

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SHANNON WALLACE
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

Jury convicts man of aggravated assault and child molestation
State vs. John Richard Hartsfield

February 14, 2020 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that a Cherokee County jury convicted John Richard Hartsfield, 50, of Canton, of aggravated assault, battery-family violence, child molestation, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and hindering an emergency telephone call.

On May 20, 2018, Hartsfield kicked, punched, and strangled his girlfriend, causing multiple bruises and lacerations. During the assault, he smashed her cell phone to prevent her from calling 911.

While the Cherokee Sheriff's Office was investigating this case, a family member disclosed that Hartsfield had also molested a child. Charges included indecent contact with the child as well as providing her with alcohol.

"From the outside, this seemed to be a loving and happy home but, in reality, it was anything but," said Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Holly Varner. "Supposed loved ones of John Hartsfield were tormented by his evil, lustful, and violent tendencies to the point where they feared for their lives."

After deliberating for about two hours on January 30, a Cherokee County jury found Hartsfield guilty of all charges.

On February 5, during Hartsfield's sentencing hearing, the court heard impact statements from the child victim as well as two other family members.

The child described a lifetime of experiences that left her suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She said she is afraid of marriage, friendship, trusting, having children, and even love, adding that Hartsfield's definition of love was "perverted and wrong."

Senior Judge Frank C. Mills III sentenced the defendant to 40 years, with the first 20 years to be served in prison. Upon release, Hartsfield will serve the remainder of his sentence on probation with sex offender special conditions including no contact of any kind with minors under the age of 18. He is also prohibited from contact with the victims or any member of their family.

In delivering his sentence, Judge Mills addressed the child and her family. He praised her intelligence and inner strength and encouraged her to persevere to overcome these traumatic events.

"This terrifying incident left a victimized woman fearing for her life. With the intervention of law enforcement, she received the help she needed to end a cycle of domestic violence," said Cherokee County District Attorney Shannon Wallace. "We are thankful that the same law enforcement involvement also brought an end to the terror

for this child. This sentence protects both victims by removing Hartsfield from their lives, and from society for a lengthy period.”

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.

###