



**JOHN H. CRANFORD, JR.**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COWETA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JEP BENDINGER  
CHIEF ADA

ROBERT MOORADIAN  
CHIEF DEPUTY ADA

March 11, 2022

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RE: Sexual Predator Sentenced to 50 Years in Prison for Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children**

On March 10, 2022, Avery Hogan Pendergraph of LaGrange, Georgia, pleaded guilty to multiple crimes involving the sexual exploitation of women and children. Pursuant to a negotiated guilty plea, Superior Court Judge Dustin Hightower sentenced Pendergraph to 50 years in prison for his crimes followed by 20 years probation, which include special conditions of probation for sex offenders. Pendergraph pled guilty to two counts of racketeering (“RICO”), five counts of sexual exploitation of children, nine counts of invasion of privacy, one count of criminal trespass, and one count of possession of eavesdropping devices. During the lengthy guilty plea proceeding, six of his victims appeared before the court and delivered impactful and emotional statements detailing years of abuse by Pendergraph.

An 18-month investigation by the LaGrange Police Department, Athens-Clarke County Police Department, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation revealed that Pendergraph’s crimes began as early as 2012 when he videotaped and photographed women he was dating without their knowledge or consent. He then uploaded the videos and photos to adult internet pornography websites in the United States and throughout the world. He created hundreds of email accounts and website accounts in the actual names of his victims, which also identified their occupations and their locations. He created “deep fake” photos using non-nude photos from the social media accounts of friends and acquaintances and nude photos of other women he obtained from the internet. These fake photos were uploaded using the names and identifying information of his victims. He hid video cameras in private and public bathrooms and videotaped men, women, and children using the bathroom, which he edited and uploaded to off-shore file-sharing websites. He acquired and distributed hundreds of child pornography videos and photos featuring the molestation of infants, toddlers, and minor children.

Following a thorough review of the evidence proving all of these crimes, Senior Assistant District Attorney David McLaughlin presented an 18-count indictment in August 2021 to the Troup County Grand Jury. The indictment charged Pendergraph under Georgia’s racketeering (“RICO”) statute with state and federal crimes related to the distribution of obscene materials, the distribution of child pornography, and the fraudulent use of the identities of his victims. As alleged in the indictment:

“On and between March 18, 2016, and June 4, 2020, the accused engaged in an elaborate, systematic, and invasive scheme to acquire, maintain, and distribute thousands of obscene materials depicting children, men, and women in violation of State and federal laws. The accused’s scheme was intended to satisfy the prurient interests of himself and others. The accused’s scheme was intended to sadistically exploit, harm, embarrass, and exert the accused’s control and dominion over his victims. The accused’s scheme was intended to exalt himself through voyeuristic control over and sexualized exploitation of women and children.”

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Pendergraph is also currently under indictment in Athens-Clarke County for rape and aggravated sodomy.

District Attorney Cranford believes Pendergraph is a very dangerous sexual predator who should remain incarcerated with no opportunity to harm these victims further or to target new victims. The District Attorney commends the tireless efforts of LaGrange Police Department Detective John Slonaker, Athens-Clarke County Detective Scott Prah, and Georgia Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Haylee Peacock for putting this case together. The District Attorney also commends the tenacious work of Sr. ADA McLaughlin in obtaining this negotiated lengthy prison sentence. But most of all, the District Attorney wishes to praise the resilience and courage of the women who were victimized for so long and who hopefully feel some comfort in knowing this predator has received a measure of the justice he deserves.

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