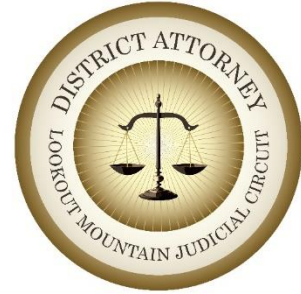


For Immediate Release

Contact: Amy Brown
Abrown@pacga.org
(706) 638-2121



September 12, 2022

State of Georgia v. Zelko 21SUCR535

Catoosa Man admits molesting Female Relative

On August 9, 2022, Jeffery Lee Zelko, 42 years old, plead guilty to incest and child molestation before the Hon Ralph Van Pelt, Jr. Zelko was sentenced to serve fifteen (15) years in prison followed by twenty-five (25) years of sex offender probation. The victim and her family, who were present in the courtroom at the time Zelko was sentenced, supported the plea agreement to prevent the victim from having to publicly testify and relive the trauma she had already endured.

Initially, the victim disclosed to a family friend that Zelko, a relative, had been molesting her and was later interviewed at the Children's Advocacy Center where she made additional disclosures of sexual abuse. The case was investigated by Detective Britany Gilleland of the Catoosa County Sheriff's Department who was able to locate physical evidence which corroborated the victim's disclosures of sexual abuse. The case was prosecuted by Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit Assistant District Attorney David Wolfe who presented the plea to the judge in open court. After Zelko admitted to molesting the victim and was sentenced, the family of the victim thanked the District Attorney's office for giving them the ability to move on from this horrific time in their lives.

District Attorney Arnt thanked the Catoosa County Sheriff's Department and the Children's Advocacy Center for their work on this case. "Mr. Wolfe and Ms. Nicholson, the victim advocate on this case, put a lot of effort into getting the case ready for court. The victim and her family asked us to try and resolve the case without her having to testify and relive her abuse and the trauma that she was put through. We were able to hold this child molester accountable with this plea agreement which removes him from society for the next decade and a half and keeps strict control of him for another quarter century after he is released from prison."

###



 Columbia