

Girl Who Helped Her Boyfriend Kill Himself through Texts Convicted of Manslaughter



Summary: A girl who pressured her teenage boyfriend to kill himself was convicted of involuntary manslaughter today.

On Friday, Michelle Carter, 20, learned that her words were deadly. A Massachusetts judge ruled that she was guilty of involuntary manslaughter after she texted her boyfriend instructions on how to kill himself.

In 2014, Carter's boyfriend, Conrad Roy III, 18, poisoned himself with carbon monoxide fumes from his pickup truck. Before he died, he had exited his truck and texted his girlfriend, Michelle Carter, who was 17 at the time. She told him to "just do it" and to get back into the vehicle.

Carter was found guilty based on her hundreds of text messages that were presented as evidence. Bristol County Juvenile Court Judge Lawrence Moniz said that it was Carter's words that had sealed her fate.

"She admits in ... texts that she did nothing; She did not call the police or Mr. Roy's family [after hearing his last breaths during a phone call]," Moniz said, according to *CNN*. "And finally, she did not issue a simple additional instruction: Get out of the truck."

While in court, Carter sobbed openly. Her family was also there as well as the parents of Roy.

Prosecutors said that Carter created a toxic environment for her vulnerable boyfriend by urging him to kill himself through text messages and that she had listened to him suffocating over the phone and failed to alert the authorities or his family.

"Although we are very pleased with the verdict, in reality there are no winners here," prosecutor Katie Rayburn said after the trial. "Two families had been torn apart and will be affected by this for years to come. We hope the verdict will bring some closure... It's been an extremely emotionally draining process for everyone involved."

Carter's lawyer Joseph Cataldo had argued that Roy was already suicidal before meeting Carter and that Roy was solely responsible for his own actions. He said that although the suicide was tragic, it was not a homicide.

"The evidence actually established that Conrad Roy caused his own death by his physical actions and by his own thoughts," Cataldo said. "You're dealing with an individual who wanted to take his own life. ... He dragged Michelle Carter into this."

According to *CNN*, Carter's guilty conviction could set a legal precedent in Massachusetts on whether or not it is a crime to tell someone to commit suicide. The state already has an expansive definition of manslaughter, but it does not have specific laws against assisted suicide.

"Given the expansive definition of manslaughter under Massachusetts law, the guilty verdict is not a surprise," *CNN* legal analyst Danny Cevallos said. "Still, this verdict is concerning because it reflects a judicial willingness to expand legal liability for another person's suicide, an act which by definition is a completely independent choice. Historically, suicide has been considered a superseding act which breaks the chain of legal causation."

Carter will be sentenced on August 3. She was allowed to remain free on bail until then because she was a teenager at the time of the suicide. She was ordered to not contact members of Roy's family and to surrender her passport.

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- [Assisted Suicide Bill Heads to California Governor](#)
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What do you think of Michelle Carter's conviction? Let us know in the comments below.

