



NEWS RELEASE

Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes
Passaic County Prosecutor's Office
401 Grand Street
Paterson, NJ 07505
(973) 881-4800

FORMER STUDENT ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR AT KARATE DOJO SENTNCED TO 18 YEARS FOR AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ASSAULT

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

June 29, 2019

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that on June 27, 2019, the Honorable Joseph A. Portelli sentenced Luke V. Bakula, 31, of Haskell, to twelve years in New Jersey State Prison for Aggravated Sexual Assault, First Degree and a six year sentence in New Jersey State Prison for Sexual Assault, Second Degree. The sentences are to run consecutive to each other for an aggregate sentence of eighteen years in New Jersey State Prison with eighty-five percent of the sentence to be served before parole, subject to the No Early Release Act. Upon release, Mr. Bakula is required to register as a sex offender pursuant to Megan's Law and is subject to Parole Supervision for Life.

Luke V. Bakula is a former student assistant instructor at Porta's Karate Dojo Academy in Pompton Lakes. Between November 21, 2005 and July 2006, Mr. Bakula sexually assaulted a nine year old female student at Porta's Karate Dojo Academy and at her home in Bloomingdale. In 2015, Luke Bakula ceased being a student assistant instructor based upon the allegations. Mr. Bakula also held a Teacher of Elementary School in Grades K-6 Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing, issued in February 2011. On June 15, 2017 the State Board of Examiners suspended Mr. Bakula's Teaching Certificate. Based upon his conviction, Mr. Bakula is disqualified from public employment.

On March 12, 2019, a Passaic County jury convicted Mr. Bakula on all counts, including two counts of first degree Aggravated Sexual Assault, two counts of

second degree Sexual Assault, and two counts of third degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child. Passaic County Assistant Prosecutor Kathy I. Oviedo, Esq. represented the State during the four-week jury trial. Mr. Bakula was represented by Peter W. Till, Esq. and Louis J. Keleher, Esq.

Media inquiries should be directed to Assistant Prosecutor Kathy Oviedo of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Sexual Investigations Unit at (973) 837-7714 or koviedo@passaiccountynj.org.



LUKE V. BAKULA