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Office of the District Attorney
Nineteenth Judicial District

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: December 4th, 2015
Contact: Kimberly Corban Weeks • kweeks@co.weld.co.us • 970.356.4010 ext. 4702
Re: Cold Case Sex Assault Garners Conviction after Seventeen Years

Greeley, CO –On Wednesday, December 2nd, a Weld County Jury convicted Ricky Rivera (DOB 10/11/1972) of Sexual Assault on a Child (F4).

On February 23, 1998, then 25 year old Ricky Rivera repeatedly had sex with an intoxicated 14 year old girl who had ditched school. Rivera, who was homeless at the time, met the middle school aged girl and several of her friends while they were walking around downtown Greeley. Rivera accompanied the group to a nearby home and had sex with the underage girl in multiple locations including in a motor home and later in a van. When the girl later told her parents that she had sex with an unknown male, they took her to the hospital where medical personnel conducted a sexual assault exam and gathered biological evidence which included DNA from a vaginal swab. The evidence was placed into a sexual assault kit and stored in evidence at the Greeley Police Department.

In 2013, Greeley Detective Christian Morgan sent the 1998 evidence to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (“CBI”) for further analysis. A DNA profile for the suspect was developed and placed into the federal CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) database. Shortly thereafter, there was a hit. Investigators soon learned the DNA profile from the 1998 sexual assault kit matched the DNA profile for Ricky Rivera. Rivera’s DNA had been previously entered into the CODIS database after a felony theft conviction in 2002. Detective Morgan then interviewed Rivera, which resulted in a partial confession. Although Rivera was considered a possible suspect in 1998, he was transient, and police were not able to interview him during the initial phase of the investigation.

In 2015, the Weld County District Attorney’s Office, under District Attorney Michael J. Rourke, chose to file the case charging Rivera with Sexual Assault on a Child, a class 4 felony. The case proceeded to trial concluding earlier this week. Despite the faded memories of several important witnesses the jury returned a quick verdict finding Rivera guilty of the charged crime. Undoubtedly, the DNA evidence from the 1998 sexual assault kit played a key role in securing this conviction.

The filing of a criminal charge is merely a formal accusation that an individual(s) committed a crime(s) under Colorado laws. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. See Colo. RPC 3.6



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The defendant will be sentenced on February 23rd at 2:00pm in Division 11 under 1998 sentencing guidelines.

WCDA

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