

## Ex-deputy on trial for rape of 5-year-old

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**MARION** — A former Marion law officer accused of sexually assaulting a child will go to trial Tuesday.

Randy Spencer, a former Marion County Sheriff's Office deputy, is accused of forcing a 5-year-old girl into performing a sex act in April.

The trial will be at the Juvenile Detention Center as the elevator at the Marion County Courthouse is undergoing repairs.

A preliminary hearing at Marion County Municipal Court in May revealed probable cause for the arrest on May 2. Special prosecuting attorney Angela Canepa called two witnesses to the stand during the hearing.

Emily Combes, a medical forensic interviewer from Nationwide Children's Hospital, recorded a conversation she had with the child. The child claims that Spencer used code language and asked her to perform the sex act, which she did.

The child's mother was also called to the stand. She said Spencer's girlfriend babysat the child. She gave Spencer permission to be alone with her daughter before the incident.

"She said Randy was bad and that wasn't nice of him," the mother said.

Defense attorney J.C. Ratliff did not call any witnesses. He said the child may have altered her story since she spoke with her mother, people at the hospital, and someone at the sheriff's office before talking to Combes. He also said that the child's drawing and descriptions were not accurate. The child went into detail about the alleged sexual abuse while talking with Combes.

Spencer was charged with seven counts of rape, all first-degree felonies.

Spencer was hired by the Marion County Sheriff's Office in 2007 as a dispatcher. He was laid off in June 2009 and rehired in October 2009 as a deputy sheriff. He was laid off again in December 2011 and took a job with the Delaware County Sheriff's Office as a corrections officer.

Spencer was placed on paid leave April 12 when the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Marion County Sheriff's Office officials began investigating charges of sexual assault, according to Delaware County Sheriff's Office public information officer Tracy Whited. She said Spencer was placed on unpaid leave indefinitely after his arrest.

Whited said Spencer passed a full background check before taking the job.