



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



**MICHAEL L. RAMSEY**  
District Attorney

**MARK MURPHY**  
Chief Deputy District Attorney

**JASON WINES**  
Chief Investigator

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **JURY FINDS MAN GUILTY OF SIX COUNTS OF CHILD MOLESTATION Faces Life Sentence**

After a nine-day trial, a Butte County Jury yesterday afternoon found an Oroville man guilty of four counts of child molestation. The children were ages 3, 6-10, and 11, when they were molested.

Robert Donovan, 36, of Oroville, was convicted of one count of Substantial Sexual Conduct with a Child under 14, two Counts of Oral Copulation of a Child Ten Years Old or Younger, and One Count of Sexual Penetration of a Child Ten Years Old or Younger. Donovan started molesting the young girls in 2013 until he was arrested in 2018. Donovan has been in custody since his arrest in 2018 pending the charges in this case.

The three young children, (now ages 10, 13, and 15) testified against Donovan, despite the years that have passed since this case was filed and the numerous times the case has been continued over the prosecution's objections. Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said despite the time between when the children were molested and when they testified, such trauma unfortunately does not fade as quickly as we would hope, and the children were able to describe to the jury in detail what happened to them.

The trial prosecutor, Deputy District Attorney JJ Stark-Modlin, said, "it's one thing to face a stranger in court, it's another to face someone with whom you lived and trusted, here the children were facing someone they lived with." Despite the fear, the children were able to rise above and describe what happened to them. Stark-Modlin gave special recognition to a pair of specialized comfort dogs, Micah and Reuben, who sat at the children's feet while they testified in court. The Lutheran Churches of Yuba City and Elk Grove provided the dogs.

Donovan remains in custody with no bail pending sentencing. Donovan faces up to 45 years to life in state prison at his pending sentencing hearing on May 21, 2021. Donovan also faces the potential of being civilly committed as a Sexually Violent Predator and being placed in the State Hospital for the rest of his life should he ever be paroled.

Ramsey praised the twelve deliberating jurors for sitting through an emotional jury trial spread over 3 weeks. The 12 jurors did their duty and rendered a just and fair verdict. Ramsey noted, "Despite the difficulties in getting Donovan to jury trial, once the trial began, residents of Butte County took their job as jurors seriously despite the COVID-19 pandemic and rendered a guilty verdict after deliberating over two days."

