

# Former Dover family's daughter had study hall with boy accused of plotting attack

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Stephanie Pruni



Lauren Pruni

A sense of innocence lost is a former Dover family's feeling amid national headlines about a Columbine-style attack on two schools.

Lauren Pruni is a freshman at Penn High near South Bend, Ind. She is the daughter of the former Stephanie Strimbu, who is the daughter of John and Althea Strimbu of Dover.

Lee Billi, 33, of Lakewood, O., is accused of collaborating with a teenager to conduct attacks at Penn High, where the boy is a student, and another unidentified school.

Pruni had a study hall with the boy, whose name hasn't been released to the media, but did not know him, she said. They had attended different middle schools in the district.

"I think she's more upset that there weren't any signs of any problems until it all came out when they searched his home and found over 100 knives," Stephanie said.

She said she talked with her daughter about the situation and "it's affected her in the sense that you think you're safe and everything's fine, but then they found all of that. You never think it's going to be your school."

Stephanie said the threats are the talk of the community.

"From hearing the girls talk, they wonder how someone could want to do something like that," she said. "Everybody's just glad they caught this before it happened. The reason they really took it seriously was because of some unrelated threats on the bathroom walls. It's happened twice. The first time the school sent home letters that they were investigating those threats, which included specific dates. They let parents opt to keep their kids home with an excused absence. It's a big school and at least half of the kids stayed home."

She said that it was the thought that the second set of bathroom wall threats were just a student wanting to get a free day out of school that prompted more serious investigation.

"That's when they started looking on MySpaces sites and talking to kids, and just sort of stumbled onto it," Stephanie said.

There are always security officers at the school.

"We've talked about it and Lauren says she's not going to worry about it or let it affect her at school – she just don't understand it," Stephanie said.

Billi pleaded not guilty Monday to a charge of conspiracy to commit murder. A Cuyahoga County Common Pleas judge set bond at \$250,000.

Police in Lakewood said Billi and the teenager were talking about a Columbine-type plot, a reference to the 1999 massacre at a suburban Denver high school in which two students killed 12 classmates and a teacher before committing suicide.

Authorities said Billi and the teenager exchanged e-mails April 20 and discussed mass murders at the Indiana school and the undisclosed site.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.