

SALEM MAN SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS FOR VIOLENT SEXUAL ASSAULT

News Release from **Marion Co. Dist. Attorney's Office**

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Salem, OR – September 16, 2026 – On September 15, 2026, the Honorable Marion County Circuit Court Judge Amy Queen sentenced Jonathan Muhire (age 20) to 25 years in the Department of Corrections and lifetime post prison supervision after he pled guilty to the following charges:

- Kidnapping in the First Degree
- Sexual Abuse in the First Degree
- Unlawful Sexual Penetration in the First Degree
- Unlawful Use of a Weapon
- Attempted Assault in the Second Degree

Muhire will also have to register as a sex offender.

In the early morning hours of June 16, 2025, the victim was walking to work on Commercial Street SE. Muhire, a stranger, approached and asked if she had a boyfriend. She told him no and made it clear she was not interested in interacting. Muhire grabbed her hand and then put his arm around her. When she continued to express her disinterest, Muhire shoved her into the bushes and down a steep embankment. He physically assaulted her and slammed her head into the ground.

Once out of sight, Muhire began to sexually assault the victim. She attempted to defend herself with a knife she had for protection, but Muhire disarmed her and used it against her. Muhire told her he would kill her. Yet despite all of this, the victim did not give up and kept fighting. At some point, while Muhire attempted to move the victim deeper into the brush, she was able to get away and ran until Muhire caught her and tackled her to the ground.

By this time, the victim had run close enough to the road to be visible to a passerby, who yelled and frightened Muhire off. Community members were then able to help the victim and called law enforcement.

Salem Police Department did extensive canvassing in the area and eventually found Muhire. At the time he was found, Muhire was still possessing a distinct jacket that he was wearing during the assault.

At sentencing, Judge Queen addressed the defendant saying, "You showed zero mercy to [the victim] The violence you perpetrated and the terror you subjected her to as she walked alone to work - leaving her battered, bruised, and sexually violated - this was not an awful mistake, not someone overcome with lust. This is someone who is a danger to any woman who chooses to walk alone or be in your presence, frankly."

This case was prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Katharine Semple. During the sentencing, Semple said: "The defendant preyed on the victim. He picked someone walking alone, who he thought was weak, and who was little. What he didn't anticipate was that though she was little, she was fierce and she would fight him every step of what he did to her that night."

"The victim showed tremendous strength and courage," said Chief Deputy District Attorney Brendan Murphy. "Hopefully she will find peace in some measure of justice as she heals from the horrors of this event."

The Marion County DA's Office wishes to acknowledge the thorough investigation of the dedicated detectives at the Salem Police Department.

Due to the sensitive nature of the investigation, no additional details will be released.

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