

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

PRUNEDALE MAN SENTENCED TO 100 YEARS TO LIFE FOR MOLESTING HIS DAUGHTER AND STEP-SON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2016:

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that David Jon Thomas, age 43, of Prunedale was sentenced to 100 years-to-life by Judge Larry E. Hayes for sodomy on a child 10 years of age or younger and 4 counts of lewd acts on a child. The 5 counts are each a strike under California's Three Strikes Law and Thomas will have to register as a sex offender if he is ever released.

On March 31, 2014, Thomas's 4-year-old daughter disclosed to her mother, Thomas's ex-wife, after returning from visitation with her father, David Thomas. She volunteered to her mother while using the bathroom that Thomas made her touch his genitals. The Monterey County Sheriff's Office then scheduled an interview of the child at the Bates Eldridge Clinic at Natividad Medical Center in Salinas. The interview, which uses a child-friendly environment and special interviewing techniques designed to get non-leading statements, allowed the child to disclose more information about her sexual abuse. Additionally, the defendant was recorded praying with his mother for the death of his daughter after her disclosure to law enforcement.

On August 16, 2014, a week after Thomas' then current wife had separated from him and moved out of the home, her 10-year-old son disclosed multiple acts of sexual abuse by David Thomas. In a forensic interview conducted shortly thereafter, the boy disclosed how Thomas would send his mother away from the home on shopping errands and then sexually molest him. The boy said he was afraid of Thomas so he complied and did not share what was happening earlier. Thomas often struck him and yelled at him while they lived together.

The case was investigated by Deputy Brian Baugh and Detective Kim Smith of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. District Attorney Investigator Jackie Meroney prepared the case for trial while fellow investigator Christi Gunter conducted follow-up forensic interviews of the children, uncovering more details about the abuse. The victims were supported by Alma Sanchez of the DA's Victim Services and Odie, a victim comfort dog.