

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SUSAN K. TREADAWAY
Acting District Attorney

Cherokee County Justice Center
90 North Street, Suite 390
Canton, GA 30114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cyndi Crossland
Public Information Officer
cbcrossland@cherokeega.com
770-479-1488

**Guilty verdict for Woodstock man who attempted to meet a “child” for sex;
child was actually an undercover law enforcement officer
State vs. Marvin Civil**

March 22, 2023 – Acting District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that on February 1, 2023, a Cherokee County jury found Marvin Civil, 38, of Woodstock, guilty of criminal attempt to commit a felony (child molestation) and computer pornography.

After the jury verdict, Chief Superior Court Judge Ellen McElyea sentenced Civil on February 5, 2023, to 15 years with the first 5 years to serve in prison and the remaining 10 years to serve on probation. He will also be subject to sex offender conditions of supervision, including no contact with minors under the age of 18.

The charges stem from a May 2020 investigation, during which Civil used a website to connect with a person who told him she was a 14-year-old girl. He communicated with this individual via texting and provided explicit descriptions of the sex acts he wanted to engage in with the person he believed to be 14 years old.

The girl was actually a fictitious child created by an undercover Cherokee Sheriff’s Office deputy from the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force. Undercover agents on this task force receive training and education about current trends in child exploitation and offender behavior, which aids them in creating decoy profiles online that mimic the circumstances under which real children have been exploited. This strategy enables officers to detect individuals seeking to exploit children before they are able to harm a real child.

On May 20, 2020, Civil invited the fictitious child to meet him in person at the RaceTrac on Sixes Road in Woodstock for the purpose of sexual intercourse in exchange for cash. At the meeting time, he asked her to text a nude photo from the gas station restroom to prove she was there. In another text, he told her he was waiting at the Home Depot instead and sent her a photograph of his location. While he continued texting the fictitious child, Cherokee Sheriff’s Office located him at the Home Depot on Highway 92 in Woodstock.

After his arrest, Civil told police he was only working to help them catch a child predator when he engaged in the explicit messaging and that he did not personally have any interest in meeting up with a minor.

“This defendant told a fantastical story in an attempt to explain away his criminal conduct in this case,” said Assistant District Attorney Leyna Pope, of the Special Victims Unit. “The jury followed the evidence and found that the defendant’s intentions were to engage in sexual acts with a child that day.”

During the two-day trial, the jury listened to the testimony of four witnesses and viewed exhibits including the text communications between the defendant and the fictitious child. The jury found the defendant guilty of all charges.

“Undercover agents handling these types of investigations serve a critical function in keeping our children safe. Thankfully, no actual child was harmed by the defendant’s actions in this case, and the court’s sentence has removed him from the streets of Cherokee County to prevent the sexual exploitation of children in our community,” said Acting District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “This case serves as a reminder to be vigilant with monitoring online content and relationships that our children form on the internet.”

This case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff’s Office. Prosecution was handled by Assistant District Attorney Leyna Pope, of the Special Victims Unit.

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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