



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR RAPE IN THE SECOND DEGREE

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Ethan James Gabbert, 20, of Republic, MO was sentenced today for raping a 14-year-old girl in 2014.

Gabbert was sentenced by The Honorable David Jones to 4 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections for rape in the second degree. On July 14, 2014, the defendant had sexual intercourse with a 14-year-old girl knowing that he did not have her consent. The defendant told the victim that she had better not tell anyone. This crime came to light a few days later when the girl took too many Ibuprofen pills and told her father that she felt “funny.” Concerned about their daughter, her parents took her to the hospital. Once at the hospital, the girl reported that she had been raped by Gabbert. She reported that she first told two close friends, but she felt “alone” when they did not believe her. She made a report to the Republic Police officer who responded to the hospital, she submitted to a sexual assault forensic examination for evidence collection, she participated in an interview at the Child Advocacy Center, and she submitted to an examination by a nurse practitioner at the Child Advocacy Center. That nurse practitioner, Patricia Webb, noted traumatic injuries during her examination of the girl.

On November 23, 2015, Judge Jones presided over the bench trial in this matter. The State presented the testimony of the girl, the girl’s father, the officer who responded to the hospital to take the report, and nurse Patricia Webb, as well as testimony by Detective Mark Wilcox of the Republic Police Department. Detective Mark Wilcox testified that he interviewed the defendant. The State presented the video-taped interview. On behalf of the defense, the defendant testified and presented the testimony of two character witnesses.

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v. Gabbert, 1431-CR04024-01

After considering all of the evidence presented by each side, Judge Jones ruled on November 23, 2015 that the defendant was guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of rape in the second degree. The judge indicated that he weighed the credibility of the girl against the credibility of the defendant, and that he believed the girl's testimony and did not believe the testimony of the defendant.

In preparing the Sentencing Assessment Report, Probation and Parole received a letter written by the girl. The letter discussed the impact Gabbert's actions had on her: 'I was unreasonably scared about certain everyday things, I was nervous of normal situations, and for a short period of time, I was depressed because I felt like I was now damaged or unpure. I felt as though a part of me was taken and that I would never be the same "me."' She indicated that she is not a "victim." She wrote, "A victim is helpless, broken, shattered... I am strong, brave, and no matter what has been done, that will never change."

At the sentencing hearing today, the State argued for 5 to 7 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections, given the nature of the crime and the lack of remorse or accountability shown by the defendant. The defense requested probation. Judge Jones again indicated that he believed the girl in this matter and pronounced a sentence of 4 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections. As a result of the sentencing, the defendant will have to register as a sex offender. While in prison, he will have to complete the Missouri Sex Offender Program before being eligible for parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Emily Monroe. It was investigated by the Republic Police Department and Detective Mark Wilcox was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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