



# Muskingum County Prosecutor's Office

Ronald L. Welch  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Child rapist convicted by jury**

At the conclusion of a three-day trial handled by Assistant Prosecutor Gerald Anderson, jurors convicted a Zanesville man on all counts related to the sexual assaults of two girls over the course of five years.

Jurors found 62-year-old Walter Lewis guilty on three counts of rape and six counts of gross sexual imposition.

Throughout the trial, the jury heard from numerous victims, including the medical forensic interviewer who is specially trained to speak with the victims about their assaults, the SANE nurse who medically examines child victims, a Children's Services worker, lead Detective Randy Wilson from the Muskingum County Sheriff's Office, as well as both victims and the defendant.

"The courage of victims that are willing to confront their accusers is a critical part of successfully prosecuting child molesters. Another component is the jurors taking the time to listen to the testimony of the witnesses and understanding the complex issues that exist, such as delayed reporting, lack of physical injury to the victim and the trauma associated with testifying in front of the abuser," Prosecutor Ron Welch said.

The assaults were investigated by law enforcement after a friend of the victims overheard a phone conversation between Lewis and one of the victims in which the girl mentioned being sexually assaulted by the defendant

Both victims spoke with a forensic interviewer and revealed how Lewis assaulted them for years beginning in 2017 for the first victim when she was just 12 years old.

The first victim explained how her relationship with Lewis changed as her mother was dying in the hospital.

Lewis began spending more time with the first victim and would kiss her and touch her on the chest and vaginal area.

The first victim disclosed that Lewis digitally penetrated her and performed oral sex on her starting at the age of 12. He later vaginally raped her and forced her to perform oral sex on him as well.

In 2018, Lewis also began assaulting the first victim's friend when she began staying with her.

The second victim told the forensic interviewer that Lewis touched her chest, rubbed oil on her and rubbed her vaginal area outside her clothing.



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Both victims described instances in which Lewis followed them into the bathroom to touch them while they showered. They also explained how Lewis placed mirrors in the basement to be able to look at the girls in their bedroom and bathroom through the vents.

When law enforcement executed a search warrant at the home where the girls were assaulted, they found loose ductwork and the specific mirror in the basement that the girls described to the forensic interviewer.

When interviewed, the victims also shared that Lewis had a habit of stalking women, even following one home from Walmart.

Detectives found binoculars that Lewis admitted to using so he could watch a woman in her workplace.

Throughout the investigation leading up to the defendant's arrest, Lewis sent packages to the first victim, including the defendant's bed sheet, underwear and sliced up t-shirt, as well as a box of razor blades and knife that Lewis used to cut the victim in an attempt to torment and manipulate the victim.

"It's always difficult for victims to testify in front of strangers and especially their abusers, but in this case, the defendant continued to use the relationship that he developed with his victim over the years in an attempt to exert dominion and manipulate up to and even in the courtroom during the victim's testimony," Assistant Prosecutor Gerald Anderson said.

During trial, the defendant wore his half of a matching outfit he shared with the first victim and even winked at her while she testified.

"He's been playing a manipulation game with her her whole life," Mr. Anderson said.

Those games will come to an end when Lewis goes to prison.

Lewis faces a minimum sentence of 25 years to life in prison for his charge of rape by force with a victim under the age of 13, plus an additional 41-and-a-half years for the additional counts of rape and gross sexual imposition.

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