



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man Convicted of Sexually Abusing Granddaughters

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Brett Sanders, 54, of Ash Grove, MO was convicted yesterday of statutory sodomy in the first degree, statutory sodomy in the first degree, sexual misconduct involving a child, child molestation in the first degree, statutory sodomy in the first degree, and child molestation in the first degree for sexually abusing his granddaughters between 2008 and 2011 following a jury trial before the Honorable Calvin Holden. The jury deliberated for a little over three hours before delivering the verdict.

Both of the defendant's victims testified about their sexual abuse at trial. At the time of trial, the oldest victim was 14 years old and the younger victim was 12 years old. At the time of the abuse, both girls were under the age of 12 and their family was living here in Greene County with the defendant in defendant's house. Neither victim disclosed the abuse until they moved away from the defendant to another state. When asked why she never disclosed, the older victim stated that the defendant threatened her with a gun and the only reason she told after she moved was because she believed that the defendant could not get to her in another state. The younger victim testified that she did not tell because she was scared.

The older victim also testified that she would try to protect her younger sister from the abuse. She stated that every time the defendant would go after her little sister, she would try to draw the defendant's attention away and focus on her, even though she knew that it would mean that she would be abused more. When asked why she would draw the defendant's attention to her, even though she knew that she would be abused more, the victim began to cry on the stand and stated that "she is my little sister" and that she considered it her job to protect her little sister from the defendant.

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v. Sanders, 1231-CR03665-01

The victims' mother testified at trial and discussed the long-term effects on her daughters. She testified that the older daughter began cutting herself to relieve the pain. She testified that her youngest daughter began wetting the bed every night and that continues to this day. She further stated that her daughters were scared of going to the bathroom alone and didn't want to be left alone with men. The older victim testified that she was "scarred" as a result of the abuse.

The defendant exercised his right to jury sentencing in this case. During sentencing, the jury also heard from the defendant's adult niece who testified that she was also sexually abused as a teenager. The attorney for the defendant argued for the minimum sentence on each charge, claiming that the defendant's niece was fabricating the abuse for attention and the child victims were not really affected by the abuse. In support of his claim that the children were not that affected, defense counsel argued that there was evidence that the victim had only sliced her arms and wrists once, so that was evidence that she was not that damaged. The State argued that the children were deeply affected by the abuse and noted that they would suffer the consequences of this abuse for the rest of their lives. The State requested a sentence between 20 years to life.

After hearing evidence and argument, the jury recommended a life sentence for the conviction for statutory sodomy in the first degree, a life sentence for the conviction for statutory sodomy in the first degree, a 4 year sentence for the conviction for sexual misconduct involving a child, a 10 year sentence for the conviction for child molestation in the first degree, a life sentence for the conviction for statutory sodomy in the first degree, and a 10 year sentence for the conviction for child molestation in the first degree. Following the jury's verdict, the defendant was taken into custody and is currently being held in the Greene County Jail without bond. Judge Holden set a sentencing hearing for March 14, 2014 at 2:30PM following a sentencing assessment report by the Department of Probation and Parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Stephanie Wan and Joseph Arnold. It was investigated by the Greene County Sheriff's Office and Sergeant Mark Staeger was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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