

🕒 This article was published more than **24 years ago**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Sex Charge Against Spielberg Dismissed

August 8, 2000



By Tom Jackman

The last remaining charge against Jonathan Taylor Spielberg, the 27-year-old who masqueraded as a high school freshman, was dismissed by a Fairfax County judge yesterday, but county prosecutors said they are not through pursuing the famed felon.

In June, Spielberg was free on bond after admitting he had defrauded Paul VI Catholic High School in Fairfax City by falsely claiming to be the 14-year-old nephew of filmmaker Steven Spielberg.

While he awaited sentencing on that conviction, Fairfax County police arrested him on a new set of sex-related charges. Detectives said that Spielberg had molested an 18-year-old man and contributed to the delinquency of a minor by having sex with a 16-year-old girl.

Spielberg claimed that the 18-year-old was trying to blackmail him by making the complaint to police. But Fairfax prosecutors quickly sought to revoke Spielberg's bond, saying his arrest was a violation of bond conditions, and Fairfax Circuit Judge Kathleen H. MacKay agreed. She sent Spielberg to jail until his sentencing.

The once flamboyant Spielberg, whose quest for fame drew media attention from across the country, became despondent during his three-week stay in jail. Normally carefully coiffed, he made one court appearance disheveled and unshaven in a green jail uniform. Fairfax Circuit Judge Jane Marum Roush reinstated his bond on June 30, asking, "Why are we revoking bonds based on arrests when there is a presumption of innocence?"

Roush later sentenced Spielberg to two years' probation and 100 hours of community service on the original fraud charge. She also ordered him not to have contact with anyone younger than 18 years old.

Then, Fairfax's new charges fell apart. Four times, the cases were called in various courts, and four times, police and prosecutors failed to produce any witnesses. Manuel E. Leiva, Spielberg's attorney, said the 16-year-old and her parents were unwilling to cooperate in the delinquency case, and prosecutors dropped that charge last month. Leiva said police told him they would refile it.

Yesterday, the misdemeanor charge of sexual battery on the 18-year-old was called. Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney John Murray said "the witnesses were not cooperating." Fairfax Detective Ron Miller added that the 18-year-old originally claimed he was sexually assaulted against his will, but Miller said, "I found out that he did in fact want the [contact] to happen to him."

Fairfax District Judge Stewart P. Davis dismissed the case with prejudice, meaning it cannot be refiled against Spielberg.

Spielberg was cautious in his comments after the hearing because his attorneys told him he may not be done with the justice system yet. "I just want to get on with my life," Spielberg said, "and with my career." He hopes to parlay the episode into one or more national magazine stories, do some television interviews and then launch an acting career.

Later in the day, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Ian M. Rodway confirmed that prosecutors would pursue the delinquency charge that was dropped last month. In the bond revocation hearing, he characterized the allegation as Spielberg having sex with his 16-year-old girlfriend. Rodway would not say whether the girl now was cooperating with investigators.