



JACKSON COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

Michael C. Carr, State's Attorney

Jackson County Courthouse • 1001 Walnut • Third Floor • Murphysboro, IL 62966
(618) 687-7200 • FAX (618) 687-7215

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: MICHAEL C. CARR, State's Attorney

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PAUL E. JENNINGS, CARBONDALE, SENTENCED TO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS FOR CRIMINAL SEXUAL ASSAULT

Michael C. Carr, Jackson County State's Attorney, announced today that Paul E. Jennings, 44, of Carbondale, Illinois, was sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections for the offense of criminal sexual assault.

On February 5, 2017, a visibly shaken 16-year-old female who was reported missing from a Carbondale rehab facility arrived at the Carbondale Police Department to turn herself in. She told police that she had been sexually assaulted by an unknown male. The victim advised that as she was searching for the Amtrak station she encountered an individual, later identified as Paul Jennings, outside his residence on South Washington Street, near the Amtrak station. Jennings offered the victim money to help him paint his residence, which she agreed to in order to make money to purchase a train ticket. She told officers that she placed a plastic covering over an air conditioning unit at the residence.

The victim stated that she and Jennings walked to a liquor store, later determined to be Old Towne Liquors, and then returned to the house. As the two were seated on the couch, the male grabbed her face and tried to kiss her. She attempted to get away and he told her that she wasn't going anywhere. Despite her repeatedly telling him no, he forcefully removed her clothing and had sexual intercourse with her.

The victim was taken to Carbondale Memorial Hospital for a sexual assault examination. Later, she showed officers the residence where the assault occurred and pointed out the plastic covering she had placed on the air conditioning unit. She also identified Jennings in a photo lineup. Investigators were able to corroborate the victim's report through video surveillance and forensic evidence. A Bill of Indictment was filed on June 13, 2018, charging Jennings with two counts of criminal sexual assault.

On January 16, 2019, Jennings entered an open plea of guilty to one count of criminal sexual assault, a Class 1 Felony. On April 10, 2019, he was sentenced to serve eight (8) years in the Department of Corrections, followed by three (3) years to life of mandatory supervised release. Jennings will be a registered sex offender for the rest of his life.

The investigation was conducted by the Carbondale Police Department. Assistant State's Attorney Rebecca Blomer was responsible for the prosecution.