



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAN FOUND GUILTY IN THE CASE OF MALNOURISHED CHILD

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Dustin Blair Richard, 32, of Springfield, Missouri was convicted today by a Greene County judge of abuse of a child for failing to provide a three year old child with adequate nutrition and endangering the welfare of a child in the first degree for failing to provide a seven year old child with nutrition. The verdict came after a two day bench trial that was held on October 26, 2015 and October 27, 2015.

The two victims were the defendant's girlfriend's children and had both been living with Richard and their mother, Kaylah Hill. On December 26, 2013, the girl was brought to Mercy Hospital by her maternal grandmother. She was immediately admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with child abuse/neglect, Kwashiorkor, skin abrasions, skin infections, and foreign bodies in her foot. While at the hospital she underwent two surgeries to remove a wire and a piece of acrylic or glass that had been embedded in her feet. During trial, her pediatrician, Dr. Hoang Nguyen, testified that this was the "worst case of neglect" she had ever seen and immediately took protective custody of the girl.

The boy testified at both a preliminary hearing and trial. He testified that the defendant would not allow either him or his sister to eat. He further testified that he was not allowed to tell anyone about his treatment in the defendant's home or he would get in trouble with the defendant. He finally testified that his mother would sometimes sneak him and his sister food, but they would not be allowed to tell the defendant.

The children's maternal grandmother testified that she had not seen her grandchildren between October 8, 2013 and December 25, 2013. When she finally saw her grandchildren, she was surprised and disturbed by the girl's condition and

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immediately took her to the hospital for treatment. Children's Division was involved with the family, but had not been able to see the female victim since November 2013. Despite numerous attempts and home visits, they were unable to check on the safety of the child in the two months prior to her hospitalization. In one incident in December, Children's Division attempted a home visit with a police officer. They observed the defendant in the home, observed him look at them, and then ignore them and refuse to answer the door.

The Honorable Calvin Holden issued his verdict today convicting the defendant of abuse of a child for failing to provide the female victim with adequate nutrition and endangering the welfare of a child in the first degree for failing to provide the male victim with nutrition. Judge Holden found the defendant not guilty of abuse of a child for failing to provide the female victim with medical care. The defendant is facing up to seven years in the Missouri Department of Corrections for his conviction for abuse of a child and up to seven years in the Missouri Department of Corrections for his convictions for endangering the welfare of a child in the first degree. Because he was convicted of abuse of a child, the defendant must serve at least one year in the Department of Corrections before he is eligible for probation and parole. Judge Holden set a sentencing hearing for April 22, 2016 at 1:30PM following a sentencing assessment report by the Department of Probation and Parole.

In this particular incident, the female victim was of particularly high risk for abuse and/or neglect as she was not visible in the community. At the time of these offenses, she was too young to be in school and was not attending daycare or participating in any activities outside the home. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, please call the Child Abuse Hotline at (800)392-3738.

**This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Stephanie Wan and Nathan Chapman. It was investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective Annesha Umbarger was the lead investigator assigned to the case.**

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