

## A survivor's story

'To me it just made me feel like, well this is the only way I'm going to connect with my mom.'

**NOW 30, TATIANA JONES HAS DECIDED SHE WANTS TO TALK ABOUT THE ABUSE SHE SUFFERED FROM THEN-MAYOR GIORDANO**



PHOTO BY CHUCK BURTON

Tatiana Jones pauses as she stands on the patio of her home in North Carolina. Jones has spoken for the first time about the child sexual assault case that garnered national attention and riveted a city, horrified by testimony that grade-school girls had been assaulted by Waterbury's mayor in his city-supplied car, his law office, City Hall and the home he shared with his wife and their three sons.

BY TRACEY O'SHAUGHNESSY  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

**T**oys sprinkled the mayor's office, scattered into corners and on chairs — Barbies and Cabbage Patch dolls which she long dreamed of having. Her mother promised her a doll if she

would do this thing.

And she did this thing, twice a week for several weeks in the fall and winter before she turned 9.

"She would always tell me this is our little secret, this our little bonding," Tatiana Jones says now. "She wanted me to touch him in his private parts. I remember crying. I didn't understand. To me it just made me feel like, well this is the only way I'm going to connect with my mom. Maybe this is the only way we're going to have a connection. Maybe his way she would love me."

There never was the promised Cabbage Patch doll for Tatiana Jones, the youngest of two girls sexually assaulted by then-Waterbury Mayor Philip A. Giordano between November 2000 and June 2001.

Tatiana's mother is Guitana Jones, the

former crack-addicted prostitute who forced first her daughter, then 8, and then her niece, 10, to perform oral sex on Giordano.

Guitana showed them how.

Tatiana Jones is now 30 and lives in North Carolina with her child she is raising alone. She runs her own cleaning business and lives in a comfortable, four-bedroom home in a gated community. She is the biological daughter of the then-32-year-old prostitute and drug addict who renounced her parental rights to her daughter the moment Tatiana was born in July 1992 at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Tatiana Jones reached out to The Sunday Republican with a personal mission: To no longer be a victim, adamant of the importance of telling her story.

"I've reached my breaking point," said Jones, who explained that she has experienced nightmares since her daughter turned 8, the age Tatiana was when the assaults occurred. "I think my pot is at the boiling point now. This is mentally breaking me down to the point where I can't get up in the morning to do regular stuff with my daughter because I'm so depressed.

"I have to tell my story."

# 'The feeling of fault is so deep.'

## SURVIVORS SPEAK OUT TO TAKE CONTROL, THERAPISTS SAY



PHOTO BY CHUCK BURTON

Tatiana Jones sits near drawings by her daughter that cover a wall in their home in North Carolina.

BY TRACEY O'SHAUGHNESSY  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

**W**hen Tatiana Jones, daughter of the prostitute involved in the then-Mayor Philip A. Giordano child sex assault case, reached out to The Sunday Republican to publicly talk about what she endured, she was pursuing a drive many abused as children experience: A desire to take control of her own story.

Mental health experts who counsel those abused as children say that the desire to divulge what happened to them allows survivors to take control over a situation where they were powerless.

"In the core of trauma is an overwhelming sense of isolation," said Dr. Hadar Lubin, co-director of the Post Traumatic Stress Center in New Haven. Lubin said the feeling of isolation comes from "the experience of having no voice, no rights, no choice as the perpetrator exerts power over the victim."

Telling their story, either to close friends or publicly, she said, comes from their "urge to heal, their wish to control their narrative, and their desire to seek justice," she said.

Patrick Atkinson, the Minnesota-based founder and chief executive officer of the Institute for Trafficked, Exploited & Missing, says a sexual assault on a child robs them of the fundamental need to have control over one's body — and therefore one's destiny. "If we are not in charge of our body, we cannot meet our own needs, which is one reason why rape is such a searing of the soul," he said. "That core feeling that we have to have, that I'm in charge of my own body, is gone. That very fundamental core, survival instinct, is shattered."

Atkinson, who has no connection to the Giordano case, said he understood why the now 50-year-old Tatiana Jones wants to share her story of the sexual assault by Waterbury's then-mayor when she was 8. "She is setting the narrative. She is taking back the power that she lost."

Nearly one in 10 children nationally will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday, according to the Connecticut Children's Alliance. The median age for reported abuse is 9. The state Department of Education reports that one in five girls and one in 14 boys has been a victim of sexual abuse in the state. One in every seven of those

### SCOPE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Nationally**, one in 9 girls and 1 in 53 boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault at the hands of an adult.

**82% of all victims** under 18 are female.

**Females ages 16-19** are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.

Children who have suffered sexual assault are:

**About four times more** likely to develop symptoms of drug abuse.

**About four times more** likely to experience PTSD as adults.

**About three times more** likely to experience a major depressive episode as adults.

Source: RAIN: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

### CALL FOR HELP

#### Connecticut Sexual Assault Hotline:

You can be immediately connected with services in your area by calling the sexual assault hotline. The statewide 24-hour hotline is 1-888-999-5545 in English, 1-888-568-8332 in Spanish. All sexual assault advocacy services are free and confidential. Go to [endsexualviolence.org](http://endsexualviolence.org).

**Locally:** For information about Jane Doe No More's Survivor's Speak program, visit [janedoenomore.org/programs/survivors-speak](http://janedoenomore.org/programs/survivors-speak)

were under the age of 6, the education department reports. In 90% of the cases, the perpetrators are known to the children.

"The hardest step is understanding that they weren't at fault for what happened," said Patricia Ieraci, a licensed professional counselor who practices in Woodbury. "The feeling of fault is so deep. Even if they can come to a point where they say, 'I can understand that this happened to me,' the issue of fault is a problem. If something bad in their life happens, then they blame it on themselves."

Only 38% of child victims disclose the fact that they have been sexually abused,

according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN). Of those, 40% tell a close friend rather than an adult or authority, which does not always result in a formal report. Other sources, including the U.S. Department of Justice, report that 86% of child sexual abuse is unreported.

Shame, fear and a profound sense that they or their family members might be hurt if the child divulges the abuse lies behind many victims' reluctance to disclose what has happened to them, said Ieraci, who, along with her twin sister, was abused by her father's best friend from the time she was 8 until age 10.

"He would say if 'we told anybody no one would believe us and he would kill our family,'" said Ieraci. "He seemed so in control of things. I was too afraid that my dad would lose his best friend, that it would tear apart my family."

Donna Palomba, founder of Jane Doe No More, which works to empower victims of sexual assault, said families often refuse to believe victims, often causing family rifts.

"I can't tell you how many families have been separated because the family members are not willing to acknowledge or support this victim because it's an embarrassment," she said. "Victims on our team have been told 'You're selfish,' they've been told they're lying. The hurt goes on and on. It's being revictimized. (Families) feel this is an embarrassment, it's an ugly topic, it's an ugly thing and it will perhaps cast the family in ugly light."

Although the National Association of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse reports there are more than more than 42 million survivors of sexual abuse in America, those numbers are likely higher because of the reticence many survivors have of disclosing the abuse, mental health experts say.

Talking about the trauma, said Palomba, helps survivors gain control of an assault. Her nonprofit organization, Jane Doe No More, runs a Survivor's Speak program, a one-day workshop in which those who have been assaulted explore and document their stories with other survivors and learn how to speak publicly about their assault.

"Often, they want to hear other survivors share their story," said Palomba, a Waterbury native who was raped in her home in 1993. "It's so incredibly validating. While you hear these stories all the time, when you are actually in a room with other people, you suddenly realize that you are not alone, you realize that it's not your fault, you realize that there is a path forward."

**I**t was her duty as a mother, Tatiana Jones said, that led her to speak for the first time about a child sexual assault that riveted a city horrified by testimony that grade-school girls had been assaulted by Waterbury's mayor in his city-supplied car, his law office, City Hall and the home he shared with his wife and three sons.

Tatiana Jones, now 30, was one of two girls assaulted by Philip Giordano from fall to winter in 2000 and 2001.

"I need to let people know I am not a victim," Jones said.

The psychological effects of the abuse had intensified last year, when her daughter turned 8, the same age Tatiana was when the abuse began. "It is something I deal with every day," she said, "physically, emotionally, spiritually, psychologically."

Federal investigators discovered then-Mayor Giordano's sex crimes when they started digging for evidence of municipal corruption.

Jones, in interviews with The Sunday Republican, spoke of the first assault against her and of regret that gnaws at her for not being "mean enough" to say no to her mother, and for acquiescing to her request that she ask her cousin to become involved in the abuse.

She no longer speaks to her cousin.

Nor does she speak to family members about the assaults and abuse. It is a subject they avoid, she said. When a reporter phoned Jones' aunt with a number supplied by Jones, the person who answered hung up and later texted that the newspaper had the wrong number.

Jones said she wants to confront all of it in an almost full-frontal psychic assault — scrutinizing her records, watching the trial, reviewing her case. "I need to get some stuff together with myself and I feel like this is the start of it. I need to tell my truth."

She is seeking access to court records regarding the assaults that were a part of her grammar school life two to three times a week for nearly eight months; the subsequent federal court trial in which she testified over closed-circuit television; and the Department of Children and Family records that include details of the night welfare officials removed her from her home, telling her she was going on a vacation.

Jones wants all of this and more. She wants to sit across from Giordano face-to-face and have the former mayor and Republican U.S. Senate candidate tell her that he did not assault her. She does not believe he can do it.

"I want to go see him," Jones said. "I want him to tell me to my face he didn't do that to me. I tell you he cannot do it. He's not going to lie to my face. He's not going to do that. If I see that man, he probably would put his head down. He has no remorse. He cannot tell me he didn't do that."

Giordano, now 59, is serving part of his 37-year prison sentence in federal prison in Yazoo City, Miss. and is scheduled to be released in 2033. He pleaded not guilty to the charges and has filed multiple appeals, actions that Jones said have exasperated her and made her desire to hear Giordano address the abuse to her face more acute.

"I want to hear him say it because it's held me back from so much — so much," Jones said. "I want to hear him say it because he's still lying about it. I just want him to tell the truth. 'Every other year you are trying to get out of jail early because of this. You don't deserve to. You're still lying.'"

Giordano's attorney, Sebastian DeSantis of New Haven, said the former mayor's "position regarding the accusations has not changed."

**'I want to be loud'**

"I don't want to be quiet any more. Now I feel like, 'You don't have this power anymore,'" Jones said, referring to Giordano. "This is a battle he won't win. I'm not silent any more. I'm speaking and I want to be loud."

Giordano last appealed for early release in August 2022. He has long denied he sexually abused the girls and testified that both were in an adjacent room when he had sex with Tatiana's mother, Guitana Jones. In the 2003 federal court case, Giordano testified he had the girls present only for "mental stimulation." In that same trial, Tatiana Jones testified that she believed that a mayor's role was to "protect the city" and "watch over us, like God." According to court transcripts, young Jones also testified she "was afraid he could have someone hurt my family and I was afraid he own everybody."

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# 'I have to tell my story'

BY TRACEY O'SHAUGHNESSY

## TATIANA JONES: I AM NOT A VICTIM



PHOTO BY CHUCK BURTON

Tatiana Jones looks out from the patio of her home in North Carolina. Jones said she wishes former Waterbury Mayor Philip Giordano, the man who sexually assaulted her when she was a child, would stop the appeals process.

**THE CASE OF PHILIP A. GIORDANO**

Once a rising political star, the former Waterbury mayor sits in prison for his crimes. Thirteen years later, his victims have seen less than 1% of the damage funds awarded to them, **PAGE 2B**.

**A TIME TO HEAL**

Tatiana Jones says she wrestles daily with the emotional, physical and spiritual effects of the abuse, **PAGE 3B**.

**ON THE WEB**

Hear Tatiana Jones, in her own words at REP-AM.COM.





# STORY: Life before abuse was full of love

Continued from 1B

Her cousin, then 10, testified that she was frightened that if she told someone what the mayor was doing to her, "I thought he would hurt my family and me and my cousin. I was afraid. I was afraid he owned everybody."

In denying Giordano's latest appeal, U.S. District Judge Stefan Underhill noted that Giordano "has never accepted full responsibility" for his actions.

Jones said she wished he would stop the appeals. "I just want to shut him up publicly," Jones said. "Just do your last years in silence. Just shut up. You're lucky this is all you got. He has no remorse.

Like, 'You are not even human. Why should anybody let you walk free for what you've done? You haven't even shown that you've changed.'"

Jones' younger brother, Jaylen, also Guitana Jones' biological son, confirmed details of his sister's story. He said he only learned of the sex assaults as a 13-year-old when he asked his adopted mother how he and his sister had come to be adopted by her and live in West Haven.

The siblings were adopted by Mary Harrington when they were in their early teens. Jaylen Jones said Harrington provided him with transcripts of the federal court case involving his sister, mother and Giordano, which he read.

"I just felt, like, sorry for my sister," he said. "I felt really sorry for her and all her behaviors all made sense. My sister is the type of person where she don't need nobody, she feels like she got it. For me, looking as a younger brother, I always came to my older sister for answers. I didn't think it was possible for anything like that to happen to her."

The two have not discussed the abuse. "If we did, I probably erased it out my mind so I didn't have to deal with it," Jaylen Jones said. "All we talked about was 'How could our mother do this to us?' It's crazy that she would do this to her own kids. She put us through all this stuff." He said he has no contact with his biological mother.

"I feel like she's not my mom at all," he said. "My mom has really not done nothing for me but cause drama and chaos in my life, and I try to stay away from that."

Tatiana Jones gave The Sunday Republican the only two phone numbers she has for Guitana Jones. She could not be reached.

Her daughter does not expect an apology from her mother, who apologized in court testimony but never to her daughter. "I think the truth is not in her," Jones said.

"I just want an explanation. I have always felt like since I was born, she didn't want me. I want to clear it up. I am not coming out to tell my story so anybody will feel sorry for me. I've been through that stage in my life."

## 'I never saw behavior like that'

Jones said she is pursuing \$8 million in damages from Giordano that Stefan R. Underhill awarded the child victims in 2009. She said she has not received more than \$6,000.

The abuse started in the fall of 2000, Jones said, when she was living with the aunt who raised her and repeating second grade. She had long harbored a feeling that her biological mother did not want her, in part because she resented that Jones called her custodial aunt "mom."

"I felt like she had resentment for me because I didn't like calling her 'mom.' I called her 'Gigi,'" Jones said. "She didn't like that. She would pop me and tell me, 'She's not your mom.'"

Jones saw Guitana Jones sporadically at her maternal grandmother's house, where Guitana often stayed. It was while there that Guitana Jones first proposed the two visit the mayor to collect money she said he owed her. "In the beginning I would stay out there with the (law office) secretary," Tatiana Jones said. "One day my mom had me go into the back office with him and she told me what she wanted me to do and I was so shocked and confused. She wanted me to touch him in his private parts. I remember crying.

I didn't understand."

She said the first time she was forced to perform oral sex, she was so "horrified" she did not even remember where her mind went. "I remember thinking to myself, 'Nope, she's not my mom,'" she said. "She can't be. The mom that I've seen in movies and how my aunt treated me, I never saw behavior like that."

Younger brother Jaylen Jones said he was present in a nearby office during several of the sexual assaults that took place in Giordano's office. "It upsets me because when I was a child, my mom used to take me, too, for a disguise," to Waterbury City Hall. "We would sit in the mayor's office while they (went) in the room. They would give me, like, a whole tray of candy. I'm only 5 years old. I just remember the whole tray of candy." He said the mayor supplied the candy.

Jones describes a preassault life that had been almost idyllic, suffused with an "unconditional love" from her maternal aunt, who immediately took her into her Waterbury home after Guitana Jones renounced her maternal rights.

Jones said she realizes her revelations in the local newspaper will hurt her aunt, who began to sense that the unthinkable violation might have been taking place only days before DCF personnel swept into her home and removed the children into DCF care.

She and her aunt have not discussed the assaults. "I don't like to talk about it with her," Tatiana Jones said. "She is such an emotional person, I feel like she can feel my pain. I don't need that. I don't like to see her hurt. And I know that really hurt because she thought she was doing the right thing by letting my own biological mom spend time with me. In a way she feels that she should have never let me have contact with my mother. There's nothing to be forgiven. I have no reason to forgive her because she didn't know anything."

Everything that Tatiana Jones feared — that disclosure of the assault would rend her family and sunder it into scattered bits, that her aunt would suffer — happened within the hours DCF placed her in the care of the first of two foster homes. A spokesman said DCF took her in the middle of the night due in part to safety concerns.

## 'I was completely stunned'

When Tatiana Jones' daughter turned 8, her own nightmares and panic attacks began again. She resolved to confront her past, researching case details on the internet. It was during this research that she said she learned that Giordano pleaded not guilty to the charges.

"Nobody ever told me that he pleaded not guilty," she said. "I can't believe that. I was completely stunned when I read that. The mayor would bribe me with money. He would always tell me that he would buy me stuff. It's just like 'you took advantage of a child and you would bribe a child and I never got anything, no toys, nothing.' I remember he promised me that pink jacket he had in his office. I never received anything. My mother kept everything."

As a child at Bucks Hill Elementary School, Jones repeated second grade twice because of difficulty reading. Reading is now her escape, she said, adding that she spends most of her free time in the library where she indulges her love of fantasy, including Harry Potter.

"It's the magic," she said. "If I got ahold of some magic right now, I would change this world around. I would be the one to cure world peace."

As she amasses documents that detail her case, Jones said she will return to the city she has avoided for a decade.

"I do plan on making a visit to Waterbury soon," she said. "I have to show my face. I want to let everybody know, I'm not scared any more. I want to go by his law office. I need to pass by it. Something inside me is telling me I need to, I need to go back. I don't ever think I will get closure but I do need peace of mind."



# 'I just want to shut him up publicly'

## THE CASE OF PHILIP A. GIORDANO

BY BRUNO MATARAZZO JR.  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

**H**ow does one calculate civil damages related to more than 100 instances of sexual abuse by one of the most powerful men in the city?

It was a responsibility carried out in 2009 by a federal judge tasked with determining a figure for the "extreme emotional distress, pain and suffering" ... as well as future medical costs, loss of earning capacity and the loss of innocence and loss of youth.

Judge Stefan Underhill came up with \$8 million each for the two juvenile girls who were sexually abused by then-mayor Philip Giordano 128 times over a period of eight months in 2000 and 2001.

Thirteen years later, the two victims, including Tatiana Jones, have seen less than 1% in damages while the disgraced former Waterbury mayor remains locked behind bars in a federal prison until 2033.

It's unlikely the victims will ever see the total awarded.

The lawsuit originally sued the City of Waterbury as well, but the judge denied the plaintiffs' request after ruling the city was not liable, meaning the judgment ordered in October 2009 would solely focus on Giordano.

Erskine McIntosh, the attorney who represented Jones in the lawsuit, said the difficulty in collecting additional money for Jones is that Giordano is in prison. "It's a lot easier to follow that person around. You find out where they were and then you can slap a lien ... or set up some arrangement whereby the person has to pay off the judgment over time. This has not been the case with Mr. Giordano, unfortunately," McIntosh said.

If Giordano inherits a large sum of money or signs a book deal, McIntosh said they would go to court to get a certain percentage of whatever they get.

The picture will change for McIntosh once Giordano is released and Giordano, a former lawyer, has made numerous at-



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION VIA AP

This undated inmate identification photo released Jan. 5, 2017, by the state Department of Correction shows former Waterbury Mayor Philip Giordano. Giordano is serving a 37-year sentence for child sexual abuse.

tempts to get out of his 37-year sentence early. In 2015, Giordano lost a bid to have his sentence set aside based on an argument that his lawyer during the trial did not convey a plea deal to him.

Giordano recently filed an appeal with the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York

after a judge denied his request for early release.

He made an effort to reduce his sentence, citing concerns about COVID-19. The former mayor is behind bars at Yazoo City Medium Federal Correctional Institution in Mississippi. He has been in custody since July 26, 2001.



REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN ARCHIVES

Before his crimes were revealed, Philip Giordano was an up-and-coming Republican candidate, vying for the U.S. Senate. Here he is accompanied by his wife, Dawn Giordano.



PHOTO BY CHUCK BURTON

Tatiana Jones pauses as she talks in her home. Despite her abuse, Jones says she cannot be a hateful person.

## ‘I look forward to Sunday’

### AFTER THE ABUSE, JONES IS MOVING ON

BY TRACEY O'SHAUGHNESSY  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Tatiana Jones grew far from her troubled childhood, when she was sexually assaulted by the then-mayor of Waterbury.

Raised Jehovah's Witness, Jones subsequently became a Baptist. She has avoided any sort of counseling, although she says she daily reads a note she has written to herself that she must begin therapy soon.

"I look forward to Sunday," Jones said. "It's almost like it's my therapy now. I can cry, cry ugly and nobody will judge me. I look at it as almost like therapeutic."

After the Department of Children and Families removed her from her aunt's Waterbury home in July 2001, Jones stayed with a foster mother and her brother in Plainfield for nearly two years. But the woman directed racist remarks at her, she said, referring to her and her brother as "Oreos."

DCF removed the siblings from that home and placed her in her final foster home in West Haven. Her final foster mother later adopted Tatiana and her brother.

Jones attended Eli Whitney Technical High School for three years but ended up graduating with honors from Wilby High School, where the aunt who raised her could watch her walk across the stage to "Pomp and Circumstance."

She received an associate degree in accounting at Naugatuck Valley Community College and later transferred to the now-shuttered Lincoln College of New England. She said she fled from there after a dorm-mate told her that a basketball player had raped her and then, in the dean's office, insisted that Jones had made the story up.

It triggered a long-held fear in Jones that no one would ever believe her, no matter what she said. "It mentally did something to me. It left me so low. I was so ready to go fight for this girl. I couldn't believe that she completely split her story and then she was looking at me like I had just done something wrong. I felt like, even if I told my story, nobody would listen, like what was the point?" Jones left for North Carolina, which she

now considers home. After working as a manager at a storage facility and then as a bartender, she opened her own cleaning service in 2019. She manages the cleaning service.

She last returned to Waterbury 10 years ago. "It was so horrifying for me," she said. "For the past 20 years, I've been lying. I've been lying about my race. I've been lying about my name. I was just so afraid that somebody would judge me off that. It took me a long time to realize that it's not my fault. I was listening to my mom, like I was listening to someone I was supposed to trust."

Jones said she wrestles daily with the emotional, physical and spiritual effects of the abuse and for the yawning gap in her that has long lingered at the core of her for a mother's love, a goal that has eluded her. "I was so weak minded and I just wanted love from my mom and I didn't say no to her and I wish I did. I wish I didn't long for that mother-daughter connection."

Like many victims of sexual abuse, Jones believes that had she been "a little bit meaner," she might have been able to defend herself from the abuses. "I felt like it was my 'yes' and 'OK' to agree with it that demolished my family," she said. "I feel like if I was more aggressive as a child I feel like it might not have turned out that way."

As she manages her day raising her daughter and tending to her business, she said she considers herself a "loving" person who has had to fight periods where she felt hatred, fury and bitterness.

"I have learned to be positive because I felt hatred for so long, I felt that the world owed me something."

About three years ago, when her then-5-year-old was in the car, the daughter mimicked an invective her mother leveled against another driver who had cut her off. Her daughter repeated the curse.

"I realized I cannot be a hatred person. I'm producing a hateful kid. I cannot do that. I refuse to do that. It changed. It was like something changed in me. It was like, 'Girl, tighten up, you got someone who is looking at you.'"



STEVEN WALENTI/REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

The area of 1169 West Main St., the neighborhood where Giordano's law office used to be in Waterbury.



REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN ARCHIVES  
**The former mayor's arrest booking photo.**

**THE ARREST:** On July 26, 2001, federal agents arrested Philip A. Giordano, then mayor of Waterbury, after discovering phone records and pictures that revealed he was sexually abusing the 8-year-old daughter and 9-year-old niece of a prostitute. Giordano was then 40, a married father of three boys. He had served three terms as the mayor of Waterbury and had been a

candidate for U.S. Senate

During the trial, the prostitute testified that Giordano, with whom she had a long-term relationship, told her "he wanted young girls, girls younger than me" and that he often asked her to "bring the little ones." She testified that she was high on most of the occasions and that she was paid \$40 or \$60 two or three times a week to bring the minors to the mayor for sex.

**CONVICTION:** In March 2003, Giordano was convicted of two counts of civil rights violations, one count of conspiracy to use a facility of interstate commerce for the purpose of enticing a person under the age of 16 to engage in sexual activity and 14 counts of using an interstate commerce device — a cellphone — to arrange sex with the minors. He was sentenced to 37 years in federal prison for the crimes. At sentencing Judge Alan H. Nevas said that in 18 years on the federal bench, "this case is the worst I've ever seen." Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter S. Jongbloed, the lead prosecutor in the federal case, noted Giordano's absence of remorse. "The one thing we have not heard in any sense from the defendant is that he's sorry for what he did, that what he did was wrong," Jongbloed said. "Nothing. It's deafening."

The Sunday Republican reached out to Jongbloed for comment, but he did not return phone messages.

During the 2003 federal trial in Bridgeport, both victims testified via closed-circuit television, and although Tatiana Jones remembers the testimony, she said she has not seen or read transcripts from that trial. Among the evidence obtained in the trial were carpet swatches that tested positive for semen that matched Giordano's DNA and 200 pages of cellphone conversations between prostitute Gutiana Jones and

the former mayor.



REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN ARCHIVES  
**The July 27, 2001 cover of the Republican-American, reporting the arrest of Giordano.**

**APPEALS:** Giordano, who pleaded not guilty, has filed several appeals for early release, most recently requesting "compassionate release" for ongoing back problems and COVID-19. Federal Judge Stefan Underhill denied Giordano's request, citing the egregiousness of the offense and the former mayor's failure to express remorse over the underlying crimes. Underhill "vehemently" rejected Giordano's request, writing that Giordano "does not expressly address the conduct at issue in the underlying crimes in his litany of filings" and never accepted responsibility for his conduct. "Although he notes in passing his remorse for causing harm to his minor victims, the bulk of his submissions address the effect of his conviction and incarceration on his own life and his own family," Underhill wrote. "Though I do not discount the impact of a lengthy term of incarceration on Giordano or his loved ones, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, his failure to acknowledge the harm his actions caused does not jibe with his claim that he would pose no danger to the public were his sentence to be reduced to time-served."

Sentenced to 37 years in federal prison, Giordano is scheduled to be released in 2033. He remains incarcerated in federal prison in Yazoo City Medium Federal Correction Institution in Mississippi.

**HIS ACCOMPLICE:** In 2003, Gutiana Jones, Tatiana Jones' biological mother, testified she frightened the girls into cooperating.

Her niece, who was 9 at the time of the assaults, testified that the encounters took place "four to five times a week."

In 2003, after pleading guilty to the charges, Gutiana Jones was sentenced to 10 years in prison for risk of injury to minors and sexual assault conspiracy.

At the sentencing, Nevas said he could not "conceive of anything more horrible that a mother can do to her children."

According to federal judicial records, Jones served her 10 years. She was later rearrested in 2013 for failing to register as a sex offender when she tried to move to Florida. The U.S. attorney's office sentenced Jones, then 42, to a year in prison, time already served and seven years of supervised release for failing to register as a sex offender and violating the conditions of her supervised release. Among those conditions were that she have no unsupervised contact with minors. State judicial records indicate Gutiana Jones has been rearrested for a variety of offenses, including criminal mischief and breach of peace in 2018, third-degree burglary in 2019 and violation of probation in 2021 and 2022. She could not be reached for comment through the phone numbers Tatiana Jones supplied.

**HIS WIFE:** Dawn Giordano remains married to the former Waterbury mayor. She lives in a single-family house on Long Island. In a letter she wrote to Judge Stefan Underhill as part of Giordano's appeal, she wrote that the couple had had a "rocky road," and that she has "learned how to forgive him for his mistakes. He has shown much remorse and is a much humbler person today." She concludes, "The thought of having my family of five back together would make my heart sing with pride. I would love to grow old with Phil back in my life."

— Tracey O'Shaughnessy