

Ex-Cop Convicted Of Sex Assault Of Girl, Age 6

by Sanford Schmidt

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EDWARDSVILLE - A St. Louis area man could get up to 120 years in prison after a judge Wednesday convicted him of twice sexually assaulting a 6-year-old Alton girl in Rock Spring Park in Alton.

Keith L. Hare, 52, was accused of two counts of sexual contact with the child after he set up a meeting with Rashanda Barnes, 26, of Alton.

Circuit Judge Kyle Napp said she relied heavily on the words of the victim and a friend of hers, also a girl, 6 at the time.

Attorneys in the case said the meeting was set up by Barnes, who met and communicated with Hare through an Internet dating site. They said Barnes and Hare previously discussed a sexual “threesome” with the child.

The assaults were on Nov. 15, 2109, after Hare drove to Alton and picked up Barnes, the victim, and two other children at Barnes’ homes. They told the girls they were going out for pizza, but, instead, Hare drove to the park where he assaulted her.

He then took the victim, now 8, to his car and again committed the same crime. The victim told a forensic interviewer that Hare stopped when his car alarm went off, but he continued after the alarm stopped. “He went on and on,” the child told the interviewer at the Madison County Child Advocacy Center.

The other girls were told to go play on the playground, but one child returned to the benches where one of the crimes was taking place.

In court Tuesday the friend described in detail what she saw Hare doing. She said Barnes was doing the same thing, but Barnes pleaded guilty to a charge of indecent solicitation of a child in exchange for the state dropping a charge of predatory criminal sexual assault and the promise to testify truthfully.

The friend went home and told her mother what happened, and the mother notified the police.

The judge said she discounted the’ testimony of Barnes and two others who testified about previous sex crimes Hare allegedly committed. Barnes testified she was forced by Hare to touch the victim’s private parts, but both attorneys said she was an active participant.

The state was represented by Assistant State’s Attorneys Jake Harlow and Cara Tegel. Hare was represented by Donna Polinske, a special defender.

Napp noted that the victim’s account at the CAC matched that of her friend who saw and testified about the crime at the park bench.

Hare was formerly an East St. Louis police officer. He was convicted in St. Louis County of three counts of official misconduct for using his official capacity to commit a sex crime with an adult.

The judge also found Hare not guilty of one count of attempted predatory criminal sexual assault of a child. She said there was not enough evidence to support that charge.

Hare has been held in the Madison County Jail since Nov. 27, 2019. The judge ordered him held without bond. She said a sentencing date will be set later.