

# The Tidewater News

## Jury deadlocks in abuse case

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COURTLAND—The two-day jury trial of a Franklin man accused of sexually assaulting a juvenile 25 years ago ended in a mistrial Tuesday afternoon in Southampton County Circuit Court.

“Nothing is more frustrating to the court,” said substitute Circuit Court Judge Robert Curran before he declared a mistrial because jurors, after two hours of deliberations, were unable to come to a unanimous decision on the charges against 56-year-old Samuel Parker Drewry.

Jurors deadlocked on the case even after Curran sent them back twice for further consideration.

Drewry is accused of sexually assaulting a juvenile male on two different occasions in 1985.

In August, Franklin police arrested Drewry and charged him with three counts of aggravated sexual battery of a juvenile. The third charge, however, was dropped in November.

“My jaw hit the floor,” Drewry said, when asked about his initial reaction to the allegations. “What he’s alleging did not happen.”

Southampton County Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney George Bruch said Drewry was a “trusted father figure” to the alleged victim.

In court, the alleged victim, now 37, described in detail two alleged incidents of inappropriate sexual contact with Drewry, one in August 1985 and another in December 1985, when the victim was 12 years old and 13 years old. The alleged victim said he didn’t tell anyone about the abuse because he was “scared” and “embarrassed.”

Two expert witnesses testified that delayed or non-reporting of sexual assaults is common. Bruch said that the alleged victim became a father within the past couple of years, and that helped push him to come forward.

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Drewry's attorneys questioned the alleged victim's reason for waiting nearly 25 years to come forward with the allegations and showed pictures of Drewry with the alleged victim's daughter.

"It doesn't make sense," said Jack Randall, an attorney for Drewry. Randall called the case "an absurdity."

"This is a case about greed and inconsistencies," Randall said.

He said the alleged victim didn't come forward until Drewry and his wife received a significant sum of money in a settlement from the death of one of their sons in a car accident.

"This alleged victim was talking about needing money," he said. "You have clear motive in this case."

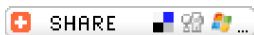
However, Bruch said the alleged victim never asked for money; instead he demanded that Drewry admit to committing the abuse and avoid being alone with children. When Drewry didn't comply, the alleged victim went to the police.

Bruch called the accident that killed Drewry's son sad but said it – and the resulting settlement – "had nothing to do with this."

Drewry remains free on bond awaiting a new trial.

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