



ZERO TOLERANCE UNIT

TODAY'S EPISODE:

ZTU: KATY

Back in the dark days before ZTUs existed all over Texas, students sometimes were able to engage in what experts call “pranks” or “harmless fooling around.” The Legislature, working with school district bureaucrats, saw the threat to democracy if such actions

were allowed to continue. Thus was born the Zero Tolerance Unit, a brave group of men and women determined to teach kids that the world makes no sense.

Kid's Story

District's response

Comment

What happened

Shelby Sendelbach, 12, wrote “I Love Alex” in three-quarter-inch letters on a bleacher

Called her into the school office *and read her her Miranda rights*

Shelby's Dad: “Shelby has no clue what Miranda is.” She needs to watch more cop shows

Bad cop, bad cop routine

Vice-principal Jose Colorado tells Shelby's mom her daughter is lucky, because the Harris County DA's office declined to charge her with a felony

Katy ISD spokesman Steve Stanford says he can't comment on specifics

World's Shortest Conversation: Busy-as-hell Harris County prosecutor dealing with actual crimes; the phone rings from the Katy ISD wondering if the DA's office would like to file felony charges over “I Love Alex”

Flexibility rating: Zero

Shelby's Dad: “The law is designed to protect against gang activity. Once again, common sense and rationality elude our school officials”

Stanford: “The [Katy ISD] administration can't second-guess the Legislature...The Legislature doesn't always think about how the law is going to play out, whether it will include little schoolgirls writing innocuous things”

Innocuous?
“I Love Alex” could be code for “Free crack and heroin at Shelby's tonight!”

Chances for overturning

Well, they have Japanese TV following the case, not to mention Channel 11 and the *Houston Chronicle* (after promising an exclusive to the *Houston Press*)

Stanford: “The administration is put into a position where they have to follow the law, and that's it”

Take note, all you Sharpie-wielding lovers of Alex: ZTU: Katy is on the case, and hard time is coming