



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON IN THE CASE OF MALNOURISHED CHILD

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Dustin Blair Richard, 32, of Springfield, Missouri, was sentenced today to three and a half years in prison for 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 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 immediately took her to the hospital for treatment. Children's Division was involved with

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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.

At the sentencing, the sentencing judge, the Honorable Calvin Holden, heard the girl's foster mother discuss the impact these crimes had on her, which included a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, behavior issues, and food hoarding issues. The boy also wrote a victim impact statement which was read to the judge. The State requested a ten year sentence for Richard citing that the defendant showed no remorse for his actions, claimed that these incidents were only "mistakes", and that the defendant was the impetus for these actions as the neglect did not begin until the children moved into the defendant's home and none of the defendant's biological children suffered from these issues. The defendant requested probation or two years in prison.

Judge Holden sentenced the defendant to three and a half years in the Missouri Department of Corrections for each conviction. Judge Holden ordered the sentences to be run concurrently and denied probation. The defendant will have to serve at least one year before he is eligible for parole.

This case was 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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