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Press Release - For Immediate Release

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Elk Point, S.D. – State's Attorney Jerry A. Miller said today that Taras James Michels, 42, North Sioux City, SD, was sentenced today in the 1st Circuit Court on one count of first degree rape, a class C felony, and to one count of aggravated incest, a class 3 felony. While the maximum sentence on a class C felony charge is life imprisonment without the possibility of parole and / or a fine of \$50,000 with a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years, Michels received a sentence of 70 years in the SD state penitentiary with 10 years suspended. As this is Michels first felony offense and first degree rape is considered a violent offense Michels will be required to serve 50% of the unsuspended 60 years (or 30 years) before he will be eligible for parole.

Michels was also sentenced on the count of aggravated incest, a class 3 felony carrying a maximum sentence of 15 years in the penitentiary and / or a fine of \$30,000. On this charge, Michels' was sentenced to an additional 15 years with no time suspended consecutive to Michels' sentence in the first degree rape charge. This will require Michels to serve an additional 6 years after he has served the required 30 years on his first degree rape charge totaling a minimum of 36 years before he may be released on parole.

During the sentencing hearing, State's Attorney Jerry Miller, pointed out a multitude of aggravating factors in this case including multiple victims and admitted offenses exceeding six hundred separate offenses warranted a life sentence plus 15 years. The sentence imposed by the Court keeps Michels incarcerated until he is 78 years old and supervised for the rest of his natural life. Michels will also be required to register as a sex offender for life, along with completing a sex offender treatment program while incarcerated and five years of continued counseling following his release from incarceration.