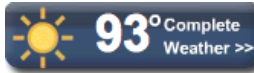


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East Texas

Posted 10:15 pm Friday, December 28, 2007

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Deputy Indicted For Indecency With Child
From Staff Reports

GILMER - A former Upshur County Sheriff's deputy was indicted last week for five counts of indecency with a child.

Richard Louis Bridgewater, 29, of Big Sandy, turned himself in to authorities on Dec. 7 after admitting to inappropriately touching an 11-year-old girl. His indictment lists five separate incidences that occurred between February and November.

He was arrested and held in the Titus County Jail as a safety precaution because he'd served as a jailer in the Upshur County Jail, officials said.

The case surfaced toward the end of November, when the victim made an outcry to friends at school, according to District Attorney Billy Byrd. The victim told a forensics investigator that Bridgewater touched her up to 20 separate times at his home, Byrd said.

Bridgewater admitted to the accusations on Dec. 7 during an interview with Texas Ranger Ronny Griffith and turned himself in for arrest the next day.

Sheriff Anthony Betterton said Bridgewater had been with his department for about a year. He was hired as a jailer in October 2006 and was transferred to the patrol division that same month.

Betterton told the Tyler Morning Telegraph on Dec. 8 that Bridgewater presented no problems within the department and had passed routine psychological and background checks. Before his time at the sheriff's department, Bridgewater worked briefly for the Big Sandy and Overton police departments.

If convicted of the second-degree felony, Bridgewater could face two to 20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000 and lifetime registration as a sex offender.

The grand jury for the 115th District Court met on Dec. 21 and returned 18 other indictments, five of which were sealed. The open indictments include:

- Marvin Ray Narramore, 59, Gilmer, driving while intoxicated;
- Ricky Everett McElduff, 44, Tatum, driving while intoxicated;
- Cary Buckner Fant IV, 32, Ore City, unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon;
- Richard Odie Belcher, 21, Mount Pleasant, burglary of a building;
- Jeremy Oneal Skinner, 21, Gilmer, evading arrest/detention with a vehicle;

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