



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

3/1/19

**VISALIA MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR RAPING  
UNCONSCIOUS WOMAN**

Today in Department 5 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Joseph Kalashian sentenced Tommy Ponce, Sr., age 53, to 44 years-to-life in prison. On November 19, 2018, a jury convicted Ponce of rape of an intoxicated person and rape of an unconscious person. Ponce's extensive criminal history includes a 2013 conviction for unlawful sex with a minor and domestic violence, a 2007 conviction for domestic violence and dissuading a witness, a 2002 conviction for domestic violence, and a 1992 conviction for robbery.

In the late evening of September 29, 2017, the 21-year-old female victim had been drinking heavily with her boyfriend and friends at a Visalia park. While walking along Mooney Blvd. with her boyfriend, the two met Ponce in a parking lot. On seeing her state of intoxication, Ponce offered to help get her home. After an argument with her boyfriend, she began walking home alone.

The next day, she woke up in an unknown vehicle in a different parking lot on Mooney Blvd. with scratches and bruises to her body, along with vaginal bleeding. She responded to urgent care where a SART exam was performed. DNA obtained from the exam rendered a CODIS hit which resulted in Ponce's arrest on December 7, 2017.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Erica Gonzalez and investigated by Det. Jacob Sorensen of the Visalia Police Department.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare  
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