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## Freeman gets 50 years for sexual abuse

The man who repeatedly raped his daughter when she was a child is sentenced to 50 years in prison.

By **Kristin M. Kraemer**  
*Tri-City Herald*

SPOKANE — All before the age of 12, Kylie Freeman was forced by her father to dress up like a hooker and say dirty words to a video camera and was bound by ropes and repeatedly raped.

This sexual abuse continued for about 14 months until her "spirit was broken," and it was only years later while on the verge of suicide that Kylie finally told her mother.

Wednesday, the now-19-year-old daughter fearlessly faced Kenneth Freeman in a Spokane courtroom and said he may have traumatized her as a child, but seeing him go to prison for 50 years will bring some justice and help advance her healing.

"Biologically Ken Freeman is my father, but many years ago he violated his right to be so...," said Kylie, who spoke at two separate hearings. "Six years of silence, that is how afraid of him I was. But I'm not afraid anymore."

"Those things you did to me, they're wrong...," she added.

Ken Freeman, 46, received the lengthy sentence as part of a "global plea agreement" with state and federal prosecutors. He pleaded guilty in December in all three cases.

The 50 years will be served in a federal prison on the crime of production of child pornography in Washington and, in Oregon, one count each of possession of child porn and interstate transportation of a minor for purposes of engaging in unlawful sexual activities.

U.S. District Court Judge Lonny R. Suko scoffed at Freeman's comment that it would spare the taxpayers some money if he got a shorter term and served it in a medium security facility.

Suko said taxpayers would foot the bill for a maximum facility because Freeman's actions and likelihood to reoffend justify the sentence. He also noted that if Freeman ever walks out of an institution he would be in his mid-80s.

"Actions speak louder than words," said Suko, who pointed out that as Freeman faced trial in Benton County in 2006 he fled to China "knowing that judgment day was coming."

More than two hours later on Wednesday across the river in Spokane County Superior Court, Freeman was ordered to do 20 years in prison for three counts of first-degree rape of a child. The Benton County case was handled in Spokane to avoid any issues of transferring him back to Kennewick.

That sentence will be served at the same time as the federal term.

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Superior Court Judge Kathleen M. O'Connor said what happened in this case — a biological parent sexually assaulting their child — is extreme and "fairly rare." She reminded Freeman that his daughter will continue to suffer from the effects of the childhood abuse.

"That's not going to go away today and that's not going to go away tomorrow...," she said, "but she can move on as best she can."

Freeman is a former Hanford patrol officer and a reserve deputy for the Benton County Sheriff's Office. He was one of the country's most-wanted fugitives when Kylie went on the TV program America's Most Wanted to talk about the assaults.

One of his appointed attorneys, Carl Oreskovich of Spokane, said his client had a very difficult childhood and "various ghosts in his closet... from abuses that he had suffered." Those issues and an emotional breakdown in 2000 affected Freeman's "ability to modulate his behavior" and led to his fascination with porn and eventual abuse of his daughter.

"The sin that I did and the pain that I caused my daughter can never be undone. I promised myself as an abused child never to be like the person who abused me," Freeman told the court.

"It's completely my fault and, Kylie, I can never ever repay what I did to you...," he later said. "I hope you move forward with your life."

Nearly three dozen people — the majority family and friends of Kylie — packed both courtrooms.

Her mother and stepfather, Gaye and Chris Peale, and her step-grandfather Larry Peale also addressed the court.

"This sentence in no way scratches the surface of what he deserves for the pain and suffering he's caused Kylie and her family," said Chris Peale, noting that Kylie came into his life when she was 3 years old.

"You have hurt her to the core, you stole her innocence and you bullied her" to the point where she was thinking of giving up on life, he added. "You have chosen poorly and you now must suffer the consequences. ... My daughter deserves justice, she deserves closure and she deserves to continue down the path of being whole again."

Gaye Peale said that because of her ex-husband's "horrible and repulsive actions" she has had a job that no mother ever wants — identifying her little girl's face and body in hundreds of child porn images that have been widely circulated.

"Having my daughter say the words, 'My father molested me,' 'My father raped me,' and 'I wanted to take my own life,' " were unexpected and shocking, Gaye Peale said.

"You have hurt her physically, emotionally and mentally deeper than anything ever will... You have marked her and scarred her for life," she added. "How could you do this to her? She is such a precious gift. ... You have lost your privilege of being a father. Fathers don't do that."

James McDevitt, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington, attended the hearings.

In a news release issued later Wednesday, McDevitt said, "Today's sentence of 50 years imprisonment is an important vindication for victims who have the courage not only to survive the ordeal of sexual abuse, but to come forward to see that justice is served."

Kylie wondered aloud in court if the former Tri-City cop ever imagined that when he raped her, took pictures and videos of the abuse and eventually saw them posted on the Internet that it would come to this — spending the rest of his life behind bars.

Those images have become one of the most prolific child porn series, downloaded by countless people around the world. Kylie said she goes "ice cold" every times she thinks about what they're doing.

"They're dangerous and, even though I don't know them, they're continuing to hurt me," she said.

In September, Seattle Times reporter Hal Bernton embedded with Apache Company, 2nd Platoon, a Joint Base Lewis-McChord unit, as they patrolled the Panjwai District of Afghanistan, where U.S. soldiers have faced one of the highest IED threats.



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Kylie has been active in helping other victims of sexual assault and said this type of advocacy work brings her joy. She created a website, [www.thesafeproject.com](http://www.thesafeproject.com), to let others know they are not alone and can heal through talking about their abuse.

"For a long time I didn't want my father to go to jail, but then I realized that what he did to me isn't what a father should do," Kylie said after both hearings wrapped up.

Chris Peale told the Herald that the family is "extremely happy" both judges accepted the recommended sentences.

"As a family, now that we've crossed this hurdle we're going to continue to move forward and grow from this tragedy," he said.

Kylie, who now is a freshman in college, has "awesome strength and is a beacon of light for all those that have to go through this," said Peale, who called her his hero.

Other victims of all ages have reached out to Kylie and her parents for guidance, he added.

"It's amazing to know and to see how many people in the Tri-Cities have had this happen and have had no closure, no support and no justice. And they're in pain," Chris Peale said.

Gaye Peale said it is the family's goal to help change the world one victimized person at a time because "it doesn't go away until you face it."

"The grip today has been loosened and we all can move forward," she added. "It's a victory."

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