

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canton man Admits to Raping a Child and Is Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison, Followed by Life on Probation
State vs. Jeremy Lenard Varner

April 30, 2024 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that Jeremy Lenard Varner, 43, of Canton, pled guilty on April 17 to three counts of rape. Superior Court Judge Ellen McElyea sentenced Varner as negotiated, to 25 years to serve in prison without the possibility of parole, followed by life on probation subject to sex offender special conditions.

Charges stem from a Cherokee Sheriff's Office investigation that began on November 8, 2018, when a child disclosed to a relative that Varner had raped her multiple times. After an investigation that included a forensic interview conducted by the Anna Crawford Children's Center, Varner was arrested and charged.

"This defendant was known to the child and her family, and he used this access to engage in sexual acts with an innocent little girl, raping her in her own bedroom," said Assistant District Attorney Alana J. Driscoll, of the Special Victims Unit, who prosecuted this case on behalf of the State. "When this brave girl finally had the courage to tell her family what had occurred, they immediately called law enforcement."

At the plea hearing, Varner admitted to raping the child and was sentenced as negotiated.

"This young victim has been incredibly strong throughout this process, but emotional scars can take a lifetime to heal. Through this negotiated plea, justice was served and the victim was spared from reliving this trauma in front of a jury," said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. "The victim and her family can now move forward with their lives knowing that this sex offender will spend the next 25 years in prison."

This case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff's Office. Prosecution was handled by Assistant District Attorney Alana J. Driscoll, of the Special Victims Unit. The Anna Crawford Children's Center conducted the forensic interviews.

Sexual Abuse of Children

Child abusers often engage in a grooming process that allows them to perpetrate sexual abuse undetected. "Grooming" in the context of child sexual abuse is a manipulative process intended to secure the child's silence. Common characteristics of the grooming process include targeting the child, gaining the child and caregiver's trust, filling a need, using flattery and gifts, isolating the child, sexualizing the relationship, and maintaining control.

Children who have been groomed are often conflicted about their feelings for the abuser because he/she has methodically established a positive relationship with the child prior to introducing sexual touches. Children who have been groomed are also more likely to conceal the abuse and delay disclosing the abuse to others.

To report suspected child abuse, call Child Protective Services at 855-422-4453. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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