

Greater New Orleans

NOPD officer sentenced to life without parole for raping 7-year-old girl

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A New Orleans police officer **[convicted in August of raping a girl more than 10 years ago](#)** was sentenced Tuesday (Dec. 15) to serve life in prison without the possibility of probation or parole.

The sentence imposed on 41-year-old **[Michael Thomassie](#)** by Orleans Parish criminal courts Judge Tracey Flemings-Davillier was mandatory after a jury found him guilty of aggravated rape Aug. 20.

Thomassie was convicted of raping the daughter of his then-girlfriend in 2003 when the child was 7 years old.

NOPD Superintendent Michael Harrison said in August that he was "disgusted by the unspeakable actions of this officer," following Thomassie's conviction. It quickly became evident in court Tuesday that fellow inmates found the officer contemptible as well.

"Put him in a cell with me! I'll turn him over and make him a mop!" shouted inmate Erik Beasley, as Thomassie stood before the judge in his red jail jumpsuit indicating segregation to maximum security.

Beasley, awaiting trial on an unrelated charge of home invasion, ultimately was ordered to serve an additional 950 days in jail for contempt of court when he would not stop his courtroom outbursts.

Thomassie, his head shaved bald and a gray billy-goat beard hanging below his chin, smiled nervously as he was brought back to his seat next to Beasley. He avoided eye contact with Beasley, and with family members of the victim seated in the front row.

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune generally does not reveal the identities of sex-crime victims.

The victim's biological father commended the work of Orleans Parish Assistant District Attorney Laura Rodrigue, the lead prosecutor on the case.

"I didn't think we were going to get a fair shake," the father said outside the courtroom. "He's a New Orleans cop, here in New Orleans. I said, 'We ain't never going to get a fair shake here.'"

"But it worked out good. He's getting what he deserves."

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Before imposing the sentence, Flemings-Davillier denied motions by defense attorney Pat Fanning seeking a post-conviction acquittal and order for a new trial. Fanning then filed another motion to withdraw as Thomassie's attorney, saying his client was now indigent and would be represented by the Louisiana Appellate Project to appeal his conviction.

More than a decade passed before the sexual assault was reported to authorities, partly because the victim's mother was a substance abuser who relied upon the officer financially, prosecutors Rodrigue and Tiffany Tucker told the jury four months ago.

The victim, now 19, **testified** at trial that the police officer she considered her stepfather raped her in two rooms of their Algiers home in October 2003 when she was in second grade.

Thomassie **elected not to testify in his own defense** in the two-day trial. He was caught using his phone to **send racy text messages** and photo "selfies" to a woman in Florida from the courtroom during jury selection.

After the officer's conviction, Harrison said, "I am taking immediate steps to remove him from within our ranks. There is no place in this department for officers who choose to commit acts of violence."

Thomassie, a 13-year-veteran of the NOPD, was placed on administrative reassignment in July 2014 when the Public Integrity Bureau and Child Abuse Unit launched a joint investigation into the rape allegations.

NOPD spokesman Tyler Gamble said Tuesday that while efforts to officially fire Thomassie from the force have begun, his termination has not been completed.

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