



Office of the District Attorney Stanislaus County

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: May 20, 2020
Re: James Patrick Arnold
Sentencing

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Modesto, California – Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that James Patrick Arnold, age 41, of Modesto, was sentenced to six years and eight months in prison. Arnold entered a plea on March 3, 2020 to the following charges: (1) continuous sexual abuse of a child; (2) possessing child pornography; (3) using a minor for posing involving sexual conduct; and (4) disorderly conduct – concealing a camera for the purpose of viewing the body of that person without that person’s knowledge. Deputy District Attorney Erin Schwartz prosecuted the case for the People.

In February of 2019, Jane Doe, a 12-year-old girl, disclosed that a family member, James Arnold, had touched her inappropriately on three separate occasions. When confronted by law enforcement, Arnold admitted touching Jane Doe on three separate occasions over a period of multiple months. It was later determined that he had also set up a hidden camera in the bathroom to record Jane Doe in a state of undress. In a statement given to a probation officer in August of 2019, the defendant indicated he recorded the victim to determine whether he was physically attracted to her. He reasoned that if the victim was showing signs of physical maturity, then that didn’t make him a pedophile.

During sentencing, several people gave victim impact statements, including Jane Doe. She told the court that “James had a choice...and he made the choice to touch me over and over.” She went on to describe the trauma this has caused in her life, also indicating to the court her unique vulnerability, stating “I was vulnerable and people that have a lack of love [can’t] recognize what love really feels like or looks like, so I was easy prey.” While initially fearful of giving a statement to the court, she was doing so “to get closure [so] that he won’t be able to hurt me, the people I love, or anyone else ever again.”

The defendant also gave a statement to the court prior to sentencing, stating he “was selfish and took advantage of [Jane Doe’s] vulnerability...none of this was [her] fault.” He also stated it was never his intent to hurt so many people but wanted Jane Doe to “know [he] wants what’s best for [her] and will always love [her].”

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Arnold's sentence was not the result of a plea bargain. Instead, he entered a plea to all counts as charged and Judge Shawn D. Bessey, after hearing victim impact statements and argument from both sides, determined the sentence. The prosecutor asked that Arnold be sentenced to 12 years in prison, while the defense asked for probation. Although Arnold was technically eligible for probation, the judge agreed that was not appropriate given the facts of the case. The defendant was facing a sentence of between six and 17 years in prison. In addition to serving six years and eight months in prison, Arnold will have to register as a sex offender for the remainder of his life and will be on parole for about 20 years once released.

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