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(S.D.)-State Supreme Court Orders Hearing In Rape Case



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/10/2013 10:18 AM

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - The South Dakota Supreme Court says a Rapid City man sentenced to life in prison for raping a minor is entitled to additional proceedings in circuit court to determine if he was properly convicted.

John Rolfe was convicted in 2011 on three counts of first-degree rape and 12 counts of possession of child pornography. Circuit Judge Thomas Trimble sentenced Rolfe to three life sentences for rape and 120 years for possessing child pornography.

Trimble closed Rolfe's trial to the public when the child victim testified.

The Supreme Court says Trimble must make specific findings on whether the courtroom should have been closed. If the judge finds the closure was justified, he can enter a new judgment of conviction. If the trial was improperly closed, Rolfe would get a new trial.