

Trial Starts for Woman Accused of Instructing Boyfriend on How to Kill Himself



Summary: Today is the first day of trial for a woman accused of instructing her boyfriend on how to kill himself.

In 2014, a teenager killed himself by inhaling carbon monoxide; and on Monday, the manslaughter trial of his girlfriend began. Prosecutors claim that Michelle Carter, now 20, exploited the boy's mental illness and pushed him into committing suicide via text message.

Conrad Roy of Massachusetts killed himself on July 12, 2014, according to *Buzzfeed News*. The 18-year-old sat in his truck and inhaled carbon monoxide produced by the vehicle's water pump. While inhaling the poisonous gas, he had a change of heart, and according to court documents, his girlfriend sent him texts demanding that he "get back in" and finish the job.

Carter was 17 at the time, and prosecutors said that the teenager sent her "scared" boyfriend text messages and phone calls, pressuring that he kill himself. Not only did she push the mentally distraught teenager, prosecutors said, but she also gave him instructions on how to end his life.

"The theme of those text messages can be summed up in the phrase used by the defendant four times between July 11 and July 12, 2014: 'You just [have] to do it,'" the state's court said in a ruling last year.

Carter was given the choice to have a jury trial, but she waived that right, which gives a judge the ability to decide on her fate.

Carter's legal team has argued that she did not physically harm Roy, and she never threatened him. They also said that the state has no laws criminalizing assisted suicide and that Roy was already predisposed to suicide because of his mental illness.

"Charging Carter with involuntary manslaughter in the present circumstances is a rather dubious effort to circumvent the fact that the Massachusetts legislature has not criminalized words encouraging someone to commit suicide," Carter's attorney, Joseph Cataldo, stated in an appeal.

According to *Buzzfeed*, this case could potentially lead to the state of Massachusetts passing new legislation that would criminalize assisted suicide and result in a more aggressive pursuit of cyber bullies whose words result in suicides.

Carter and Roy met in 2011, and the two teens who lived in separate towns primarily communicated through texts and phone calls. Roy's family said that he was a well-rounded athlete, but he had been in treatment for mental health issues since 2011. In 2013, he had tried to kill himself by overdosing on acetaminophen, but his friend saved his life.

Carter's lawyers said it was Roy who had planted the idea of his suicide in her head. The majority of the messages between the teen lovebirds was focused on the topic. Text messages showed that Roy had come up with the idea to die by inhaling carbon monoxide, which prompted Carter to provide technical advice.

Prosecutors showed that before Roy's death, Carter had sent her friend a message that acknowledged that she should have stopped his suicide or called the police.

A legal expert told *Buzzfeed News* that the shocking details of Roy's suicide may lead to a guilty conviction if the ruling was based on emotions, but there was a higher chance that Carter would not be found guilty because there was a strong case of reasonable doubt.

"Ultimately it was Conrad Roy alone in the car who killed himself, while she was miles away with her phone," Daniel Medwed, a professor of law and criminal justice at Northeastern University School of Law said.

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- [Vermont Law Student Commits Murder-Suicide](#)
- [Chef Murders and Cooks Girlfriend Before Committing Suicide](#)

Source: *Buzzfeed News*

What do you think of this case? Let us know in the comments below.

