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PLEDGER SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR SEXUAL BATTERY

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that the Honorable Don Lester sentenced Christopher Pledger to life in Florida State Prison for four counts of Sexual Battery. A Clay County jury found him guilty of all four counts during a trial in March.

During an investigation by the Clay County Sheriff's Office, investigators discovered Pledger began sexually abusing the victim at the age of 13. Pledger continued the abuse for years even after the victim turned 18. The sexual battery occurred at his house, at the church he attended, and on a church bus. When the victim tried to stop the abuse, Pledger became verbally and physically abusive to other members of the victim's family. For many years, the victim has feared repercussions if they came forward about the abuse. The victim disclosed the abuse in 2016 when they knew family was no longer living in the same house as Pledger.

When CCSO's investigation began, Pledger had moved to India, where he remained until his visa expired in November 2020. When he returned to the United States, he was taken into custody.

The case was investigated by Clay County Sheriff's Office and was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Randi Daugustinis and Phil Bavington.