



## Lies Allowed Teacher to Get Job at 2nd School After Sexual Relationship with Student, Documents State

*Written by Avalon Lustick on February 28, 2018 4:50 pm.*

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A decade-long relationship that started in 2008 between a student and teacher at St. Paul's School involved sex and lies, according to court documents.

Authorities arrested David O. Pook, of Warner, on Wednesday and charged him with two counts of witness tampering and two counts of conspiracy to commit perjury.

[READ: NH PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHER ARRESTED AS PART OF ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL PROBE BY AG \(/NEWS/CRIME/NH-PRIVATE-SCHOOL-TEACHER-ARRESTED-AS-PART-OF-ST-PAUL-S-SCHOOL-PROBE-BY-AG\)](#)

The arrest follows an extensive history of "troubling" behavior in a professional setting and personal setting.

Pook taught humanities at St. Paul's starting in 2000 and left under questionable circumstances in 2008. He was then hired by Derryfield School in Manchester in 2009.

Records produced by St. Paul's depict Pook's repeated "boundary crossing," a term used when the student reports feeling uncomfortable.

MAY 2002

In one instance, a student reported that Pook made her uncomfortable when, as part of a moral dilemma example, "he threatened to stick his tongue in her ear and began to do so, getting closer and closer to her face and ear, but never actually doing so."

Pook, as head of a girls' dormitory, had been told to avoid going "into their rooms after check-in when they were getting ready for bed." In response, Pook expressed "concern about being able to visit girls at all hours of the night if he is to do his job of being a watchful, good head of house."

The second concern brought up in May was that Pook sometimes would allegedly perform his check-ins under the influence of alcohol, one witness said that he, "clearly had alcohol on his breath."

SEPTEMBER 2004

Two years later Pook was reprimanded for similar events that happened in 2002.

On Sept. 24, he pulled the chair out from underneath a student, and then licked his finger and stuck it in the student's ear (an act known as a "wet willy").

Court documents say administration spoke to Pook previously, and during that conversation, they determined together that actions like this are deemed inappropriate.

Due to these and previous events, Pook was ordered to undergo "boundary training" and after signed an agreement and understanding about safe school and appropriate boundaries training.

MARCH 2005

Pook received no further consequences for his “troubling” behavior, but instead was given a raise by his department head. An email addressing the raise said, “I hope that this serves as a tangible reflection of the school’s (and my) appreciation of your work.”

SEPTEMBER 2006

Pook’s behavioral issues continued when the school found out he was taking weekly long bike rides alone with a female student who was a former advisee.

The parents of the student were aware of the bike rides.

Pook was advised by school officials to cease the behavior because of the perception from others and “that he could not afford this risk.”

Pook complied and indicated he understood why the behavior may be deemed inappropriate.

FEBRUARY 3, 2008

Court documents reference an email titled “Confidential” between school officials.

The email discussed “tough conversations” the school had with Pook regarding his behavior in the dorm, classroom and crew practices that were reported by students, parents, and colleagues.

The school official also said in the email that Pook was moved “out of his head of house in a girls’ dorm and eventually out of living in a girls’ dorm altogether because of these specific concerns.”

Pook was also warned to stay away from the girls’ dorms after drinking and “to keep his love for martinis and scotch to himself.”

The email ended with, “I can’t help but cringe just a little when we so publicly describe him as the ‘master teacher’ we want all our teachers to emulate.”

FEBRUARY TO OCTOBER 2008

Pook began communications with the female student who is now the subject of the witness tampering case.

Court documents state the relationship that arose between the student stemming from the email conversations appear to be the primary reason Pook was terminated in October.

The summary of the emails is that the alleged victim confided in Pook about something the student was "going through." The alleged victim shares her appreciation for Pook listening to her. Pook then responded saying, "I'll always be there for you."

Later on, the student emails Pook frantically about a "big big big mistake" and that the two needed to talk. They exchange emails for a time to meet.

That mistake, according to another student's testimony, is that the alleged victim told another student she was having a relationship with a teacher on campus. The student who testified said she does not remember the exact details of the conversation, which likely took place on Sept. 11, 2008, but she remembers taking away from the conversation that the relationship between Pook and the female student involved a physical aspect, court documents state.

The student tried to convince the alleged victim to tell an adult about her situation with Pook, but the alleged victim threatened to harm herself if anyone was told.

The second student's testimony said she ended up telling her parents and an adviser about the conversation she had with the alleged victim.

St. Paul's did not appear to take any immediate action against Pook after the allegations surfaced, court documents state.

The alleged victim also showed her email conversations with Pook to another student who then reported it to her adviser. The alleged victim told this student that "she thought she needed to end the relationship" but then she later changed her mind. This student said she did not believe the relationship with Pook and the alleged victim had been physical but that "some of the emails were pretty bad."

St. Paul's terminated Pook's employment on October 21, 2008.

During his subsequent job search, Pook emailed a St. Paul's official that he was referring to his termination as a "personal leave" based on the agreement they had signed.

Internally, St. Paul's referred to Pook's departure as a "termination."

APRIL 2009

The head of the Derryfield School called St. Paul's about potentially hiring Pook.

A former rector at St. Paul's made statements that were "neither honest nor forthcoming" about Pook's behavior.

"He took personal leave and decided not to return to St. Paul's next year," the rector told the Derryfield School, according to documents.

When asked directly about rumors of a relationship with a student, the rector dismissed the accusation.

"I said there had been nothing physical that caused us to be concerned about student safety."

The rector also said that they would hire Pook back. Pook was then hired at Derryfield School.

On Wednesday, St. Paul's issued a statement saying the recommendation shouldn't have happened.

"The school leadership at the time should never have given Mr. Pook a recommendation and the fact that it did not inform Derryfield of Mr. Pook's boundary issues was a failure for which we apologize," said Michael Hirschfeld, the current Rector of St. Paul's School.

#### OCTOBER 2017

On Oct. 25, the Attorney General's office filed with the Merrimack County Superior Court a motion to disclose Pook's records to Derryfield School because neither St. Paul's nor Pook made the school aware of past incidents.

#### NOVEMBER 2017

The alleged victim was summoned to testify before a Merrimack County grand jury in December.

At this time, Pook filed a pleading with the Superior Court to stop the state from disclosing the St. Paul's records to Derryfield.

Pook's pleading states that his relationship with the alleged victim was one reminiscent of counselor and patient. The student confided in Pook that she was gay and so their relationship had nothing to do with sexual interest in the student.

#### DECEMBER 2017

The alleged victim stated in her testimony she had no sexual contact with Pook while she was student at St. Paul's or at any other time.

The alleged victim categorized the emails exchanged between her and Pook as "jokes" and "banter."

As far as physical contact, the student said the two only hugged.

A classmate of the alleged victim also was called to testify. The classmate stated that the summer before their first year of college the alleged victim told the classmate that during the summer, her and Pook met up in Boston, spent the day together, went to a movie, and had a sexual encounter in a park. The classmate also stated that the alleged victim and Pook had contact after his dismissal from St. Paul's.

The classmate continued saying that in January 2012, the alleged victim told the classmate that she felt her relationship with Pook had been inappropriate.

The AG ordered a subpoena for the phone records between Pook and the alleged victim. While the alleged victim testified that she did not have telephone contact with Pook since she received her grand jury subpoena, records indicate the pair likely spoke Dec. 4 before her grand jury testimony.

All of the witnesses that appeared before the court were asked if the alleged victim ever had any relationships with men or women. All denied that they ever knew the alleged victim to have relationships with women. One witness said the student had brief relationships with men in college.

Pook's explanation of "counseling" the alleged victim appears to be a lie, according to court documents.

JANUARY 2018

On Jan. 16, warrants were served on Google to retrieve the records between the alleged victim's email account and Pook's between Oct. 27, 2017, and Jan. 16.

The records produced by Google appear to show that Pook and the alleged victim are currently involved in a sexual relationship and have been for some time now, even when the alleged victim was a student at St. Paul's, according to the AG. The AG says that some of the emails exchanged were sexual in nature and involved pornographic images and videos and reference sexual acts the two have performed together.

They two also used a euphemism "tucked in" which they used for cyber/telephone sexual interactions the two have, documents state.

The emails directly contradict the alleged victim's testimony, proving she lied on the record, documents state.

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