

**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Woodstock man admits to aggravated child molestation and rape, sentenced to 25 years in prison without parole**  
**State vs. John Allen Bennett**

**March 30, 2023** – Acting District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that, on March 13, 2023, John Allen Bennett, 38, of Woodstock, pled guilty to multiple charges of sexual abuse of children. Superior Court Judge Tony Baker sentenced Bennett 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, which determined that Bennett had molested two children who shared his home as well as a third child who had visited the residence. The mother of two of the children made the initial allegations on March 26, 2022, after finding Bennett in a bedroom with her child.

When Bennett learned that law enforcement had been contacted, he fled from Woodstock to avoid arrest. The following day, March 27, 2022, he was apprehended in Mississippi. Following his arrest, he attempted suicide, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

During the investigation, the children participated in forensic interviews conducted by the Anna Crawford Children's Center. The children, who were between the ages of 11 and 13 at the time, described multiple acts of aggravated child molestation, rape, and child molestation. One victim said that Bennett would engage in bribery, offering money or gifts in exchange for sex acts.

"This defendant weaseled into the lives of innocent children, then violated them in unspeakable ways, manipulating and betraying them," said Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Rachel Hines, of the Special Victims Unit, who prosecuted this case on behalf of the State. "Then, when he was caught in the act, he ran away, like a coward, afraid to accept responsibility for his actions."

At the plea hearing, Bennett admitted to all charges, including aggravated child molestation, statutory rape, child molestation (5 counts), criminal attempt to commit aggravated child molestation, and failure to register as a sex offender.

"We are thankful for the investigation done by the Cherokee Sheriff's Office which led to the arrest and successful prosecution of this dangerous sexual predator," said Acting District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. "Through this plea, justice is served without subjecting these children to reliving horrendous acts in a trial. And, today, our community is safer with this defendant behind bars."

This case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff's Office. Prosecution was handled by Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Rachel Hines, 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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