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**16-YEAR OLD MALE ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ASSAULT
CERTIFIED TO BE TRIED AS AN ADULT**

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez informed today that a local 16-year-old male accused of aggravated sexual assault will be tried as an adult after a district court judge decided to certify him as an adult.

The allegations stemmed from a night-time abduction of a young woman who left her home to get a late-night snack from a fast food restaurant. The victim was forced back into her car under the threat of a gun and driven to an isolated area of the city where she was sexually assaulted. After the attack the abductor drove her to another part of the city. When she had an opportunity, she jumped from the moving vehicle and ran screaming to a nearby home. Quick response from the El Paso Police Department's Forensic Team lead to the discovery of a fine print and the victim subsequently identified a picture of the defendant.

This morning, after hearing the facts of the case, 65th District Court Judge Alfredo Chavez certified the juvenile to face 4 criminal counts: Aggravated kidnapping, aggravated sexual assault, aggravated robbery, and aggravated assault.

As a consequence of the certification, the juvenile will be transferred to the county jail to await trial. In the meantime, the County Attorney's Office will transfer the case to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Adult certification of a juvenile offender is reserved for the most serious criminal cases. In approving the certification the judge considers four factors:

- Whether the alleged offense was against a person or property, with greater weight in favor of transfer given to offenses against the person.
- The sophistication and maturity of the child.

- The record and previous history of the child.
- The prospects of adequate protection of the public and the likelihood of the rehabilitation of the child by use of procedures, services, and facilities currently available to the juvenile court.

In this case, the court weighed all the factors and determined that due to the serious nature of the crimes alleged that it was appropriate to certify.

The juvenile is now subject to the full range of penalties available in adult criminal cases.

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The Texas Family Code prevents the County Attorney's office from disclosing more details about the incident.