



**PATRICIA R. LYKOS**  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
**HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

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Public Information Office  
Donna Hawkins  
George Flynn  
(713) 755-3320

**Coe Gets Maximum Penalty for Sex Assault of 4-Year-Old Who Died**

Houston, Tx – Harris County District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced that Lucas Ruric Coe received the maximum punishment Thursday of a \$10,000 fine and life in prison without the possibility of parole in the brutal sexual assault of four-year-old Emma Thompson.

A jury returned that sentencing verdict after convicting Coe, 28, on Tuesday of the super aggravated sexual assault of a child. Evidence showed the victim had blunt force trauma to the abdomen, a skull fracture, head lacerations, about 80 bruises, and bleeding from a torn genitalia after the attack on June 27, 2009. She was later taken to a hospital, where she died.

The girl also suffered from herpes of the mouth and genitals. That condition, usually transmitted through sexual acts, was present in Coe and Emma’s mother, ex-nurse Abigail Young of Spring. She was the girlfriend of Coe, a Magnolia resident.

His trial and conviction are among the earliest in Harris County under a 2007 Texas law that significantly toughened the penalties for sexually assaulting a child under six years of age. Coe was not on trial for killing Emma: this offense subjected him to potentially harsher punishment options than if he had been found guilty of first-degree murder.

“Legislators had defendants like Lucas Coe in mind when they passed this law,” District Attorney Lykos said. “He is a monster who must be removed from our society.” The District Attorney commended the prosecutors, Assistant District Attorneys Colleen Barnett and Tina Ansari. “This was an especially challenging case,” Lykos said. “I feel very proud of both of them and their professionalism.”

“Tina and I worked very hard on it,” Barnett said, “but Emma was worth every bit of that effort – and then some.”

They also prosecuted Young, who received a 20-year prison term on July 12. She was convicted on a charge of reckless injury to a child under 15 years of age.

Prosecution witnesses said the types and severity of Emma’s injuries were not consistent with defense claims that they could have come from falls or other typical childhood injuries. In the punishment phase of Coe’s trial, jurors heard testimony about other assaults and brutality by Coe. A 10-year-old boy said he was hospitalized for several days after a beating by the defendant.

Jurors deliberated less than three hours before returning the punishment verdict. It concluded an eight-day trial in the court of visiting State District Judge Doug Shaver. (end)