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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

On July 14, 2021, Luke A. Lessmeier was sentenced to incarceration in the Missouri Department of Corrections for a term of seventeen (17) years after a guilty plea to the felony of First-Degree Statutory Sodomy. Specifically, Lessmeier admitted to the court that he “knowingly had deviate sexual intercourse” with a child who was less than twelve years old by touching her vagina with his hand and that he did so “for the purpose of arousing or gratifying” his sexual desire.

First-Degree Statutory Sodomy involving a victim less than twelve years old is punishable by no less than ten (10) years in prison and has no maximum sentence. It is a “Dangerous Felony” as defined by Missouri law which means that a defendant must serve eighty five percent of any incarceration before he is eligible for parole, and he is subject to lifetime supervision as a registered sex offender.

Miller County Prosecuting Attorney Benjamin Winfrey is grateful for the hard work of the Miller County Sherriff’s Department and Kid’s Harbor Child Advocacy Center in resolving this case. However, “I understand this punishment is not sufficient justice for the Defendant or his Victim, but jury trials in cases like these place enormous pressure and trauma on our children witnesses.”

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law and charges of a crime are not evidence of a defendant’s guilt.

Please contact the Miller County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office for more information.