



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**4-1-14**

On April 16, 2014, Cody Holt, 28, of Denison, was sentenced to 25 years in prison for the offense of Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child. The sentence was handed down by 59<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge Rayburn Nall after a jury found Holt guilty after a six day trial.

On March 6, 2012, Detective Shane Kumler of the Denison Police Department received a report from the grandmother of a ten year old boy that the child had made an outcry of repeated sexual abuse at the hands of Holt, the child's uncle. The boy's grandmother had legal custody of the boy and his two siblings, a nine year old boy and a six year old girl. Det. Kumler took all three children to be interviewed at the Grayson County Children's Advocacy Center, and all three children reported having been abused by Holt. Holt was charged under a law enacted in 2007 which allows prosecutors to combine multiple offenses of sexual contact into one indictment.

At trial, prosecutors called the three children to testify how Holt had abused them over a five year period. The youngest victim, age eight, had difficulty verbally describing the abuse, but with the help of anatomically correct dolls, was able to demonstrate to the jury, under questioning by Assistant District Attorney Hunt, what had happened to her. Prosecutor Britton Brooks played for the jury a recorded interview of Holt, taken by Det. Kumler, in which Holt admitted to sexual contact with one of the children.

Holt's attorney, Pamela McGraw, accused the children's grandmother of coaching the children for financial gain, and called several witnesses to raise questions about the grandmother's motives and character.

After over a week of listening to evidence, the jury convicted Holt of Continuous Sexual Abuse, an enhanced first degree felony that has a range of punishment of twenty-five (25) years to life in prison, rather than the traditional 5 year minimum punishment range of a first degree felony. In addition to a 25 year minimum sentence, the law also provides that a convicted offender is not eligible for parole at any point of their sentence.

"This is a relatively new law," said Grayson County District Attorney Joe Brown. "It is harsh, and meant for offenders who repeatedly abuse children over at least a 30 day period. This is actually the first time we have had a defendant go to a jury trial on this offense."

"The worst thing about what the defendant did was that all three of these children are special needs children," said Assistant District Attorney Bi Hunt. "He picked these children because they were vulnerable and would have difficulty protecting themselves, crying out for

help, and testifying. Thank God he underestimated them and thank God for Grayson County juries.”