

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

SALINAS MAN SENTENCED TO EIGHTEEN YEARS IN PRISON FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that on February 13, 2018 Salinas resident Michael Russ, age 41, was sentenced to eighteen years in prison for a violent and prolonged attack on his wife in 2017.

On July 9, 2017, Russ and Doe were parked near Sherwood Park in Salinas. Russ accused Doe of cheating on him while he had been incarcerated for a prior attack on Doe. Russ became enraged when she denied any infidelity. When he tried to remove her from the vehicle, Doe, who considered the car her home, refused to go. Russ then punched Doe in the head, engaged the child locks to prevent her from escaping, and told her he “knew somewhere he could take her.” He drove to a dimly lit dead-end street Salinas, and then began a vicious assault that lasted for twelve hours. Over the course of the evening, with the child locks on to prevent her escape, Russ beat Doe repeatedly and relentlessly with his fists, then a metal butane can, and ultimately a wooden cane. At various points during the assault, he held her down and sheared off pieces of her hair with an eight-inch knife. Russ also repeatedly strangled Doe until she could not breathe.

The next morning, a Good Samaritan on his way to work found Doe lying on the sidewalk and called 911. She was barely clothed and had been beaten so severely she was unable to stand. Her face was covered in blood from a laceration above her left eye and both eyes were bruised and swollen shut. She had bald patches from the knife attack. Doe would later be diagnosed with a facial fracture and cervical spine injuries as a result of this attack.

Russ was located by Salinas police officers two days later. The interior of his car confirmed Doe’s version of events: her blood was found throughout the vehicle, from the steering wheel to the rear compartment. While being transported to the jail, Russ told officers that he thought he was going to jail for murder.

Monterey County Superior Court Judge Julie Culver sentenced Russ to eighteen years in prison. At the time of the 2017 attack, Russ was on parole for assaulting Doe with a firearm in 2012 in Santa Maria. He had also been arrested in Salinas on three prior occasions in 2017 for misdemeanor attacks on Doe. At sentencing, Judge Culver noted the “pervasive” violence against a truly vulnerable victim, and said that there was “no question” Russ beat Doe “within moments of her life.”

Justice was served thanks to the Salinas resident who saw Doe, called 911, and cooperated with law enforcement. This case was investigated by Salinas Police Officers Christopher Neff, Nick Grave, and Manuel Lopez, as well as District Attorney Investigator Erik Morris.

There is no excuse for domestic violence and no one should live in fear. If you or a loved one are experiencing domestic violence and need assistance, call the YWCA at 831-372-6300 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).