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## Former police officer and judge Hoffman pleads guilty to three sex charges

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By JENNY MICHAEL, Bismarck Tribune BismarckTribune.com | Posted: Tuesday, July 12, 2011 11:11 am

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By TOM STROMME, Bismarck Tribune

TOM STROMME/Tribune Randall Hoffman plead guilty to three sex charges in district court in Mandan on 7-12 morning.

A former police officer and judge has pleaded guilty to three sex charges, one of which could put him in prison for the rest of his life.

Randall Hoffman, 55, pleaded guilty on Tuesday at the Morton County Courthouse to Class AA felony continuous sexual abuse of a child, Class A felony attempted gross sexual imposition and Class C felony corruption or solicitation of minors.

In exchange for his guilty pleas, prosecutors moved to dismiss 49 additional corruption or solicitation of minors charges. South Central District Judge Tom Schneider will sentence Hoffman following a presentence investigation and sex offender risk assessment.

The continuous sexual abuse of a child charge carries a maximum sentence of life in prison without parole. The attempted gross sexual imposition has a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, and the corruption or solicitation of minors charge carries a five-year maximum sentence.

Hoffman was charged in September 2010 in Grant County with the 52 offenses, which accused him of molesting and attempting to rape a girl from the time she was 12 or 13 until she was 17. Until his arrest, Hoffman had been the police chief and only officer in Elgin.

Hoffman resigned from his district judgeship in April 1999 after facing a disciplinary complaint for stalking, harassing and exhibiting abusive conduct toward his ex-wife. The North Dakota Supreme Court suspended his license to practice law in 2003 for misconduct, then declined to reinstate it in 2005, finding he had practiced law without a license during his suspension.

Schneider on Tuesday ordered Hoffman to be held in the Mercer County jail, which contracts with Grant County to house inmates, until his sentencing. Since March, Hoffman has been at Alpha Human Services in Minneapolis, a nonprofit sex offender rehabilitation facility. His sister and brother-in-law posted \$50,000 cash bond and paid for his time there.

Hoffman's attorney, Irv Nodland, suggested in court that Hoffman should be allowed to return to Alpha Human Services rather than go back to jail pending sentencing. Hoffman made significant progress and had not been a problem at the facility, while his time in solitary confinement in the Mercer County jail had been difficult on him physically and emotionally.

"He has gotten emotionally very much stronger," Nodland said about Hoffman's time at the facility. "It's better to let him improve physically and emotionally than to put him back in solitary confinement in Stanton."

Assistant Attorney General Jon Byers, who is prosecuting the case with Grant County State's Attorney Dan Herbel, said Hoffman should be returned to jail, as prosecutors will be recommending a prison sentence for him no matter how he does at the sex offender treatment facility. Schneider ordered

Hoffman to go back to jail for convenience; if parole and probation officers conducting the presentence investigation need to talk to him again or if sentencing can be held more quickly than planned, the judge wants him close by.

Byers said the plea agreement under which the 49 additional charges were dismissed does not include anything about sentencing. He did not say how much prison time he and Herbel would be seeking for Hoffman. He also explained that they felt it was appropriate to drop the additional corruption charges, which accounted for each month the girl was abused, as proving each charge would have been an unnecessary use of state resources.

*(Reach reporter Jenny Michael at 250-8225 or [jenny.michael@bismarcktribune.com](mailto:jenny.michael@bismarcktribune.com).)*

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