



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

JEP BENDINGER
CHIEF ADA

ROBERT MOORADIAN
CHIEF DEPUTY ADA

September 30, 2022
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARROLL COUNTY JURY CONVICTS MARK ANTHONY STARNES OF RAPE, AGGRAVATED CHILD MOLESTATION, AND CHILD MOLESTATION

On September 30, 2022, Mark Anthony Starnes, 46, was found guilty of Rape, two counts of Aggravated Child Molestation, and two counts of Child Molestation, by a Carroll County jury. Coweta Judicial Circuit Acting-Superior Court Judge Michael Hubbard presided over the trial, which stretched on for two weeks from September 19 until September 30. Sentencing has been scheduled for November 14, 2022.

Assistant District Attorney Scott O. Teague, of the Coweta Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office, prosecuted the case and Inv. Ametrice Jackson of the Carroll County Sheriff's Office was the lead law enforcement investigator. The prosecution was assisted by Chief Deputy Inv. Rebecca C. Byrd and Victim Advocate Katelynn Culbreath of the District Attorney's Office for the Coweta Judicial Circuit.

The evidence that came out at the two-week trial showed that Starnes raped, orally sodomized, and repeatedly molested the victim, from a young age until she was 12 years old. Starnes was able to abuse the victim during this time period due to his relationship with the victim's mother, which gave Starnes regular access to the victim. That access included staying in the same residence as the victim overnight and babysitting the victim, during which Starnes regularly sexually assaulted the victim. The last time Starnes raped and abused the victim in Carroll County was in 2019 when he came up from his new home in Florida to take her and her mother down to the beach.

The investigation began on April 24, 2020, when the victim disclosed the abuse to a relative, who then told the victim's mother. The victim's mother contacted the Carroll County Sheriff's Office, and Inv. Ametrice Jackson began her investigation, which included speaking with the victim who was 13 years old at the time. The victim was taken to the Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta where a sexual assault examination was performed, which revealed evidence consistent with the sexual abuse the victim recounted. The victim was then taken to the Carroll County Child Advocacy Center where she disclosed more details about the abuse. Starnes was arrested in Florida in July 2020, and extradited to Carroll County where he remained in jail awaiting trial.

At trial, the victim, who is now 15 years old, endured cross-examination for more than a day in an attempt by the defense to discredit her testimony. However, the young victim persevered through the attacks against her to tell the truth about what she endured. We're thankful the jury saw the truth in this case and spoke the truth through their verdict by finding Starnes guilty of all counts.

JOHN HERBERT CRANFORD, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COWETA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Carroll County Courthouse
PO Box 338
Carrollton, GA 30112
Phone: (770) 830-2171
Fax: (770) 830-2170

Coweta Co. Justice Center
PO Box 1918
Newnan, GA 30264
Phone: (770) 254-7300
Fax: (770) 254-7305

Heard County Courthouse
PO Box 730
Franklin, GA 30217
Phone: (706) 675-0955
Fax: (706) 675-0958

Meriwether County Courthouse
PO Box 520
Greenville, GA 30222
Phone: (706) 672-1302
Fax: (706) 672-1801

Troup Co. Government Center
100 Ridley Ave. - Suite 3500
LaGrange, GA 30240
Phone: (706) 298-3708
Fax: (706) 298-3709