

## **St. Petersburg Times**

### **Former counselor gets prison for sex charge**

November 10, 1999

A former counselor at Cypress Creek Correctional Facility has been sentenced to serve 25 1/2 months in prison for engaging in sexual activity with an 18-year-old Cypress Creek inmate. Ruth Ingleston was placed on paid leave in November 1998 after allegations surfaced that she twice had sex with the inmate at the facility. She was fired Feb. 1 and arrested three weeks later. In September, a jury found Ingleston guilty of sexual misconduct with a juvenile, a second-degree felony. A judge ordered Ingleston to pay court costs, but she won't face probation after her release.

## **St. Petersburg Times**

### **Woman guilty of sex with teen inmate**

September 15, 1999

By JAMAL THALJI

The 39-year-old former counselor to serious juvenile offenders faces a possible year's sentence.

In the trial Tuesday of former Cypress Creek Academy counselor Ruth Ingleston, accused of having sex with an 18-year-old inmate at the facility for the state's worst juvenile offenders, defense attorney Jim Cummins told jurors to ignore the smoke:

The white Reebok basketball high-tops she allegedly bought for the inmate.

The tattoo of Tigger, the Winnie the Pooh character and the inmate's nickname, over her left breast.

The testimony by the inmate that they had sex twice in November in his room, and the corroborating testimony of another inmate, who said he acted as a lookout when the sexual acts took place.

"There's smoke," Cummins said, "but there's no fire."

It took the jury 45 minutes to decide otherwise, finding Ingleston guilty of sexual misconduct with a juvenile offender by a Department of Juvenile Justice Employee.

The jury instead believed Assistant State Attorney Willard Pope's argument that the sneakers and the tattoo bolstered the testimony of one former and two current Cypress Creek inmates that the incidents did occur.

"I want you to see the building of the relationship," he said. "Where there's smoke, there's

fire."

Ingleston, convicted of a second-degree felony, could face up to a year in jail and as many as nine years' probation. Circuit Judge Patricia Thomas ordered her held in Citrus County Jail until sentencing Nov. 3.

Ingleston was placed on administrative leave from Cypress Creek on Nov. 17 and fired on Feb. 1. After her arrest Feb. 22, authorities said she was not charged with sexual battery because the sex was consensual.

Former inmate Brandon Anderson of Jacksonville testified that he reported Ingleston for dancing suggestively with inmates.

Current inmate Delaney Hunter testified that he acted as a lookout during the two incidents, and saw Ingleston have intercourse with the inmate, whose name the Times is withholding.

That inmate, who is still in Cypress Creek, told the jury about his intimate relationship with Ingleston.

Ingleston, 39, denied everything on the stand.

"Did you have sexual intercourse with (the inmate)?" Cummins asked.

"No sir," she said.

Cummins told the jury that the three Cypress Creek witnesses were unreliable. Their accounts of details, such as sexual positions, their descriptions of Ingleston's Tigger tattoo and other tattoos, and their recall of events all were inconsistent, he said.

"Everyone can't be right," Cummins said, "unless they're all mistaken."