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Child Predator Who Raped and Tortured 6-year-old Girl in 1996 Sentenced

Michael D. Graham Caught in Colorado After Child Porn Arrest

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that a 67-year-old man has been sentenced to prison for raping a 6-year-old girl in 1996 as she slept on the family sofa in University City.

Michael D. Graham was sentenced to 60-years-to-life in prison. As his trial was underway and jury selection was in progress, he abruptly pleaded guilty on May 12 to all six charged felony counts of forcible rape, forcible sodomy, aggravated sexual assault and lewd acts on a child. In doing so, Graham admitted special allegations that he personally inflicted torture and great bodily injury upon the child, identified only as Jane Doe to maintain her confidentiality in court, and committed the offenses during a residential burglary.

“For nearly 30 years, this sexual child predator escaped justice for his criminal acts while the victim and her family had to live in fear and suffer through horrendous trauma,” **DA Stephan** said. “Today, that ends. The defendant will have to live the rest of his years behind bars, paying for what he did. I hope today’s sentence brings a measure of closure to the victim and her family. I want to thank Deputy District Attorneys Dan Owens and Adriana Ross from our Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division for fighting for justice. Let the message be loud and clear to predators who hurt our children that we will find you and you will face the maximum sentence under the law.”

In February 1996, the then-6-year-old victim fell asleep on the living room couch after watching a movie. Her parents and teenage sister were asleep in their bedrooms. Shortly before 5 a.m., the victim’s mother awakened to the sound of the victim crying and went to check on her. She found the victim lying on the couch naked, her clothes strewn on the floor, her blankets pushed into the back of the couch, and the adjacent sliding glass door was left open. The victim had apparent blood on her inner thighs, and her face was badly swollen and discolored. The victim said, “I had to go to the bathroom, but somebody was pushing me down.”

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The victim was rushed to the hospital where she received treatment for apparent chemical burns to her face. A sexual assault forensic exam was done by a physician at Rady's Children's Hospital that noted significant genital injuries, and DNA swabs were collected. The victim was forensically interviewed by a specially trained licensed clinical social worker to fully document her statement.

Law enforcement's response and initial investigation was thorough and all leads were pursued, but the perpetrator remained unidentified for decades. San Diego Police developed a suspect DNA profile from a single source sperm fraction from the victim's sexual assault kit and officers canvassed various nearby encampments of unhoused individuals and known sex offenders residing in the area to collect reference samples, but all were excluded. In 2000, the unknown suspect DNA profile was uploaded into the newly operational national CODIS DNA database in an effort to identify the perpetrator.

"For three decades, our teams never forgot what the victim and her family went through that night," said **Deputy Police Chief Shawn Takeuchi**. "Generations of detectives and forensic analysts have reexamined the evidence from 1996 and leveraged technology to continue their search for the person who did this. We hope this brings peace to the family, knowing that a dangerous predator is off the streets, where he cannot hurt anyone else."

In December 2023, San Diego Police received a DNA hit from Colorado. Michael Graham had been arrested by the Frederick Police Department, and his DNA was collected as part of his booking process. In Colorado, Graham was charged with 12 felony counts of sexual exploitation of a child following an investigation that revealed that he was in possession of thousands of images of child sexual abuse material. Two weeks later, the Colorado Bureau of Investigations notified the San Diego Police Crime Laboratory of the CODIS match and, while out of custody pending charges in the Colorado case, Graham was arrested in Orlando, Florida by the U.S. Marshalls Service on February 23, 2024.

He was ultimately transported to San Diego, where he was prosecuted for the 1996 rape.

At the sentencing hearing today, a letter from the victim's mother was read aloud in court. She said:

"I am the mother of my beautiful daughter, the innocent and sweet 6-year-old child that you, Mr. Graham, assaulted, raped and used a chemical substance that burned her sweet little face. After this day for many years after, this horrendous crime devastated my family and affected us in so many ways. My daughter was hospitalized and transferred to other hospitals for several weeks. The despicable acts you forced on my daughter were so painful to bear. Now, after 30 years, writing this statement brought so many painful memories and tears. I am thankful that you, Mr. Graham, are behind bars and will be locked up for a very long time. You don't deserve to be free, and I am relieved that you cannot hurt other innocent lives."

Deputy District Attorneys Dan Owens and Adriana Ross from the DA's Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division prosecuted this case.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.