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**Polk County Prosecuting Attorney Secures Conviction Against
Curtis "Chris" Benenhaley Jr. on Charges Including Statutory Sodomy and Incest**

October 29, 2024 – Clinton, MO – Today, Polk County Prosecuting Attorney Keaton Ashlock announced a conviction in the case against Curtis “Chris” Benenhaley Jr., who was found guilty on all charges after a two-day jury trial held at the Henry County Courthouse following a change of venue. The jury returned verdicts on five serious charges, including two counts of statutory sodomy in the first degree, two counts of incest, and one count of tampering with a victim in a felony prosecution.

The convictions stem from incidents that took place between June 2021 and January 2022 at a residence in Humansville, Missouri, where the defendant engaged in “deviate sexual intercourse” with a victim under the age of 12 who was his descendant by blood. Benenhaley then threatened to kill the victim’s family members if she reported the offenses.

The statutory sodomy charges carry the potential of life sentences for each count, and the convictions for incest and victim tampering could result in an additional combined fifteen-year sentence.

The trial commenced with the state presenting evidence on the first day, with closing arguments and deliberation on the following day. The prosecution utilized the 2014 Missouri constitutional amendment (Article I, Section 18(c)), which permits evidence of prior criminal sexual offenses to be presented in court to establish a pattern or propensity in similar cases. Evidence of Benenhaley’s previous 2005 conviction in Vernon County for statutory rape and incest was thus presented, aiding the jury in understanding the defendant's established history.

We are grateful to the jury for their service and dedication to justice and to the law enforcement professionals who ensured a thorough investigation. Our hope is that today’s verdict provides some measure of closure and relief for the victim and their family and prevents this defendant from committing offenses against any other children.

Benenhaley now awaits sentencing; The date for sentencing has yet to be announced.

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