

Teen's texts encouraging friend's suicide are cited in decision to charge her in his death

An 18-year-old girl from Plainville, Massachusetts, has been charged with involuntary manslaughter based on allegations she helped a friend research how to kill himself and encouraged him to go through with it.

The teen was 17 on July 12 when her friend, Conrad Roy III, killed himself, report the Boston Herald, the Boston Globe, South Coast Today and the Sun Chronicle. Roy was found in his truck the next day; he died from carbon monoxide poisoning. The teen will be tried in juvenile court as a “youthful offender,” meaning her trial will be open to the public, the Sun Chronicle says.

According to allegations in a police report in the case, the teen “not only encouraged Conrad to take his own life, she questioned him repeatedly as to when and why he hadn’t done it yet.”

The teen allegedly told a friend in a text that she was on the phone with Roy when he died, according to South Coast Today and the Boston Globe. When Roy had second thoughts and stepped out of his truck, the teen told him to get back in, she allegedly told her friend.

Yet the teen told other friends she tried her best to prevent Roy’s suicide, part of what police says was an effort to generate attention and sympathy for herself as a tragic figure. When Roy went missing in the days before his death, the teen told friends she was worried and “a mess,” even as she continued to exchange texts with Roy, police said in court documents.

On the night of July 11, just an hour after she professed worry to a friend, the teen allegedly texted Roy this message: “Let me know when you’re gonna do it.” The teen’s lawyer, Joseph Cataldo, told South Coast Today that authorities were “cherry picking” the information being released. “It’s misleading by only pointing out a small portion of what was said,” he said.

“I want to point out that even if you took the factual allegations as truth, it doesn’t equal manslaughter,” Cataldo added. “She didn’t cause his death. This is someone who had sadly decided to end his own life. It was his voluntary decision. It was not caused by [my client].”

By Debra Cassens Weiss