



## **AG, CALHOUN DA ANNOUNCE SEX CRIMES INDICTMENTS; AG REPORTS ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF COLD CASE UNIT**

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange and Calhoun County District Attorney Brian McVeigh announced indictments\* in a cold case that involved nine sex crimes against three young girls. Attorney General Strange also reported on the overall achievements of the Cold Case Unit since its inception in 2008.

Evidence was presented to a Calhoun County grand jury, resulting in three indictments on May 6 of Billy Wayne Cooper, 45, a former resident of Calhoun County. Cooper was served notice of the indictments at the United States Military Detention Barracks in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas where he is serving time for convictions of multiple sex crimes that occurred on United States Army posts in the State of Washington and in Germany.

Specifically, the Calhoun County indictments charge Cooper with:

- second-degree sexual abuse of a victim less than 16 years old but more than 12 years old, a class A misdemeanor;
- second-degree attempted rape of a victim less than 16 years old but more than 12 years old, a class C felony;
- first-degree sexual abuse of a victim less than 12 years old, a class C felony;
- second degree sexual abuse of a victim less than 16 years old but more than 12 years old, a class A misdemeanor;
- first-degree sodomy of a victim less than 12 years old, a class A felony;
- first-degree rape of a victim less than 12 years old, a class A felony;
- second-degree sodomy of a victim less than 16 years old but more than 12 years old, a class B felony;
- second-degree rape of a victim less than 16 years old but more than 12 years old, a class B felony; and
- second-degree sexual abuse of a victim less than 16 years old but more than 12 years old, a class A misdemeanor.

Bond for the current charges was set at \$300,000. If convicted, Cooper faces penalties of up to life imprisonment for each of the two class A felonies, two to 20 years for each of the two class B felonies, and one to 10 years for the class C felonies and up to 365 days for the class A misdemeanors.

These offenses occurred between 1999 and 2004 in multiple locations in Calhoun County, Alabama. No further information about the investigation or about Cooper's alleged crimes other than what is stated in the indictment is available.

*\*An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*

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The indictments against Cooper are the result of a joint investigation by Special Agents of the Attorney General's Cold Case Unit; Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Weems and the Calhoun County District Attorney's Office, and Agents of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigations Division. These cases will be prosecuted by the Calhoun County District Attorney's Office.

"This case is an example of the excellent work performed on a regular basis by the Cold Case Unit," said Attorney General Strange. "Since beginning its work, the Cold Case Unit has provided hope and delivered justice for many victims whose cases had long gone unsolved."

The National Institute of Justice—Solving Cold Cases grant was provided by the U.S. Department of Justice to start the Attorney General's Cold Case Unit in 2008. The Cold Case Unit targets unsolved or unresolved violent sexually motivated assaults and homicides in which probative DNA exists. To date, Special Agents assigned to the Cold Case Unit have reviewed more than 1,300 violent crime cases from throughout Alabama.

The cases that were investigated by the Cold Case Unit involve crimes that occurred from November 1985 to November 2011, with indictments against 10 men for a total of 54 criminal counts. The cases include charges of rape, sodomy, robbery, burglary, sexual abuse, enticing a child for immoral purposes, attempted murder and kidnapping. Three of those indicted are allegedly serial rapists who committed multiple violent sex crimes, some of which were across state lines. Because of the Cold Case Unit's work, 19 female victims and one male victim, who ranged in age from four to 51, now have seen those responsible for the crimes against them brought to justice.

Cases accepted for consideration by the Cold Case Unit typically have probative DNA evidence, with the DNA testing performed by the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences. The Department of Forensic Sciences DNA Program has assisted almost 5,000 previously unsolved investigations through a search of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), and has provided closure for victims of violent crime across Alabama and 40 different states.

"I applaud General Strange for his leadership with regard to the Cold Case Unit initiative. As an internationally accredited laboratory system and one of the original members of the CODIS pilot program more than 20 years ago, the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences (ADFS) has a responsibility to provide assistance to law enforcement agencies who routinely look for guidance on matters concerning cutting edge forensic technologies," ADFS Director Michael Sparks said. "ADFS is proud to partner with Attorney General Luther Strange and his office in this endeavor."

The investigative talents of Special Agents within the Cold Case Unit, combined with the scientific expertise in DNA testing provided by the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, presents an opportunity for unsolved cases to be reopened and fully investigated. Using state of the art DNA technology, evidence that had never been analyzed or was previously analyzed using older technology is submitted to ADFS for analysis and the results are provided in a timely manner. In addition to the Cold Cases that resulted in an arrest or indictment, the Cold Case Unit is currently engaged in the active investigation of numerous cold case homicides and numerous sexual assaults across the state.