



Muskingum County Prosecutor's Office

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Dresden man convicted of molesting young child

A Dresden man who groomed and molested a young child he was trusted with caring for faces prison after jurors convicted him of a sex crime last week.

Jurors found 60-year-old Michael Larr guilty of two third-degree felony counts of gross sexual imposition at the conclusion of a two-day trial prosecuted by Muskingum County Assistant Prosecutor Gerald Anderson. Gross sexual imposition (GSI) can be committed in several different ways. In this case, the crime involved a grown man abusing a child by rubbing his fingers over her clothed vagina.

Throughout the trial, Mr. Anderson called seven witnesses, including family members of the victim, law enforcement, a forensic interviewer and the medical expert involved in her examination. The victim herself is under the age of 5 and did not testify.

"Anytime a sexual assault victim is a young child that is unable or unwilling to testify in court, the case becomes significantly more difficult," Mr. Anderson explained. "In this case, the mother immediately took her daughter to the hospital when her daughter disclosed, and then scheduled a forensic interview for the very next morning."

These actions allow children the best chance at receiving medical and mental health services while further increasing the chance of a successful prosecution.

Jurors heard from the professionals at the Child Advocacy Center that treated the victim. They also watched a recording that allowed them to see and hear the victim as she described how the defendant tickled her vagina.

As soon as the child reported the abuse, the victim's mother and father immediately took appropriate actions to have the girl examined and interviewed by experts in the field of sexual abuse.

When Larr was informed that he could no longer see the child due to a pending investigation, he threatened to divorce his wife if it meant he could spend time with the victim again.

"Sexual predators prey on young children because they are more trusting, easier to groom, and fail to recognize sexual abuse as something wrong," Mr. Anderson said. "This child was protected from her abuser because the family acted promptly and appropriately, and the jurors did a great job of listening and evaluating the evidence presented."

After the trial, when asked if they had concerns that the victim did not testify, the jurors said they understood the victim was young and it would be a traumatic experience for her.

"The more people become educated on issues of sexual assault, the better it will be for our community," Muskingum County Prosecutor Ron Welch said. "The outcome of this case is a credit to the jurors in understanding what sexual assault is and the challenges of prosecuting these crimes."

At sentencing, Larr faces up to a maximum sentence of five years in prison on each count for a total of 10 years. He must also register as a sex offender.