

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Cherokee County jury convicts Canton man of sexual exploitation of children**  
**State vs. Jonathan Ellis**

**February 23, 2022** – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that on December 6, 2021, a Cherokee County jury found Jonathan Ellis, 39, of Canton guilty of sexual exploitation of children. Senior Judge Frank C. Mills, III sentenced Ellis on January 24, 2022, to 20 years, with the first 4 years to be served in prison and the balance on probation under sex offender special conditions. While on probation, Ellis may not have any contact with any minors under the age of 18.

These charges relate to a 2016 Cherokee Sheriff’s Office investigation involving reports of an individual downloading and distributing child pornography via a peer-to-peer network. After conducting a search warrant at Ellis’ home, deputies found evidence that Ellis had downloaded sexually explicit media files of children.

“Innocent children in sexually explicit media are revictimized every single time the images and video are shared by people like Mr. Ellis – a truly heartbreaking fact,” said Assistant District Attorney Meaghan Frankish, who prosecuted the case on behalf of the State. “The evidence in this case clearly showed this defendant has a sexual interest in children and needs to be closely monitored.”

During the trial, the State called two expert witnesses to testify about how the defendant possessed and shared as many as 35 erotic images of children through a peer-to-peer network. One of the witnesses testified about how law enforcement identifies known media or series of media that involve child sexual assault material, then locates the predators who possess and distribute these images and videos. The State also presented an expert witness in the field of digital forensics who testified about extracting the digital evidence found in the defendant’s home, including several external hard drives, a laptop, and a desktop computer.

“This trial involved a tremendous amount of digital data terminology and sensitive matters. The jury carefully sifted through testimony and evidence to convict this defendant,” said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “It is essential that sick individuals like this defendant be prosecuted and sentenced to ensure the protection of our children, in Cherokee County and beyond.”

This case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff’s Office and prosecuted by ADA Meaghan Frankish, Special Victims Unit, Cherokee County District Attorney’s Office.

*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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