



NEWS RELEASE

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Thornton Man Sentenced to 32 Years for Sexual Assault of Three Young Girls

Matthew Paul Barnett was sentenced Friday to 32 years in prison for attempted sexual assault on a child and first-degree assault for sexually assaulting three young girls.

“The conduct in this case is a shock to the conscience,” Deputy District Attorney Christopher Rhamey told the court at the sentencing hearing. “It is horrible and tragic on so many levels. I am shocked that there was not a finding that he is a sexually violent predator in this case. This is one of the most aggravating cases we have seen. He is a true danger to the children of this community.”

Rhamey said Barnett quickly moved in with the children’s mother a month after meeting her so that he would have access to her children, and began sexually assaulting them multiple times in various locations, often in the presence of each other or their 10-year-old brother.

Barnett (DOB 5-24-85) was charged with sexual assault on a child as a pattern of conduct and by a person in a position of trust involving three girls, ages 6 and 7. He pleaded guilty to attempted sexual assault and first-degree assault in February.

The investigation began last year after allegations were made while Barnett and the victims were in Winter Park. The investigation uncovered additional incidents in Adams County. According to an agreement between the District Attorneys for the 14th and 17th Judicial Districts, the case was prosecuted in Adams County.

Rhamey asked for a sentence to the maximum 32 years under the plea agreement, citing the aggravating factors of the age of the children, the repeated and ongoing pattern of conduct and threats that Barnett made to the children if they said anything about what he was doing to them.

Adams County District Judge Sean Finn imposed the maximum 32-year sentence, citing the many aggravating factors in the case.

