

## Woman testifies about alleged sex abuse by former Modesto police sergeant

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### 2012 cop pedophile

A 19-year-old woman broke into tears while on the witness stand Friday when she was asked to point to her father, the defendant accused of sexually abusing her when she was 15 years old.

“Sorry, I didn’t think this would be so hard,” the young woman said while wiping away tears with a tissue.

Robert Hodges, 42, is charged with seven felonies in connection with the alleged abuse. He also is charged with two misdemeanor counts of failing to comply with a court order not to contact the alleged victim or her immediate family.

Kirk McAllister, Hodges’ attorney, has told the jury his client is innocent. He said Hodges and his ex-wife were in the middle of a heated separation when she threatened to ruin the defendant. Not long after, the allegations of sex abuse surfaced.

The defendant is a former Modesto police sergeant. Hodges was a 15-year veteran of the department and was working patrol when he was arrested Oct. 22, 2012. He no longer works for the department, and he remains free on bail.

Testimony in the trial began Friday morning with the alleged victim, referred to in court as Jane Doe.

She testified that the abuse began one day when she was home sick, lying on the living room couch and watching TV. Hodges was the only other person home. She said he started massaging her right side before he started groping her. Then, he used his hand to sexually molest her, according to the woman.

“I just laid there in shock. I didn’t do anything, I just went with it,” she said while crying on the witness stand. She said it stopped at some point, and she got up from the couch and left.

She told the jury the sexual abuse worsened, occurring about once or twice a month over several months. In one incident, she said, her brother had walked into the living room when he saw her straddling Hodges on the couch.

Her brother, who was younger than 10, asked if they were wrestling. They said they were; their bottom halves were beneath a blanket. The boy stayed in the living room playing video games for about 15 minutes before Hodges said it was time to tuck them into bed.

Jane Doe testified that Hodges later came into her bedroom, leaving the door slightly open. She

said his wife was in her bedroom and the defendant had shut the door to his son's bedroom. She said Hodges got into her bed and had intercourse with her, which was her first time.

Jane Doe testified that almost every time he was done abusing her, Hodges would apologize and tell her it was a mistake. She said he told her that if anyone ever found out a police officer was sexually abusing his daughter, people would think she was weird and he would lose his job.

She told the jury that Hodges would tell her, "If you tell anyone, it will ruin the family.' ... Over and over, every single instance."

The abuse stopped at the end of her freshman year in high school, Jane Doe testified. She didn't speak about the alleged abuse. She said she felt brainwashed, under his control, and she didn't want to harm her family. "This is a horrible burden," she said about the alleged abuse.

She said she revealed the abuse during an argument in a family car ride home from Sacramento. That was about a year and a half after the alleged abuse stopped.

Hodges was upset his daughter was texting a man who was 20 years old, divorced and in the Navy, Jane Doe said. She said her father knew she wanted to date this man, whom she had known since her freshman year when they went to high school together.

After Hodges took away her cellphone, she told him he wasn't anyone to tell her whom to date. Then, she said, she revealed the abuse in front of her mother. It was Jan. 2, 2012, and Jane Doe was a junior in high school.

Jane Doe testified that she remembers Hodges saying he and his daughter had "messed around. It's over now, it's not going to happen anymore."

At home, she discussed the issue again with her mother and father. She said Hodges told her they couldn't go to the police, before telling her he was sorry and he wasn't going to do it again. She testified that her mother stayed quiet and seemed to be agreeing with him.

Jane Doe said she didn't tell police about the abuse until Oct. 22, 2012. She testified that her mother told her she was going to the police. Jane Doe said she pleaded with her mother not to, but her mother convinced her they needed to seek help.

The girl was questioned at the Stanislaus Family Justice Center in Modesto. Modesto police Detective Martha Delgado arranged for Jane Doe to call Hodges. The phone call was recorded and the audio was played for the jury Friday afternoon.

"The plan was for him to admit that he raped and molested me," Jane Doe said about the recorded phone call. She said the detective was about 5 feet away in the room and didn't listen in on the call.

During the phone call, Hodges promised her he was never going to do anything to harm her, and

he suggested to her that she not say anything to authorities. He told her, "You know what happens if you say anything like that, right?" He went on to tell her, "I go away, if convicted, I go away to prison, which I will be convicted, I go away to prison for the next 30 years. I'm 40 years old and that means by the time I'm out, I'll be about 70. ... I would go behind bars and you would never, ever see me again."

Jane Doe told her father what he did to her was horrible and she was afraid the cycle of sexual abuse would continue. "It'll come back to haunt me and it'll just keep getting worse and worse," she told him.

When she asked him why he did it, Hodges told her that he wished he could explain it. He told Jane Doe that they can work on their relationship as a family with her brother.

"How can I trust my dad? Honestly, how can I trust you after what you did?" she asked Hodges. Jane Doe said Hodges then hung up the phone shortly after.

Testimony in the trial is expected to resume Wednesday in Stanislaus Superior Court.