

District Attorney's
Office
State of North Carolina
26th Prosecutorial District
Mecklenburg County

www.charmeckda.com

NEWS RELEASE

Spencer B. Merriweather
III
District Attorney

October 20, 2023

Felony Special Victims Team convicts two defendants

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Felony Special Victims Team convicted two defendants during the team's most recent trial session. A jury found one defendant guilty of sexually abusing two boys while they were in his care. Another defendant was convicted of third-degree sexual exploitation of a minor. The proceedings were held October 2-13, 2023 before The Honorable Matthew J. Osman and The Honorable Matthew B. Smith, Superior Court Judges.

Christian Watts, 28, was tried for 1) four counts of sexual offense with a child by an adult, 2) four counts of taking indecent liberties with a child, and 3) two counts of sexual activity by a substitute parent. The charges arose from the sexual assaults of two young boys for whom Watts served as a caregiver. The jury found Watts *guilty* as charged. Judge Osman sentenced Watts to 50 years in prison. Upon his release from prison, Watts will have to register as a sex offender for 30 years.

Joshua Stepnoski, 29, was tried for five counts of third-degree sexual exploitation of a minor. The jury found Stepnoski *guilty* as charged. Judge Smith sentenced Stepnoski to 6-17 months in prison followed by 36 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, he must undergo sex offender treatment. Stepnoski must also register as a sex offender for 30 years.

Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, follow @CharMeckDA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

// End //