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DECEMBER 28, 2010

[Former Anne Arundel Police Lieutenant Sentenced to 5 Years For 'Sexting' Teen](#)

On December 22nd, a former Anne Arundel County police lieutenant was sentenced to prison after he was charged with exchanging sexually explicit photos and text messages with a sixteen-year-old girl. Forty-seven-year-old James Cifala of Edgewater was convicted on a single count of receiving child pornography.

The contact between Cifala and the then sixteen-year-old was allowable under state law, but prosecutable under federal law. Cifala met the girl in 2007 when she was fourteen-years-old, but told her that they would have to wait until she turned sixteen before having physical sexual relations. During the ensuing two years, Cifala and the victim used pre-paid cell phones and social networking sites to exchange messages, including over 1,300 messages exchanged between mid-August and early September of 2009. According to a plea arrangement in the case, Cifala and the victim had sex "several times" in a vacant house and in Cifala's truck.

At a hearing in US District Court, Cifala's [Maryland criminal lawyer](#) spoke of his client's decades of service to the community, calling the decision to engage in a sexual relationship with the teen "disastrously stupid."

"There is another side to him... Look at the good he has done for so many people... that is the side that defines him, not this stupid three-month decision."

While US District Court Judge Catherine C. Blake agreed that the period of time in which the two exchanged photos during the course of their relationship was brief, Cifala's actions, she said, were worthy of a strong sentence:

"I can't overlook that there was a relationship and contact before the victim was sixteen. It was a serious offense and a serious sanction is warranted."

Cifala was sentenced to five years in federal prison, with an additional fifteen years of supervised probation. He will be required to register as a sex offender upon his release.

This blog post is published by Price Benowitz LLP. Our attorneys in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia represent clients in DUI, criminal, personal injury, and immigration cases. For more information, please visit our [Virginia Criminal Attorney](#) and [Washington DC Criminal Defense Lawyer](#) websites.