

# ‘I never saw this coming’: Father sentenced to 15 years for causing brain injury to infant son

By Heather Schaefer  
OF THE RIVER NEWS

Several times during his sentencing hearing in Oneida County Circuit Court Friday afternoon, 37-year-old Clayton T. Kuehl of Woodruff repeated the phrase “I never saw this coming.”

Similarly, before handing down a sentence of 15 years confinement to be followed by 10 years extended supervision, Oneida County circuit judge Mike Bloom repeated the words “why” and “how.”

The sentencing hearing took place one month after Kuehl entered a guilty plea to a single felony count of physical abuse of a child (repeated acts causing great bodily

harm) and approximately 15 months after he admitted to swinging, squeezing and holding down his infant son in an attempt to stop him from crying.

According to the criminal complaint, he was charged in late February 2022 after the child stopped breathing and was taken to a hospital. Doctors diagnosed the baby with an anoxic brain injury and multiple rib fractures. A child abuse specialist later determined that the injuries were consistent with “non-accidental trauma” and found evidence of older injuries, the complaint said.

According to Oneida County district attorney Mike Schiek, the child is now approximately 18 months old but, due to the brain injury he suf-

fered at the hands of his father, his neurological function remains that of a 3 or 4-month-old.

The child is blind and unable to swallow. As a result, he must be fed via feeding tube (a process that consumes approximately 6 hours of his mother’s day every single day) and will not “receive the benefits of a normal childhood,” the prosecutor added.

“How someone can do something like this to their own child is beyond me,” Schiek said, describing Kuehl’s conduct as “indefensible” and “as aggravated as can be.”

Schiek candidly admitted that when he was first informed of the severity of the child’s injuries, he believed the boy would not survive. He



Kuehl

also noted the mother’s strength and devotion in providing care to her children.

“How she does this I don’t know,” he said. “She’s one of the strongest people I’ve ever met emotionally.”

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**Dan Stephens** joins Redman Realty Group

We are delighted to welcome Dan to our Three Lakes Office. Having recently retired from his landscape and design business, Dan has joined his wife Tara as a part of the Stephens Team. He previously held a real estate license in Illinois, with a focus on commercial property management. The Stephens have been residents in Three Lakes for 17 years and are actively involved in the community. They are fortunate to have daughters Colleen and Katie living in the area with their families, including two new grandkids, Isla and Leo. Dan enjoys spending his spare time on the Three Lakes/Eagle River Chain, especially while boating in his vintage Chris Craft. Dan really feels that showing buyers property by water in his classic boat is the best way to experience the true meaning of lake life in the Northwoods. You will find Dan at the newest Redman Realty Group office located within the Open Armoire Building at 6990 W School St, Three Lakes.

**Dan & Tara, The Stephens Team, at Redman Realty Group, Three Lakes**

You can contact Dan at 715-499-1099 or [Dan@RedmanRealtyGroup.com](mailto:Dan@RedmanRealtyGroup.com)

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