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Press Release

For Immediate Release

May 3, 2012

Jurors Sentence Man to Life for Sexually Abusing Little Girl

A Fort Worth man has been sentenced to life in prison without parole for sexually assaulting a family friend's 5-year-old daughter when he spent the night at the family's apartment after a night of drinking.

On Wednesday jurors in state district Judge Wayne Salvant's court deliberated about 30 minutes in convicting Eduardo "Lalo" Espinoza of two counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child.

During the trial prosecutors Dale Smith and Melinda Westmoreland presented evidence that on February 14, 2011, Espinoza — who was dating the cousin of the victim's father — went to a small Valentine's Day party at the family's apartment.

After drinking too

much, he was allowed to spend the night on the living room couch. About 3 a.m. the mother awoke to use the restroom and checked on her 5-year-old daughter. She found her daughter with the covers pulled over her head.

When the mother pulled down the covers, she saw her daughter was awake and naked from the waist down. The mother put her daughter's underwear back on, and when she picked her up to carry her into her bedroom she saw Espinoza lying on the floor, partially in her daughter's bedroom.

The child told her mother that "Lalo" had taken off her pants and underwear while she was sleeping.

Police were called, an investigation ensued and Espinoza's DNA was sub-



Eduardo Espinoza

sequently found in the little girl's panties.

Because the child was under 6 at the time she was abused, Espinoza faced a punishment range of 25 years to life in prison without parole.

The jury deliberated about 45 minutes in assessing the maximum punishment.

"Eduardo Espinoza violated a close family friend's trust in the most perverted of ways," said prosecutor Dale Smith. "They opened their home to him, and in one action, he changed their lives forever. The jury made sure he will never have that opportunity again."