



J. HANLEY

WINNEBAGO COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

PRESS RELEASE
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State's Attorney J. Hanley

Winnebago County State's Attorney J. Hanley announces that **Justen M. Cunningham (DOB: 2/27/1992)** was sentenced to 20 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections as part of a negotiated plea to attempted aggravated criminal sexual assault before the Honorable Judge Debra Schafer. Cunningham will also be on mandatory supervised release for three years to natural life after he is released from prison.

In January, 2025, Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputies met with an adult female who reported that the defendant, Justen Cunningham, attacked her. The victim told police Cunningham grabbed her and forcefully ran his hands all over her private areas. She attempted to scream for help, but Cunningham put his hand over her mouth and dragged her behind a residence. There, the defendant took the victim's phone, ripped her shirt off, and broke her necklace. The victim was knocked to the ground multiple times during the attack and injured. Later, during a search of Cunningham's residence, police located the victim's phone, shirt and necklace. The defendant was previously convicted of Home Invasion and Attempted Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse.

Due to the nature of the conviction, the defendant will be evaluated while in the Department of Corrections for whether he should be determined to be a Sexually Violent or Sexually Dangerous Person.

Attempted Aggravated Criminal Sexual Assault is a Class 1 Felony that is punishable by a sentence of 4-30 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections followed by 3 years up to natural life of mandatory supervised release.

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Department conducted the investigation in this case. Assistant State's Attorney Emily Palmer handled the prosecution.

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