

Man not guilty of shaking his son

By [ANDY KRAVETZ \(akravetz@pjstar.com\)](mailto:akravetz@pjstar.com)
of the Journal Star

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PEORIA —

Jurors took about 30 minutes Wednesday to find a Chillicothe man not guilty of shaking his then-5-month-old son so violently that he suffered symptoms of shaken baby syndrome.

██████████, 33, whose last known address was ██████████, had faced up to 30 years in prison if he had been convicted of aggravated battery to a child. ██████████, who has been in the Peoria County Jail since December 2008, likely will be released Wednesday or Thursday, said his attorney, Christopher McCall.

During the two-day trial, both sides said no one really knew what happened on Nov. 28, 2008. Wilson was alone with the infant at the time prosecutors allege he violently shook the child.

██████████, who did not testify, had denied that to police. He said he had put a bottle in the child's mouth, put the child on the couch and walked off. He told police he came back and found the child on the floor and unresponsive.

McCall pounded home that theme to jurors, saying his client was concerned enough to insist the child go to the hospital, even though an officer who responded to the scene felt it wasn't an emergency. The attorney also said Wilson stayed with his son while he was in the pediatric intensive care unit, a sign he was concerned only for the child, not himself.

But prosecutor ██████████ pointed to testimony from medical staffers who said the child's injuries - a damaged liver and injuries consistent with being violently shaken - could not have been caused by the chain of events that ██████████ described.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

[Chillicothe man charged with injuring baby](#)

[Journal Star](#)

Posted Dec 05, 2008 @ 10:35 PM

PEORIA —

A Chillicothe man faces up to 30 years in prison for allegedly shaking a 5-month-old baby and causing several injuries.

██, appeared in Peoria County Circuit Court and was charged with aggravated battery to a child. Peoria County Judge ██████████ ordered him held on \$200,000 bond pending a Jan. 2 preliminary hearing.

Assistant State's Attorney ██████████ told ██████████ that police were summoned to an area hospital Nov. 28 where doctors found he had a damaged liver, and injuries consistent with being violently shaken.

Police interviewed ██████████, who was the baby's sole caretaker at the time, as the child's mother was out of the house. Wilson told police he had put a bottle in the child's mouth, put the child on the couch and walked off. Later, he told police he came back and found the child on the floor and unresponsive, ██████████ said in open court.

Medical staff members told police the child's injuries could not have been caused by the chain of events that ██████████ described, but ██████████ denied hurting the child, ██████████ said.

Two acquitted in Peoria murder trial - Only ██████████ convicted in fatal shooting of ██████████

ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - After deliberating 7 1/2 hours Tuesday, a Peoria County jury acquitted two of three men of the first-degree murder of ██████████.

Only ██████████, 20, was convicted of fatally shooting ██████████ on July 15. Co-defendants ██████████, both 20, were acquitted.

██████████ now faces a minimum of 40 years in prison when sentenced Jan. 9. First-degree murder normally carries a 20- to 60-year prison term but because jurors found ██████████ discharged a firearm, the sentence was enhanced.

██████████, 19, was shot once in the chest as he stood outside an apartment at 2719 W. Trewyn Ave., about 2:30 a.m. July 15. He immediately was put into a sport-utility vehicle and taken away before police arrived. He died at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. Officers found a dozen shell casings from 9mm, .22-caliber and .40-caliber weapons but the bullet found in ██████████ chest was from a .38-caliber firearm.

The case featured little in the way of forensic evidence and offered no confessions from the defendants who all denied any involvement in the shooting. Rather, it boiled down to which side did the jury believe: the state's witnesses who said the men were there and fired the shots or the defendants' witnesses who were girlfriends and relatives who gave the men alibis.

Apparently, the jury split on whom to believe.

Prosecutors argued their witnesses consistently said they saw the men on Trewyn that morning. One of them, ██████████, the mother of ██████████ two children and also ██████████' cousin, told jurors that she and ██████████ were talking when ██████████ walked up. After a few minutes, ██████████ turned as if to leave and then pulled out a gun and started firing.

Then shots rang out from all directions. While the witnesses placed guns in different hands and not all said they saw ██████████ with a weapon, all described a hail of bullets. When it was over, Baugh was lying in the street in a puddle of blood.

"The state could not prove who fired what weapon or who fired what shot," said ██████████' attorney ██████████.

██████████ attorney, Christopher McCall, pointed out his client's two gold teeth, which he said couldn't be missed and wasn't mentioned by one witness. That, he argued, combined with the fact that only one of seven people present at the time of the shooting put a gun in his client's hand, was enough for reasonable doubt.

The seven-day trial featured heightened security on the courthouse's second floor. An additional screening point was set up with officers checking bags and requiring people to sign in before entering the courtroom. On Tuesday, there were several guards and police officers inside and outside the courtroom.

A man was arrested for disorderly conduct shortly after noon after a bailiff wouldn't let him back through the screening point. The man, whose name wasn't available, cursed the female employee and was arrested by a Peoria County sheriff's detective who had sat in on the trial as a security measure.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

Trial begins for trio accused of murder - Victim slain July 15 at Harrison Homes
ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - A trio of defense attorneys told a Peoria County jury on Tuesday that their clients had nothing to do with a fatal shooting this summer at the Harrison Homes.

Rather, attorneys for [REDACTED], say their clients were either not in the area or not involved whatsoever.

"He was hugging the love of his life, not the handle of a gun," said Christopher McCall, [REDACTED] attorney.

[REDACTED] attorney [REDACTED] urged jurors to keep an open mind and noted that police found no weapons.

However, prosecutors see it differently, and say the three men were all responsible for Taurus [REDACTED] death on July 15. Assistant State's Attorney [REDACTED] noted in her opening statement that [REDACTED] was having a dispute with a woman when gunfire broke out.

Cars were riddled by bullets, another person was shot but not fatally and police found a dozen shell casings, Shelby said.

"The defendants all acted together when they fired on [REDACTED], and they should all be held legally accountable," she said in open court.

[REDACTED] was shot once in the chest as he exited an apartment at [REDACTED], about 2:30 a.m. July 15. [REDACTED] of Peoria was put into a sport-utility vehicle and taken away before police arrived. He died at the hospital.

The trial, which is expected to last through the week and possibly into next week, has featured tightened security on the courthouse's second floor. An additional screening point was set up with officers checking bags and requiring people to sign in before entering the courtroom.

While there has been little in the way of problems by audience members, one of the defense attorneys, [REDACTED] of Chicago, was nearly called in contempt of court after he said Circuit Judge [REDACTED] was "somewhat biased" toward the prosecution.

The attorney, who was arguing a motion during a pretrial conference Monday, was in the midst of being rebuked by [REDACTED] for inappropriate behavior in the courtroom. After a brief recess, cooler heads prevailed and there were no problems on Tuesday.

All three face at least 45 years in prison if convicted because a handgun was used to kill [REDACTED]. State law requires that 25 years be added onto the 20- to 60-year range when a handgun is used.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

[Sparland man gets five years for molesting girls](#)

Posted Mar 16, 2010 @ 10:29 PM

LACON —

A Sparland man was sentenced Tuesday to five years in prison for sexually molesting three girls younger than 12.

██████████, pleaded guilty in January to three counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse. He admitted having sexual conduct with girls ages 7, 9 and 11, separately and on different occasions during a period of about 18 months.

Under a partially negotiated guilty plea entered at that time, ██████████ had faced a maximum of seven years at his sentencing hearing. That agreement included dismissal of the more serious charge of predatory criminal sexual assault of a child, which would have meant at least six and up to 30 years in prison.

Tuesday's hearing revealed that Marshall County State's Attorney ██████████ and defense attorney Christopher McCall had made an agreement on the five-year term, along with court costs of \$423. Hankins also will get credit for 152 days in the county jail, and also will be eligible for day-for-day credit that will cut his prison time in half.

██████████ was arrested after a brother of the youngest victim witnessed him molesting her last October, ██████████ said previously. His conduct with the other girls had occurred in the summers of 2008 and 2009.

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Ex-police officer takes Alford plea - Plea means Peorian maintains innocence but sentenced for solicitation

ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - A former Peoria police officer entered an Alford plea Friday on charges he tried to pick up an undercover agent posing as a prostitute.

██████████ entered his plea in Peoria County Circuit Court to the misdemeanor charge of solicitation of a sex act. The plea means he maintains his innocence but admits there was enough evidence to rise above the level of reasonable doubt.

His attorney, Christopher McCall of Peoria, said his client thought this was the proper move.

"Because of the way the statute is written, even if he was merely engaging in conversations about sex for money, without being serious, then it is still enough to be convicted," the attorney said.

Under the plea agreement, ██████████ will spend one year on court supervision, which will then result in a dismissal of the case if he doesn't get into the trouble. He also must pay a \$600 fine plus court costs.

An additional felony charge of unlawful use of a weapon was dismissed months ago.

Authorities had alleged that on Oct. 4, 2007, ██████████, who resigned from the department in July 2005 after an investigation uncovered he was friends with a known drug dealer, solicited sex from an undercover female police officer posing as a prostitute on Northeast Madison Avenue.

During his arrest, ██████████ was cooperative and told police he was in possession of a gun, an unloaded .32-caliber automatic handgun in his car's unlocked glove box, according to police reports. Gun magazines and a live bullet were found in a black bag behind the front seat.

Illinois gun law states in order to possess or carry a handgun, it has to be broken down in a nonfunctioning state and not immediately accessible. The apparent violation appears to stem from the fact that ██████████ glove box was unlocked.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

Sex charge against ex-officer dropped - Authorities may indict ██████████ on gun charge instead

Leslie Fark; ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - A charge of trying to pick up an undercover officer posing as a prostitute was dropped this week against a former Peoria police officer but it doesn't appear that he's out of legal trouble yet.

On Wednesday, Peoria County prosecutors dismissed the misdemeanor charge of solicitation of a sex act filed against ██████████ just as he was to go to trial.

On the court order, it states authorities plan to indict ██████████ for another felony offense, believed to involve a handgun found in his car when he was arrested.

Investigations and deliberations before the grand jury, which meets each week, are secret, and officials with the state's attorney's office declined to comment.

"Overall, all I want to say is that the allegations against me were untrue. I never solicited. Justice was served.

"If anything else is brought forth, I'm prepared to fight," ██████████ said Friday, declining to comment further.

Christopher McCall, ██████████'s attorney, declined to comment Friday but indicated that prosecutors have up to three years to file an offense before time runs out.

The new offense apparently stems from ██████████'s Oct. 4 arrest when he allegedly solicited sex from an undercover female police officer posing as a prostitute on Northeast Madison Avenue.

██████████, who resigned from the department in July 2005 after an investigation uncovered he was friends with a known drug dealer, agreed to pay \$20 in exchange for a sex act, police reports said.

It was in the alley where he agreed to meet the woman when members of the department's vice and street crimes units surrounded his car. During his arrest, ██████████ was cooperative and told police he was in possession of a gun, according to reports.

An unloaded Kel-Tec, a compact .32-caliber automatic pistol, was located in his car's unlocked glove box, according to police reports. Gun magazines and a live bullet were found in a black bag behind the front seat.

Illinois gun law states in order to possess or carry a firearm, a gun has to be broken down in a nonfunctioning state and not immediately accessible. The law further says when transporting, carrying or possessing an unloaded firearm it must be enclosed in a case, gun box, shipping box or other container by a person with a valid firearm owner's ID card.

The apparent violation appears to stem from the fact that ██████████'s glove box was unlocked.

If the grand jury fails to indict or if prosecutors change their mind, the solicitation charge could be reinstated because it was dismissed "without prejudice."

Leslie Fark can be reached at
686-3188 or lfark@pjstar.com.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at
686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

Heights baby sitter acquitted - Jury rules woman did not intentionally cause skull fracture in 15-month-old

ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - A Peoria Heights woman was acquitted of charges that she grabbed a 15-month-old boy she was baby-sitting and swung him into a crib, causing a skull fracture.

It wasn't in doubt that [REDACTED] caused the child to hit the crib. She admitted that to a Peoria Heights detective days after the Dec. 16, 2005, incident, saying it was an accident.

Rather, jurors seemed to focus on whether [REDACTED] knew her actions would result in great bodily harm.

Her attorney, Christopher McCall, hammered that point home during the one-day trial in Peoria County Circuit Court, telling jurors that [REDACTED] tried to reach the mother and tell her that the boy had bumped his head. Such actions, he contested, show [REDACTED] didn't intentionally harm the child.

But Assistant State's Attorney [REDACTED] pointed to testimony from a detective and the mother who both said [REDACTED] did not initially tell them the boy had bumped his head.

[REDACTED] also pointed to testimony from a doctor who said the injuries were caused by a force equivalent to a traffic accident.

But McCall emphasized testimony from [REDACTED], who said she was trying to put the boy down for a nap and accidentally bumped his head on the corner of the crib when she took him out. She denied being angry or upset with the child.

That contrasted with testimony from the officer. She said [REDACTED] told her that she was "annoyed" with the child because he wouldn't lie down for a nap.

The mother, who used be friends with [REDACTED], said she took her son to the hospital because he wasn't acting like himself. When she came to pick up the boy, he was sitting on a couch with [REDACTED] and his head was red. Later, the mother said she noticed swelling.

At the hospital, nurses discovered bruises on the boy's back and armpit that were consistent with the victim being grabbed, picked up and swung around, according to court records.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

Judge: Sentences not to blame for crime - Mayor criticized gun ruling as too lenient
ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - Peoria County Chief Judge [REDACTED] says it's too simplistic to blame the judicial system for the rise in the county's crime rate.

Barra, a former state's attorney, said he believes all parties - police, prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges - are working hard to do what is right for the community.

"When I started in the State's Attorney's Office in 1974 and when I left the State's Attorney's Office, crime was going up. We are hearing the same concerns 30 years later," he said.

The increase in violent crime has the full attention of Peoria Mayor Jim Ardis, who blasted the sentencing of 16-year-old [REDACTED], saying it was "outrageous" to give the teen probation for admittedly shooting a gun from a car at another car he thought was full of gang members.

"I would argue that probation is not adequate punishment for driving through a city and firing a gun out of a car," Ardis said. "The State's Attorney recommended six years, and that's where I would have started.

"I don't now anyone that would argue that was a weak sentence. A lot of these criminals are not being punished the first time, the second time and in some cases, the third time. That is what is leading them for having a lack of respect for following our laws and turning them into habitual criminals."

The judge in question, Peoria County Circuit Judge [REDACTED], declined to comment, saying he was bound by ethical rules handed down by the Illinois Supreme Court that forbid him from commenting on cases. He also declined to comment on his reasons for sentencing, citing those rules.

Those rules, [REDACTED] said, make judges "an easy target," and noted that statistics belie the notion that Peoria County's courts are too lenient.

In 1999, 269 people were sent to prison from Peoria County. By 2004, that number jumped to 433. Felony cases are on track to reach a record rate. All that shows the judge that people are doing their jobs.

"(People) don't see the hundreds of cases where a person is sent to the penitentiary. It's always the one case where something goes wrong, and then it's easy to blame," [REDACTED] said.

Peoria County State's Attorney [REDACTED] said the judges in Peoria don't have or deserve a reputation for allowing a "revolving door" for criminals.

"In fact, Peoria prison sentences are greater and longer than most Illinois counties, both in juvenile and adult courts," he said.

He also defended [REDACTED] performance on the bench, noting judges must evaluate cases one at a time, and not be "spotlighted and generalized" for one sentence alone.

"This is the same judge that gave the maximum 26 year sentence to a carjacking Peoria rapist just two months ago and sentenced [REDACTED] (who killed a sheriff's deputy and two others in Stark County four years ago) to death, so I know he is a judge who can sometimes pull the trigger," the county's top prosecutor said.

[REDACTED], like Ardis, disagrees with the sentence, and noted his office moved the case from juvenile court to adult court because it was a serious offense.

[REDACTED] was sentenced Friday to four years of probation after pleading guilty to aggravated discharge of a firearm. His plea agreement capped his potential prison term at six years rather than the 15 years allowed under state law.

Prosecutors sought the six-year cap, but [REDACTED] opted for probation, saying he believed [REDACTED]

was worth taking a risk on.

In court, ██████ said he looked at ██████ potential for rehabilitation as a factor. He also commented on the number of A's the boy earned while spending more than 200 days in custody at the Juvenile Detention Center, the fact that he had no criminal history and was a good student while at Manual High School as reasons for probation.

Judges are required by state law to consider a sentence of probation first and only resort to prison if a list of aggravating factors outweigh a similar list of mitigating factors, legalese for looking at the pros and cons of incarceration.

Among the factors in mitigation was whether a person acted under provocation. ██████ attorney, Christopher McCall, told ██████ that his client had been robbed by the gang members at gunpoint at some point earlier, and the judge appeared to take that into consideration based upon his comments in court.

McCall said Tuesday that he believed probation was a good sentence for ██████, whom he described as a "good kid who made a bad mistake." The attorney also noted that the first year of ██████ probation is intensive probation, which has a curfew and stricter rules as well as a requirement to do public service hours.

"He's on the hook even more now," McCall said, noting that if ██████ were to violate probation, he would face up to the full 15 years behind bars. "He cannot screw this up."

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

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Teen gets probation for shooting at car - South Peoria 16-year-old could have gotten 6

years

ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - A South Peoria boy was sentenced to four years of probation Friday for shooting at a car near Manual High School in January.

slumped back in his seat and took a deep breath after Peoria County Circuit Judge passed sentence.

Assistant State's Attorney had sought six years - the maximum under a plea agreement reached in June - saying the teen already had gotten a break because the charge, aggravated discharge of a firearm, normally carries a 15-year maximum.

But sided with defense attorney Christopher McCall, saying that while there was a need to protect the public and send a message that shooting guns at people can't be tolerated, he believed was worth taking a risk on.

originally was charged as an juvenile, but a judge moved the case to the adult division of Peoria County Circuit Court.

For the first year of probation, he will be on intensive probation, which has a curfew and stricter rules as well as a requirement to do public service hours.

McCall argued during the hearing his client had the support of family and the staff at the Juvenile Detention Center. He was a hard-working kid who made a terrible mistake, the attorney said.

disagreed, saying there was "no excuse for driving around in a car and shooting a gun out a window."

On Jan. 11, was leaving Manual, where he was a sophomore, when he noticed the car, allegedly full of No Love gang members. He later told police the gang members had previously robbed him and harassed him.

After he saw the gang members, got a gun and hopped into a car with others to find them. On Marquette Street, he saw the car and fired three shots, hitting no one. The gun was found nearby in an alley.

Several members of Peoria's vice unit were conducting surveillance near Laramie Avenue when they heard the shots and saw an SUV speed by their unmarked vehicles. The officers gave chase, following the SUV down alleys and residential streets before cornering it in the 2300 block of Starr Street, according to Journal Star archives.

A second man, 18, , was sentenced to two years in prison on drug and weapons charges that were connected to the shooting.

Andy Kravetz can be reached at 686-3283 or akravetz@pjstar.com.

Parties reach agreement on controversial tavern - Owner has 13 days to put Ladies Lounge II up for sale

ANDY KRAVETZ

PEORIA - The owner of a controversial Bellevue tavern and village officials hammered out an agreement Monday, just before a judge was to hold a hearing on whether to ban business permanently at the Harmon Highway address.

Under the agreement, owner [REDACTED] can operate a restaurant and has agreed to put the property up for sale by Feb. 20. In return, the village of Bellevue will not ask Chief Peoria County Circuit Judge [REDACTED] to declare Ladies Lounge II a nuisance and shutter it for good.

The two sides appeared in court Monday afternoon and informed [REDACTED] of the deal. Rather than a lengthy hearing, the matter took about a minute.

Essentially, the agreement means the bar, the site of a handful of recent shootings and a murder last November, is gone.

"It was a win-win situation for both parties, especially for [REDACTED], considering if the temporary restraining order was entered, she would not be able to run any business over there. She would probably lose the way she makes any kind of money," said her attorney, Christopher McCall.

The attorney also noted the agreement allows [REDACTED] the chance to continue to make a living while she tries to sell the property.

[REDACTED] can only operate the eatery from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m., when all patrons must be off the property.

"That means they not only have to be out of the restaurant but off the property and out of the parking lot by 9 p.m.," said [REDACTED], an attorney for the village.

[REDACTED] can have only three employees open or close the business, and there can be no liquor on the premises, the agreement states. There are two apartments above the bar now, and those will be allowed to continue to be used for residential purposes, the agreement states.

Any other use of the property must be first approved by the village.

The village sought to have the bar, 3611 W. Harman Highway, declared a public nuisance following the wave of violence. In December, the village revoked the bar's liquor license in hopes it would quell the troublesome tavern. However, another nonfatal shooting occurred there Jan. 28.

West Bluff woman sentenced for shooting - ██████████, 58, gets 180 days in jail for firing gun at Elks lodge

DAVE HANEY

PEORIA - A West Bluff woman who originally faced up to 15 years in prison after firing a handgun inside a crowded Elks lodge on Easter Sunday was sentenced to 180 days in the Peoria County Jail.

██████████, 58, turned to her intended victim who was seated in the courtroom on Friday, telling her she "was very wrong," apologizing several times to her and other relatives and added "I love you ██████████," but also acknowledged she knew she should be punished.

██████████, who has no criminal history much less any traffic tickets, was at the Peter H. Clark Elks Lodge, 1101 SW Jefferson Ave., for a talent show on April 8 when a dispute between Wright and ██████████ ensued about a relationship between the two women's grown children.

██████████ then pulled out a gun and shot at ██████████, who wasn't hit.

According to Peoria police Detective ██████████, the handgun, which was later recovered, had jammed, although it is unknown if Wright had attempted to fire the weapon again.

None of the estimated 40 to 50 people, including children, in the Elks lodge was hit by the bullet. A near riot erupted, police said, with chairs flying and people scattering to avoid the fracas. Several people, including ██████████, were treated for minor injuries.

██████████ was taken into custody on Friday from the courtroom and will immediately serve 45 days. While being led away in handcuffs, she thanked Chief Peoria County Circuit Judge ██████████ for the sentence.

Provided she conforms to rules of her probation, that's all the jail time ██████████ may end up serving. A hearing will be held Jan. 9, 2009, to determine if she has followed the rules.

██████████ could have faced 15 years in prison for the felony charge, aggravated discharge of a firearm. Under terms of a plea agreement reached prior to Friday, a sentencing cap was placed at five years.

Dave Haney can be reached at 686-3181 or dhaney@pjstar.com.

