



# Former judge gets 28 years for scheme to unjustly jail youth

By the CNN Wire Staff

August 12, 2011 6:29 a.m. EDT



S. JOHN WILKINSON/THE LEADER

In addition to the 28-year sentence, Mark Ciavarella was also ordered to pay about \$1 million in restitution.

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Mark Ciavarella was ordered to pay about \$1 million in restitution

In February, Ciavarella was confronted by a distraught mother outside a courtroom

Sandy Fonzo said her son killed himself after receiving an unjust sentence from Ciavarella

"Do you remember my son? He's gone. He shot himself in the heart, you scumbag!"

**(CNN) --** A former Pennsylvania juvenile judge was sentenced to 28 years in prison Thursday after being convicted for a scheme to make millions off unjustly incarcerating young people, court officials said.

Former Luzerne County Judge Mark Ciavarella was also ordered by a federal judge in Pennsylvania to pay about \$1 million in restitution.

The sentence was four times the 87 months sentence that Ciavarella and federal prosecutors had agreed to when he pleaded guilty to charges in 2009.

But that plea deal was thrown out by a federal judge and the case went to trial.



February: Mom goes after crooked judge

Ciavarella was found guilty in February of 12 of 39 racketeering and fraud charges for accepting millions of dollars in bribes from friends who owned detention centers to which he sent juveniles.

The case made national headlines when Ciavarella was confronted by a distraught mother outside a courtroom after his conviction.

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Sandy Fonzo's 17-year-old son, Edward Kenzakowski, spent six months in a detention center after Ciavarella sentenced him for possession of drug paraphernalia.

According to Fonzo, her son, who had no prior record, was never able to recover and eventually took his own life.

"He (Ciavarella) killed his spirit," Fonzo said at the time, "He crushed him, and he didn't help him." Fonzo said her son was full of resentment and pent-up anger after being sent to the detention center.

"He was just never the same," Fonzo said.

She said in February she came to the courthouse believing Ciavarella would be taken straight to jail. But when she found out he was going home and would not be sentenced until later, she was shocked and angered, and began shouting at Ciavarella.

Fonzo's confrontation was captured by television cameras.

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