NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Notre Dame linebacker's girlfriend's death apparently a hoax

Tom Gallagher | Jan. 17, 2013 NCR Today

Shock and awe descended on the college sports world late Wednesday with the news that Lennay Kekua, the girlfriend of illustrious and award-winning Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o, did not exist and therefore did not die Sept. 12, as had been reported. It was all a hoax.

Te'o's grandmother died Sept. 12, and hours later, the sports world was informed that Te'o's girlfriend died unexpectedly from the effects of leukemia.

The story was first reported by Deadspin.com and can be read here [1].

On Dec. 26, Te'o and his parents informed Notre Dame coaches that Te'o was duped into an electronic and phone relationship with a woman using a fictitious name, Lennay Kekua. ESPN has ample coverage [2] of this extraordinary development.

Notre Dame had this to say [3]:

> The university said "the proper authorities" are investigating a "very cruel deception to entertain its perpetrators." Notre Dame would not say who, specifically, was investigating the case.

Te'o had this to say in a statement [3]:

> This is incredibly embarrassing to talk about, but over an extended period of time, I developed an emotional relationship with a woman I met online. We maintained what I thought to be an authentic relationship by communicating frequently online and on the phone, and I grew to care deeply about her.
>
> To realize that I was the victim of what was apparently someone's sick joke and constant lies was, and is, painful and humiliating.
>
> It further pains me that the grief I felt and the sympathies expressed to me at the time of my grandmother's death in September were in any way deepened by what I believed to be another significant loss in my life.
>
> I am enormously grateful for the support of my family, friends and Notre Dame fans throughout this year. To think that I shared with them my happiness about my relationship and details that I thought to be true about her just makes me sick. I hope that people can understand how trying and confusing this whole experience has been.
>
> In retrospect, I obviously should have been much more cautious. If anything good comes of this, I hope it is that others will be far more guarded when they engage with people online than I was.

> Fortunately, I have many wonderful things in my life, and I'm looking forward to putting this painful experience behind me as I focus on preparing for the NFL Draft.

Let's hope Te'o is truly an innocent and naive college student and does not turn out to be a knowing participant in this hoax.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/04/2015 - 13:55*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/notre-dame-linebackers-girlfriends-death-apparently-hoax

Links:
[1] http://deadspin.com/5976517/manti-teos-dead-girlfriend-the-most-heartbreaking-and-inspirational-story-of-the-college-football-season-is-a-hoax
[2] http://espn.go.com/college-football/story/_/id/8851033/story-manti-teo-girlfriend-death-apparently-hoax
[3] http://msn.foxsports.com/collegefootball/story/notre-dame-manti-teo-girlfriend-lennay-kekua-death-apparently-hoax-011613