

CONTACT: GLORIA ALLRED
(323) 653-6530
Email: gallred@amglaw.com

Statement of Gloria Allred

Today I have come to Provo, UT to attend the sentencing of Robert Tanner Lant. The prosecutor had charged Mr. Lant with aggravated sexual abuse of a child, a first degree felony. (Ann. Section 76-5-404.1)

According to documents filed by the state of Utah the presumptive sentence for a conviction of this offense is 15 years to life. Imprisonment is mandatory. The charge was based on allegations made by the Deputy Utah County Attorney in charging documents in which it was alleged that the charge was based on allegations made by the defendant's stepdaughter that "she was 11 years old when the defendant entered her bedroom early one morning while M.M. was sleeping, laid down next to her on her bed and began tickling her back under her clothes. Defendant then moved his hands around to M.M.'s front, touched her breast, and then her vagina." The alleged abuse occurred in 2012.

The document submitted by David Sturgill, Deputy Utah County Attorney also stated that "the evidence of other acts of child molestation, the state intends to introduce at trial includes allegations made by J.A., defendant's sister. J.A. alleges that when she was approximately 8 years old, defendant entered her bedroom in the evening after she had gone to bed and began to scratch her back. Defendant eventually slipped his hand under J.A.'s clothes and touched both her breasts and vagina. The alleged abuse occurred in 1987.

Despite the serious additional allegations the defendant has been permitted to enter a plea of guilty to attempted sexual abuse of a child (a third degree felony) and the prosecutor has agreed that the he will not ask that the defendant Robert Tanner Lant receive a prison sentence.

Although the judge could still sentence the defendant to prison, the fact that the prosecutor has agreed not to ask for imprisonment is very upsetting to my client, the defendant's victim.

She feels that the allegations made by her and by the defendant's sister to law enforcement are so serious that Mr. Lant should be sent to prison.

Allegations of child sexual abuse even by one child should always be taken seriously, but when the allegations are made by more than one child and the defendant has entered a plea of guilty to felony conduct as to even one of them, such felony misconduct should be punished with a sentence that carries a term in prison.

Punishment should fit the crime. Deterrence is an important goal of sentencing. If there is no significant punishment because there is no imprisonment imposed on a man convicted of a crime against a child, it sends a message that child sexual abuse does not matter.

Most important, however, is that the message to a child is that the system will not take meaningful action against the perpetrator of a crime against you, even if you break out of your fear and report to law enforcement. M.M. (Madison) has been very brave in reporting the crime that she was forced to endure as a child and the victimization by her stepfather.

It is time that the system begins to protect children rather than continuing to fail them, so that brave victims like M.M. know that anyone convicted of a felony against a child will receive appropriate punishment rather than a “get out of jail free card” for their criminal misconduct against a child.

GLORIA ALLRED

Attorney at Law Representing M.M.

April 5, 2018