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*****MEDIA ALERT*****

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GONZALES SENTENCED TO 60 YEARS FOR THE MURDER OF 4-YEAR-OLD

Evansville, IN – Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that on February 21, 2025, the Honorable Judge Robert J. Pigman of the Vanderburgh County Superior Court sentenced Christian Trinidad Gonzales to 60 years in the Department of Correction for his role in the murder of Octavia Aquino. The Defendant also had to register as a violent offender. The Judge found age to be only mitigator since Gonzales is 16 years old. Aggravators were found to be the age of the victim, who was 4 years old, that she was in the Defendant's care and that he has a record of juvenile delinquency. The Honorable Judge Pigman found these aggravators to outweigh any mitigation. Gonzales was found guilty of Murder on January 10, 2025. The Co-Defendant in this case will also stand trial.

On June 14, 2024, an unresponsive 4-year-old girl was transported to the hospital after the roommates of her mother and mother's boyfriend, the Defendant, found her laying lifeless next to the Defendant with multiple bite marks and multiple bruises on her face, body, and neck. The victim had very little brain activity upon admittance to the hospital. She later passed away on June 16.

The Defendant was reported missing from Fort Wayne by his grandmother earlier in the year and had a history of being reported missing and escaping - including previously escaping from Hillcrest the same day he had been admitted. The mother of the young victim assisted in the escape of the Defendant and was living with him, the victim, and two other roommates on Evansville's east side. The mother was previously arrested for contributing to the delinquency of a minor in relation to the Defendant.

During their time in the apartment, the mother of the victim would regularly leave for work at McDonald's and leave her daughter in the care of Gonzales. The female roommates in the apartment began noticing physical injuries on the child, the child throwing up, and other strange behavior indicating the child was being abused. The roommates confronted Gonzales about the injuries on the young child, and he eventually admitted to biting her when they informed him it was caught on camera.

Officers were dispatched to the apartment on June 14 when one of the roommates arrived home from work finding the 4-year-old girl bruised and lifeless next to the Defendant on a mattress.

Prosecutor Moers stated, "It was an honor to seek justice on behalf of 4-year-old victim Octavia and her family today. This is one of the hardest cases as a prosecutor: a case with a completely innocent victim whose life was cut drastically short. The Defendant, a person who was in charge of watching over her and keeping her safe, caused grave harm to her tiny body and then did not assist her in any way when others were noticing symptoms of his violent episode which left bruising on her neck and body, bite marks, and resulted in her "zoning out" and presenting with symptoms of lethargy and tiredness before her passing from injuries to her brain.

When she succumbed to her injuries, the Defendant was found sitting next to her obviously lifeless body - which we all had to view on the officers' bodycam. The roommate called 911, but it was still too late. Despite the Defendant sitting next to her lifeless body, phone records show he was on Tik Tok instead of calling for help. He told the roommate that Octavia was just sleeping. When help was called, he ran to hide and stayed upstairs in the bathroom for over an hour while paramedics and police tried to piece together this tragic situation. When found, he spent hours lying to officers about his age and name.

I am pleased that Gonzalez received near the maximum sentence today and will spend the next 60 years in the Indiana Department of Correction. I do not think society is safe with him living among us. Someone who harms innocent children cannot be given the freedom we all enjoy.

I will always remember Octavia and her family, who have suffered greatly. Octavia should be playing with her My Little Ponies, going to the park and looking forward to starting school, but the Defendant took that away from her and her family. We pray the verdict brings some sense of justice to them.

I am thankful for the great detective work in this case by Evansville Police Department Officers Tevault, Hosterman and Trapp who arrived expeditiously and the AMR and the Fire Department who did all they could to assist Octavia. Detective Klein and Helm completed a thorough investigation, and many thanks to Investigator Jon Carter in my office for his critical assistance with technology which helped us piece together a solid timeline for this case."

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