

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Saturday, December 31, 2011 | [Hanover, Virginia](#) 54° Feels Like: 54° Partly Cloudy [View Warnings/Advisories](#)

News



Ex-state police captain guilty of sexual abuse

Recommend

78 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

Recommend this on Google

By: [BILL MCKELWAY](#) | Richmond Times-Dispatch
Published: November 30, 2011

LAWRENCEVILLE -- A teenage girl's secret life of sexual abuse and torment at the hands of her stepfather — challenged for two years in grueling court proceedings — evaporated Tuesday with a simple word that brought vindication and relief: guilty.

Standing before a circuit judge near the end of a 20-minute hearing Tuesday, former Virginia State Police Capt. Edward L. Hope Jr. entered the plea to a single charge of aggravated sexual battery, never shifting his gaze toward his victim.

The single word brought tears of relief to the victim's extended family, and outside the Brunswick County courthouse Jordan Drummonds, now 15, thrust her thumbs upward in a sign of victory.

"I feel like people will know now that I was telling the truth," the Chesterfield County high school student said, vowing to dedicate her life to helping young people.

"She told me ... that hearing that word 'guilty' would be like moving a giant piece of concrete from her chest," said Special Prosecutor Marsha Garst, who engineered a plea agreement approved Tuesday that resulted in a 20-year, suspended prison term for Hope.

He left the courthouse without comment and will be on probation for two years; he will have to register as a sex offender and is forbidden from associating with juveniles, voting or possessing a firearm.

Kim Drummonds, Jordan's mother, said the guilty plea had long been regarded by the family as vindication for years of abuse suffered by Jordan and her two sisters.

"I would never want my daughter to have to endure the pure torture of taking the witness stand again and having to go through what she did," Drummonds said, referring to an earlier trial in Chesterfield that ended with a mistrial. Hope, she said, "will live the rest of his life in a personal hell knowing that he will forever be known as a convicted sex offender."

The Richmond Times-Dispatch does not typically publish the names of juvenile victims of crime or victims of sexual abuse, but Drummonds and her daughter insisted on public mention of their names.

"What this is for my daughter is a vindication, an empowering moment for her that she has been telling the truth and that she has taken control again of her life," Drummonds, a Chesterfield resident, said. Drummonds, Jordan and Jordan's two siblings, who live in Alabama, are continuing therapy sessions.



Former Virginia State Police Capt. Edward L. Hope Jr. entered the plea to a single charge of aggravated sexual battery.

All three daughters are standout students and have broad, supportive friendships among teachers and fellow students, Kim Drummonds said.

Hope's trial in Chesterfield in 2010 on multiple rape, sexual battery and forcible sodomy charges ended in a mistrial over jury misconduct; Jordan Drummonds' lengthy appearance on the witness stand and her cross-examination in that case left her in tears and with lasting emotional harm, her family said.

"There were details from years ago she was asked to remember on the stand that even an adult would stumble over," said Kim Drummonds.

The charges stemmed from alleged abuses between 2002 and 2005 that occurred in the family home in Chesterfield. Hope and Kim Drummonds married in May 2002.

On Tuesday, Garst outlined years of abuse of Jordan and her two sisters and how the incidents became public when Jordan's older sister wrote a long school paper on a personal struggle that detailed the abuse within her family.

Dannis Drummonds, the girls' father and a retired police officer in Alabama, said Tuesday that he saw the school paper in late 2008. "I asked them, 'Is this true?' " and within days he had forwarded information to Virginia State Police "about a predator in your midst."

Hope, a 30-year veteran who had been publicly celebrated for his rapid advancement and awards, was arrested in January 2009.

Garst for the first time revealed Tuesday that search warrants taken out by state police during the investigation turned up evidence of a history of "lascivious conduct," including pictures of his stepdaughters and sexual encounters Hope had with adult females.

"These were trophies," Garst told Brunswick Circuit Judge W. Allan Sharrett, referring to the pictures and other sex-related objects recovered from Hope's Goochland County home, his office at state police headquarters and from his state police-issued vehicle.

And the veteran prosecutor told the court that a sexual-abuse expert who reviewed the case described the experiences of Jordan and her sisters as a classic example of how an adult can gradually assume control, set up borders that protect the privacy of his sexual advances against a single victim, and groom his victims by desensitizing them to his sexual acts.

The Brunswick charges stem from sexual acts that occurred in late 2003 in a hunting trailer that Hope had in the county and visited with Jordan, supposedly to track deer.

On Tuesday, though, Garst used the revelatory words of Jordan's sister's school paper to reflect the horror of a life kept secret too long: "I felt like I was being bound in hell with chains," the teenager wrote.

And a single word, guilty, was sweet release from that bondage, said Dannis Drummonds.

"It's a good day because he finally owned up to what he did and pleaded guilty."

bmckelway@timesdispatch.com (804) 649-6601

Recommend


78 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

Recommend this on Google


Reader Comments

*Facebook Account Required to Comment. If you are not already logged into Facebook, please click the comment button to do so.

15 comments



Posting as Norma Jean Almodovar (Not you?)

 Post to Facebook



Tom Keith · [Subscribe](#) · Bill and tax payer at USA