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Former deputy convicted of child sex battery, faces 90 years

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November 12, 2010 6:57 AM

Jeff Barker
Daily News

MILTON — A former Santa Rosa County sheriff's deputy accused of child sexual battery was convicted Wednesday by a jury at the courthouse where he once served as head of security.

John Mitchell Tomlinson was found guilty of three counts of sexual battery by a custodial authority on a person over the age of 12 and under the age of 18, state attorney Bill Eddins said. The former sheriff's lieutenant faces 90 years in prison and a future trial on more sex crime charges.

"We feel that because of his position of trust in law enforcement and the ongoing nature over many years of this sexual misconduct, we're gonna ask the judge to impose the maximum penalty," Eddins said. "We do not believe he should ever walk the streets of the community as a free man again."

Tomlinson, 47, initially was charged with 120 counts of sexual battery by a custodial authority after the Sheriff's Office asked the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to take over its investigation. He was placed on paid leave when he was arrested March 9 and fired May 7 after an internal investigation.

Santa Rosa County judges recused themselves from the case because of Tomlinson's former position at the courthouse, Eddins said. Walton County Circuit Judge Kelvin Wells presided.

The original charges stemmed from incidents involving three children, Eddins said. The state attorney's office consolidated the charges and narrowed down this week's trial to charges involving one of the children, but used testimony from the other two.

The prosecution presented a phone recording of a conversation between the victim and Tomlinson, who made "incriminating statements," Eddins said. He said lawmen are permitted to make such recordings without a warrant or court order if one of the two parties consents.

Tomlinson's recorded words supported the child's story, Eddins said. Tomlinson testified in his defense and denied the allegations.

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The trial, which started Monday, concluded about 9:30 p.m. Wednesday after the jury deliberated three-and-a-half hours.

Tomlinson's sentencing is set for Dec. 14. A trial date for his other pending charges has not been set.

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[navyguy](#)

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[cleigh](#)

6:20 AM on November 12, 2010

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Is that a kevlar vest he's wearing? I hope he rots in jail for what he did.

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[yarnmaster48](#)

6:39 AM on November 12, 2010

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this pile of crap will get his in the slammer .. good riddance



[timeforateaparty](#)

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Why only 90 years?

▶ [3 replies](#)



[ammo461](#)

7:49 AM on November 12, 2010

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Instead of 90 years, he should be sentenced to 90 minutes locked in a room with the victim's father.

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