

For Immediate Release

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## Tennessee Man Convicted of Child Molestation, Sentenced to 20 Years

**Monday September 28, 2021 – Catoosa County, GA** – A Tennessee man accused of child molestation was given a 20-year sentence with the first 15 years to be served in prison, by Catoosa County Superior Court Judge Don Thompson after a three-day trial ending on September 22, 2021.

Japheth Long, 28, of Soddy Daisey, Tennessee, was charged with child molestation for an incident occurring in October 2019 at the Econo Lodge Hotel in Fort Oglethorpe. Long, who had no prior felony convictions, was staying there with the four-year-old female victim's mother, who was in the bathroom when the crime occurred. Evidence presented at trial suggested Long and the victim's mother had been using methamphetamine in the room. The following day, the child disclosed the abuse to her mother, and again recounted the molestation during a recorded interview at the Children's Advocacy Center.

The case was investigated by Lieutenant Gregg Cross of the Fort Oglethorpe Police Department. Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit (LMJC) Assistant District Attorney (ADA) David Wolfe presented the case over three days. During the course of the trial, in addition to testimony involving the molestation of the four-year-old victim in Fort Oglethorpe, another minor testified that in 2016, Long, who was friends with her older brother, raped her when she was 12 years old, in her California home. The California case against Long is still pending. After a short deliberation, the jury found Long guilty of child molestation.

LMJC District Attorney Chris Arnt commended the effort of ADA Wolfe for his diligent and dedicated work to seek justice for the little girl in this case and to ensure that Long would be held accountable for his actions. Arnt also noted the work of the victim witness team that worked with the young victim and her family throughout the preparation and trial.

"Our office will always prioritize the prosecution of those who harm to our most vulnerable citizens and especially our children," said Arnt. He also thanked the Fort Oglethorpe Police Department and the Children's Advocacy Center for their work on this case.

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