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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: October 11, 2021
Re: Christopher Michael Munson
Child Rape Jury Trial Conviction

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Christopher Michael Munson, age 45, of Salida has been convicted of lewd acts upon a child under the age of 14, rape by force or fear, willful failure to appear in court and an enhancement for committing a felony while out on bail. Deputy District Attorney Patrick Hogan prosecuted the case on behalf of the People.

On August 12, 2016, officers of the Oakdale Police Department were called to a local school where a 13-year-old girl reported that she had been sexually assaulted by her mother's boyfriend. Both the victim and her mother knew Munson as "Christopher Lee Taylor."

Munson had previously been convicted in Stanislaus County in 2000 of continuous sexual abuse of a child for which he served six years in state prison. He was required to register with law enforcement as a sex offender and his conviction information was publicly available online from the Megan's Law registry of sex offenders. Munson used the false name "Christopher Lee Taylor" to conceal his past from the victim's mother.

Investigators from the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department and Oakdale Police Department eventually identified Munson by his real name and located him at his home in Salida. When SWAT officers approached him to make the arrest, he fled on foot and pulled a loaded handgun from his waistband. The officers, with the help of a K-9, were able to arrest him after a brief physical struggle.

Initially, Munson was only charged being a felon in possession of a firearm and resisting arrest while detectives continued investigating the new sexual assault. On June 5, 2018, Munson came to court for a regularly scheduled hearing only to learn that Oakdale Police officers were present and had a warrant for his DNA. When he learned that he might be remanded into custody on new charges, he ran from the courthouse and evaded pursuing officers by running through traffic. He was returned to custody months later and this time remained in custody on \$1 million dollars bail after being arraigned on the new charges.

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Department of Justice criminalists who tested Munson's DNA sample matched him to forensic evidence collected from the scene of the sexual assault.

Prior to trial, Munson pled guilty to the felon in possession of a firearm and resisting arrest charges.

In September 2021, the case went to jury trial before Judge Thomas Zeff. Evidence presented during the two-week trial included testimony from the victim who described in detail how she was sexually assaulted by Munson. His prior victim was also allowed to testify about the continuous child sexual abuse she suffered that resulted in his conviction and prison sentence in 2000.

On October 7, 2021 after only one hour of deliberations, the jury returned verdicts of guilty on all charges.

Sentencing and victim impact statements are currently set for November 16, 2021. Munson faces a sentence of at least 25-years-to-life in state prison.

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