



CHRISTIAN COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: August 13, 2021

**RE: JAMES NORMAN HARPER FOUND GUILTY OF CHILD MOLESTATION
SECOND DEGREE**

OZARK, MO – Christian County Prosecuting Attorney Amy Fite announces that on August 11, 2021, James Norman Harper (40), was found guilty of child molestation in the second degree by a Christian County jury. The jury deliberated a little over an hour before returning its verdict finding Harper guilty of child molestation in the second degree.

The evidence presented at trial included that a neighbor of the defendant was babysitting the defendant's five-year-old stepson. The neighbor observed the child sexually acting out and the child disclosed to the neighbor "Daddy does this to me" and "I don't like it." The neighbor later made a hotline call. In response to that hotline call the Division of Children's Services and the Christian County Sheriff's Office responded to investigate. The following day the child was forensically interviewed at the Child Advocacy Center in Springfield, Missouri.

To identify and successfully prosecute when children have been the victims of sexual offenses and/or physical abuse requires citizens to report suspected sexual or physical abuse of a child. Suspected child abuse or neglect can be reported by calling the Missouri Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-3738.

The Honorable Laura Johnson presided over the jury trial that began on August 9, 2021. The defendant having been found to be a predatory sexual offender is subject to a life sentence in the Missouri Department of Corrections. The Honorable Laura Johnson set this matter for a sentencing hearing on October 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

The case is being prosecuted by Christian County Senior Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Shana Mora who was assisted by First Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Kristen Tuohy. The rest of the team assigned to this case included Cathryn Ables, Victim Advocate and Suzanne Frakes, Legal Assistant. The Christian County Sheriff's Office investigated the crime. Sarah Spurlock was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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