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Press Release

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Man Sentenced to 18 Years for Family Violence Assault

GALVESTON – On Wednesday, Brandon Demon Zeno, 29, was found guilty of felony assault causing bodily injury with a family violence enhancement and was sentenced to 18 years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

On Tuesday, July 5, 2016 the jury trial for Zeno began. During the course of the two day trial, the State presented witness testimony and other evidence describing Zeno's attack of the victim, his girlfriend at the time.

The victim testified that on October 30, 2015, around 1:00 am, the victim arrived home after having worked all day and was confronted by Zeno who accused her of cheating. The couple argued and the victim told Zeno to leave but Zeno refused to go, telling the victim he would leave in the morning. The victim began gathering her personal papers when Zeno lit the top of the stack of papers on fire. Attempting to prevent further destruction, the victim grabbed the top paper almost hitting Zeno in the process. Zeno then assaulted the victim by strangling her around the neck. When Zeno let the victim go she went to sleep in a corner and when she awoke Zeno was no longer at the apartment.

Later in the morning Zeno returned and entered the apartment without permission. The victim explained that she again told Zeno to leave but he refused. The victim in an attempt to get Zeno to leave and knowing he would go lie down poured bleach over the mattress. Zeno became enraged and attacked the victim. He repeatedly punched the victim, continuing even after the victim began bleeding from the head. During the attack, Zeno took the victim's phone to prevent her from calling for help. Zeno also physically prevented the victim from leaving the apartment; however, she was able to flee when he was distracted.

The victim walked to a nearby bus stop, intending to go to the emergency room. Zeno followed the victim and begged her to not tell the hospital what happened to her because he did not want to get into trouble. When the victim said that after she arrived at the hospital

the police were called and the assault was reported. The victim received eight stitches for a wound she received over her right eye. The victim also had bruising on the left side of her upper back and shoulder. The responding officer testified that he went to the victim's house and saw multiple spots of blood on the floor in the kitchen that the victim said was a result of her being attacked.

Zeno was indicted in December 2015 for the assault which was charged as a felony because of a previous conviction for assault causing bodily injury with a family violence enhancement that Zeno received on October 15, 2015. The previous conviction date was just 15 days prior to this assault and involved an assault that occurred in September 2015 against the same victim.

The jury deliberated for about 15 minutes on yesterday afternoon before returning a guilty verdict. The punishment phase immediately followed. Zeno faced a punishment range of two to 20 years because of one felony enhancement for a 2006 conviction for burglary of a habitation. The State presented evidence of that conviction and additional evidence that Zeno also had five other prior felony convictions and two misdemeanor convictions.

ADA Christopher Henderson told the jury during closing arguments that this conviction would make Zeno's 10th criminal conviction and asked them to think about how many chances Zeno should be given. ADA Henderson argued that the victim didn't deserve what happened to her and asked the jury to sentence Zeno to the maximum sentence allowed. The jury deliberated punishment for about 30 minutes before returning with its punishment verdict of 18 years in prison.

Zeno was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Christopher Henderson and Beverly Armstrong in the 10th District Court, with Judge Kerry Neves presiding. The investigation was conducted by the Galveston Police Department.