



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Jonathan Raven
Date: October 28, 2010 Chief Deputy District Attorney
 Jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org

Yolo County Jury Rejects Child Molester's "Impulsive" Medical Defense

Woodland, CA – **October 28, 2010**- Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that on October 26, 2010, a Yolo County jury convicted Eric Franklin Sass, 43, of Woodland, of eleven felony counts of child molestation, and one count of lewd and obscene conduct, for the crimes he committed against his 11 year-old step-daughter when she was between the ages of 8 to 10 years-old. The jury also found that when Sass molested his step-daughter, Sass engaged in “substantial sexual conduct” with her.

Sass molested his step-daughter for two years before she told anyone. In May, 2009, she told her mother about Sass molesting her. The victim's mother confronted Sass. Sass confessed to the victim's mother that he had been molesting the victim for the past couple years. The victim's mother reported to Yolo County Child Protective Services that Sass molested her daughter. Child Protective Services immediately notified the Woodland Police Department, and the detectives started a criminal investigation. The victim was interviewed by a child interview specialist at the Yolo County Multi-Disciplinary Interview Center where she recounted the details about the numerous times Sass molested her. The victim explained she did not tell her mother immediately because Sass had told her that he would go to jail if she told that he was molesting her.

The victim testified at trial about several incidents when Sass molested her. At trial, Sass presented a medical defense in an attempt to excuse his criminal behavior with his step-daughter. Sass claimed that he had a cyst on his brain and he had Lyme disease. He claimed that because of these maladies, his brain was impaired such that he could not control his impulses which resulted in him molesting his step-daughter. Sass testified at trial, and the defense also called a neurologist and neuropsychologist to testify, in an attempt to convince the jury that he did not act “willfully” when he molested his step-daughter. The prosecution questioned witnesses and Sass about whether these alleged impulse control issues were present in any aspects of his life. None of the witnesses could point to behaviors that showed Sass acted impulsively. The prosecution called forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Jason Roof, from the University of California Davis Medical Center to rebut Sass' defense. Dr. Roof testified about the behaviors one would expect to see in a

person that has an inability to control his impulses. Sass did not exhibit any behaviors to suggest he had an impulse control disorder that caused him to molest his step-daughter.

The jury found Sass guilty of all counts. This case was previously tried in July, 2010. In that trial the judge declared a mistrial when the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict. Ten jurors voted guilty and two voted not guilty.

District Attorney Jeff Reisig commended the efforts of the Yolo County Multi-Disciplinary Center, Woodland Police Department, and the medical professionals from the University of California Davis Medical Center for their hard work in this case. Reisig stated, "The verdict reflects the commitment of the jury to perform their civic duty in a serious case, and also demonstrates their ability to critically evaluate the medical and psychiatric evidence they were presented with."

Sass faces a maximum sentence of 28 years in state prison. The Honorable Timothy L. Fall will sentence Sass on January 6, 2011.

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