



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ozark Man Found Guilty of Statutory Rape in the First Degree

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that James W. Rankin, 44, of Ozark, MO was convicted yesterday, 01/13/2021, by a Greene County judge of statutory rape in the first degree. Rankin was also found to be a predatory sexual offender for acts that would constitute the offense of statutory sodomy in Christian County, Missouri.

The defendant began sexually abusing his girlfriend's daughter when she was twelve years old while they lived in Christian County, Missouri. On a Saturday when she was 13 years old, the defendant took the victim to his place of employment in Springfield and raped her. The defendant was a father figure to the victim and was a trusted adult in the victim's life. The victim did not immediately disclose the abuse because she felt guilt and shame for what was happening to her and feared she would not be believed. In fact, the majority of child sexual abuse incidents are never disclosed. There are many blocks that prevent children from disclosing. These include distrusting institutional actors, fear of not being believed, shame or guilt, the fear of "breaking up" their family, or threats of harm. If you suspect a child needs help, make a report. The Children Division's Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-392-3728.

Following presentation of the evidence in trial, the Honorable Becky Borthwick found Rankin guilty of statutory rape in the first degree contained in the felony information.

The defendant is subject to a sentence of life imprisonment. Judge Borthwick set a sentencing hearing for March 18, 2021 at 1:30PM following a sentencing assessment report by the Department of Probation and Parole.

Subject: Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Press Release, State v.
Rankin, 1831-CR06747

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Elizabeth Kieseletter Fax and was formerly prosecuted by Stephanie Wan. It was investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Detective Christina Flood was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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