



CHESTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

TELEPHONE: 610-344-6801  
FAX: 610-344-5905

THOMAS P. HOGAN  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

201 W. MARKET STREET, SUITE 4450  
POST OFFICE BOX 2748  
WEST CHESTER, PA 19380-0991

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Female Chester County Teacher  
Arrested for Sex With Student**

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced the arrest of Owen J. Roberts High School teacher Melissa Bonkoski for engaging in a sexual relationship with a male student. The defendant previously was arrested for inappropriate contact with the student, but now is being arrested for actual sex with the victim.

The defendant is 38 years old. She resides in Stowe, Pennsylvania. She was a science teacher and softball coach at Owen J. Roberts High School until August of 2017, when she resigned during the course of the investigation. The high school is located in South Coventry Township, Chester County, PA.

District Attorney Hogan stated, "Rule No. 1 if you are a teacher or a coach: Do not have sex with a student. Breaking this rule is a one-way ticket to arrest, losing your job, and prison. Not to mention the profound damage to the victim and the school community which you were entrusted to serve."

The facts alleged in the criminal complaint are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

The defendant taught science at Owen J. Roberts High School. The victim, a 16 year old male, was a student in the defendant's class during his freshman year.

The investigation was triggered when the victim's girlfriend discovered suspicious texts from the defendant to the victim. The defendant had purchased a disposable "burner" phone only for communications with the student. The defendant thought that the phone would be untraceable to her.

The defendant started by communicating with the victim outside of school. The conduct progressed to kissing and "make-out" sessions in the defendant's car. The defendant would pick up the victim from work. The victim said he was afraid that he would stop getting rides if he stopped kissing the defendant.

The defendant eventually invited the victim to her house. She discussed oral sex with the victim. She kept communicating with the victim on the "burner" phone, trying to keep the communications secret. In December of 2016, the defendant and the victim engaged in sex at the defendant's home.

The victim eventually tried to cut off contact with the defendant. However, the defendant continued to insist on contacting him via text messages, leading to the discovery of the crime.

This case was investigated by the Chester County Detectives. As with many child abuse cases, it required extensive and multiple interviews with many parties, as well as a review of complex electronic evidence to re-create and corroborate the entire course of the crime.

District Attorney Hogan added, "The Chester County Detectives did an excellent job following this case from a small lead to a completed and comprehensive investigation. The leadership at Owen J. Roberts High School also has been outstanding -- they were cooperative throughout and have taken strong and affirmative steps to address this issue. The Chester County law enforcement and educational communities work together to keep our students safe."

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<sup>1</sup> A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

Deputy District Attorney Megan King has been assigned to prosecute this case. The lead investigator was Chester County Detective Christine Bleiler. Anybody with any further information about the defendant should contact Detective Bleiler at (610) 344-6866.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan