



NEWS RELEASE

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01/13/2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAN SENTENCED TO TWENTY YEARS FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Epifanio A. Chaidez, 38, of Springfield, Missouri was sentenced today for sexually abusing his girlfriend's daughter from 2004 to 2011. On November 7, 2015, the defendant was convicted of statutory sodomy in the first degree, statutory rape in the first degree, statutory sodomy in the first degree, and statutory rape in the second degree following a three day jury trial before the Honorable Judge Calvin Holden.

The victim, now 21 years old, testified at trial. She testified that the defendant began dating her mother when she was nine years old. Shortly after he came into her life, he began abusing her by touching her vagina with his hand. She went on to describe that the defendant began having sexual intercourse and oral intercourse with her when she turned twelve years old. The abuse culminated with the victim becoming pregnant with the defendant's baby at sixteen. The victim did not disclose the abuse until 2013, approximately one year after her baby was born. She explained why she kept the abuse a secret, explaining that she was intimidated by the defendant, she was concerned no one would believe her, that she was afraid that telling would cause infighting among her family, and that, later in the abuse, she thought she was in love with the defendant. The victim, her uncle, and her grandmother also described how the victim was slowly isolated from friends and family after the defendant came into her life, and, at some point, her relationship with those family members was practically severed.

The victim gave an impact statement at sentencing in which she described the effect of this abuse on her life. She explained that her childhood "wasn't a typical childhood", that she had been isolated from friends and family, not permitted to engage in normal childhood activities, forced to lie and keep secrets from her family, and lost opportunities because she gave birth to her abuser's child at sixteen. The victim's uncle

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v. Chaidez, 1431-CR04264-01

also gave a statement at the sentencing in which he stated, “[The defendant’s] selfishness not only robbed an innocent child of her childhood, it also robbed her of the only real family she had.”

The State requested that the defendant be sentenced to life in prison citing the effects on the victim, the grooming and manipulation tactics used by the defendant, and the fact that the defendant continued to deny ever abusing the victim. The defendant requested probation. Judge Holden sentenced the defendant to 20 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections. Probation was denied.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Stephanie Wan and Dane Rennier. It was investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective Christina Flood was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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