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Judge Sentences Woodland Man to Prison for Molesting His Step-Daughter

Woodland, CA – **January 6, 2011**- Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that on January 6, 2011, Yolo County Superior Court Judge Timothy L. Fall sentenced Eric Franklin Sass, 43, of Woodland, to prison for 24 years.

On October 26, 2010, a Yolo County jury convicted Sass for committing eleven felony counts of child molestation, and one count of lewd and obscene conduct, 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, he engaged in "substantial sexual conduct" with her. 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.

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 so 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.

At the sentencing hearing, Judge Fall considered statements prepared by the 11 year-old victim, her father, and her mother, along with statements prepared by Sass and his friends and family. After considering the evidence at trial, the statements, and arguments by the prosecution and defense, Judge Fall imposed a prison sentence of 24 years. The maximum sentence that could have been imposed was 28 years. Sass will also be required to register as sex offender for the rest of his life.

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