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Dept. of Education Refrains From Comment After Revelation That Witnesses Reported C.A.H.S. Coach Rape of Minor Boys Two Years Ago

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Afredo Bruce Smith is charged with a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251, sexual exploitation of children. If convicted, Smith faces a penalty of 15 to 30 years in prison. By. FACEBOOK

V.I. Dept. of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin two days after the V.I. District Court [announced the arrest](#) of former C.A.H.S. Coach Alfredo Bruce Smith for the molestation of multiple minor boys over the years of his employment at the department, issued an open letter condemning the abuse of children, stating that she "holds the safety and wellbeing of students as top priorities."

On Tuesday, Assistant U.S. Attorney Natasha Baker filed documents in the District Court that stated C.A.H.S. administrators were made aware of the rape incidents — gruesome sexual violations that included Smith, 50, raping and using a penis pump on the minor victims — since 2019. Smith continued working at C.A.H.S. for more than a year after the school was made aware.

Ms. Berry-Benjamin, when asked by the Consortium whether the department knew of the rape incidents as mentioned in the court documents, refrained from commenting on the matter. Instead, she said an internal investigation was being conducted and that the department preferred "not to get ahead of ourselves."

"This is a very serious matter; the V.I. Dept. of Education takes this matter very seriously. The safety and wellbeing of our students is first priority, and we don't condone any of the allegations against Mr. Bruce. This is an ongoing investigation at the V.I. Dept. of Education. We too are doing our own investigation, so while this investigation is taking place, we prefer not to get ahead of ourselves and wait for the facts to present themselves accordingly. So just know that we are doing our own investigations as well based on everything that's presenting itself," Ms. Berry-Benjamin said during a press briefing at Government House Thursday, where the department addressed [multiple in-person school closures](#) because of Covid-related causes.

Ms. Berry-Benjamin said the department's legal team is leading the internal investigation along with superintendents and "other respective individuals."

The rape incidents included multiple male minors, many whose hopes of becoming athletes were dashed by Smith's sexual assaults as some abandoned track and field after being violated by Smith. Smith worked as a track and field coach and school monitor at C.A.H.S.

According to documents filed in District Court by U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security Special Agent Andrew Hayden, multiple minor boys contacted witnesses stating that Smith had not only performed sexual acts on them, he also used a machine on them.

According to the court documents, while one of the victims was a 16-year-old minor at C.A.H.S., the victim traveled to Puerto Rico on a school-sponsored track and field trip in March 2019 with Smith and other members of the track and field team. The victim relayed to one of the witnesses in the case several incidents on the trip that made the victim uncomfortable, according to court documents. In one incident that occurred at the beginning of the trip, Smith and one of the victims stayed in a room together with no other adult or student. During the second night of the trip, the victim who was in the room with Smith left the room and went to another teammate's room because the victim felt uncomfortable being in the room with Smith. This victim refused to provide details on what happened in the room that made him uncomfortable, but said that what happened in the room is something Smith could go to jail for.

According to court documents, during another incident, another victim who was 13 years old at the time, told Smith that he wanted to join the track and field team. Soon after, Smith and this victim met in an empty C.A.H.S. classroom after school to try on a track and field uniform. The uniform fitted very tightly, and Smith told this victim that the victim had a big penis but that he, Smith, could make it bigger. During that time, Smith sexually violated this victim by holding the victim's private parts and pulling on it. Smith told this victim that he had taught other boys to do the same, and showed this victim images of genitalia of other minors from Smith's phone. The victim "never checked back with Smith and never spoke with Smith about the incident again," according to court documents. Smith continued reaching out to this minor victim on Facebook as he had done with other minor victims. The sporadic Facebook messages continued for four years,

according to the victim, with the last known contact being in 2021. The victim deleted the messages.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Baker, a witness said the incident was reported to school administrators in 2019, and that a school administrator stated that Smith would be contacted relative to the accusations. Attorney Baker further stated that if the administrator did speak to Smith, "the report did nothing to stop the defendant from sexually assaulting minors and producing child pornography."

Special Agent Hayden on August 11, 2021 issued a search and seizure warrant to Facebook regarding Smith's account. Facebook responded a day after on August 12, 2021, providing damning information on Smith's communication with minors.

One of the messages revealed that Smith sent a message on June 27, 2015 that stated, "I ain't driving take a pic sen it I call my partner to see if we can pick u up." In response, the victim, listed in the court documents as victim number 5, sent an image depicting the victim's penis. One witness reported that over six young males confided that they had been molested or raped by Smith.

In another Facebook message sent on Sept. 14, 2016, Smith sent a video to a male minor victim that he had raped depicting Smith raping the minor. In the message, Smith said, "... I does watch it everyday." The video was recorded in 2015, prior to the date of the Facebook Messenger conversation on Sept. 14, 2016, according to court documents.

On Thursday, an order by Magistrate Judge Ruth Miler that had granted Smiths' release pending trial was vacated by the judge after Attorney Baker's contention that Smith's release could endanger the case because of the strong possibility he might attempt to interfere. Smith will remain jailed.

Smith is charged with a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251, sexual exploitation of children. If convicted, Smith faces a penalty of 15 to 30 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.