

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SUSAN K. TREADAWAY
District Attorney

Cherokee County Justice Center
90 North Street, Suite 390
Canton, GA 30114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jury Convicts Canton Man of Physically Abusing a Child with Special Needs
State vs. Tyler James Sponge

August 16, 2024 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that on Thursday, August 15, a Cherokee County jury convicted Canton resident Tyler James Sponge, 38, of cruelty to children in the first degree, aggravated battery, and battery.

The guilty verdict was announced following a three-day trial in Superior Court Judge Tony Baker's courtroom. The jury deliberated for less than an hour before finding the defendant guilty on all counts.

Charges stem from an incident that occurred on February 10, 2021. On that date, a nurse at Kennestone Hospital reported possible child abuse involving a three-year-old child. Medical staff stated that the child had a buckle fracture of her right femur, two bite marks on her shoulder, a bite mark on her ankle, petechiae under her left arm, and bruising on her arms, legs, and right eye.

Canton Police officers determined that the child had been left alone with the defendant while the mother was at work. The mother sought medical assistance when she realized the child was injured. Since the child is nonverbal and deaf, she was unable to tell law enforcement who caused her injuries. For this reason, investigators used forensics to determine that male DNA was present in the saliva on the bite marks left by the defendant on her body.

During the trial, the State presented evidence that Sponge previously harmed the child over the course of two years and committed child abuse on a different child more than 10 years ago. Ten witnesses testified including law enforcement officers, medical professionals, a forensic biologist, DFCS personnel, and an expert in pediatrics and child abuse. A total of 29 exhibits were also presented.

The case was investigated by the Canton Police Department and prosecuted by Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Rachel Hines, of the Special Victims Unit, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

###

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.

CONTACT:
Cyndi Crossland, Public Information Officer
cbcrossland@cherokeega.com
770-479-1488