

## Te'o Victim of Hoax?

Written by Sean Stires

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[Deadspin.com](#) released a story on Tuesday afternoon that woman Manti Te'o said was his girlfriend, the 22-year-old woman he and his family said died in September, is a hoax. The site claims the woman, Lennay Keua, never existed.

It is a strange twist to the story that garnered national attention after it became public that Te'o's grandmother and girlfriend had died within hours of one another. Notre Dame released the following statement on Wednesday after the story broke on the internet.

*"On Dec. 26, Notre Dame coaches were informed by Manti Te'o and his parents that Manti had been the victim of what appears to be a hoax in which someone using the fictitious name Lennay Kekua apparently ingratiated herself with Manti and then conspired with others to lead him to believe she had tragically died of leukemia."*

*"The University immediately initiated an investigation to assist Manti and his family in discovering the motive for and nature of this hoax. While the proper authorities will continue to investigate this troubling matter, this appears to be, at a minimum, a sad and very cruel deception to entertain its perpetrators."*

[ESPN.com](#) released the following statement from Te'o:

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*"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."*