

U.S. Man Sentenced for Rape of Adopted Russian Daughter

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Michael Grismore was handed a cumulative 10-year sentence after pleading guilty in court Monday.

An American man received a three-year prison sentence and a seven-year suspended sentence in the American state of Georgia for the rape of his adopted Russian daughter, RIA Novosti reported Tuesday.

The man, Michael Grismore, was handed a cumulative 10-year sentence after pleading guilty in court Monday, Rachelle Carnesale, Chief Assistant District Attorney of Cherokee County, said in comments carried by news agency RIA Novosti.

According to legal news site RAPSI, Ksenia Antonova was initially adopted from Russia in 2001 by a woman named Marta Blanford, who subsequently gave up custody of Antonova in 2009, at which point the girl was adopted by Blanford's sister and her husband, Grismore.

A case was initially opened into the alleged rape in 2010, but was suspended after Grismore's

defense submitted documentation attesting to the theory that Antonova had been 16 years old at the time of the sexual encounters. In Georgia, 16 is the age of consent.

But the case reopened in 2011, after Russia's children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov submitted additional documentation providing evidence that Antonova had been too young to legally consent to the encounters at the time.

Grismore subsequently pleaded guilty.

In addition to sentencing him, the court forbade Grismore from ever coming into contact with Antonova again.

Astakhov lauded the news, Tweeting on Tuesday morning: "I express gratitude to the employees of the Russian Foreign Ministry and the embassy in Washington for their help in restoring the rights of ... Ksenia Antonova."

According to RAPS, the girl is currently undergoing treatment in a mental facility.

President Vladimir Putin signed a bill banning the adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens in late 2012. While some socially conservative activists have supported the law, urging the importance of Russia taking care of its own orphans, critics have argued that the law made Russian children hostages of international politics.

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