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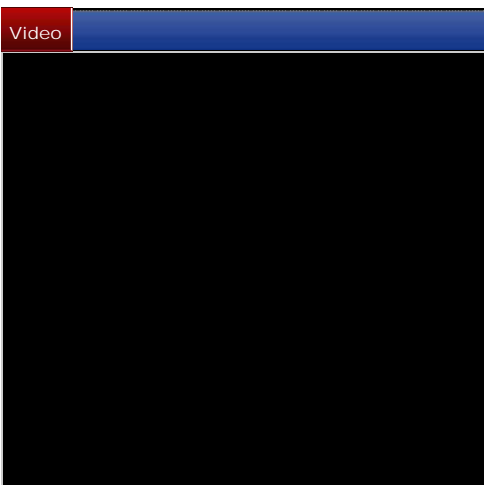
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Reported by: **Jamie Oberg**
 Email: joberg@fox23.com

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An Oklahoma Baptist minister was arrested Monday night, charged with sexual battery and rape with an instrument. The alleged victim told officers she was only 16 when the molestation began.

The accuser, is 19 and in college now, she told police that Bruce Sanders, 48 molested her throughout high school while she stayed in a Eufaula home with the pastor and his wife. According to the arrest warrant, the victim calls Sanders "daddy," but police say they are not related by blood.

FOX23's Jamie Oberg talked to arresting officers and community members. A well-known and respected preacher here at North Fork Baptist Church is in jail tonight, accused of sexual battery and rape with an instrument. The alleged victim coming forward, telling police disturbing details about what she says Sanders did to her when she was just 16 years old."

"You never want to hear that a preacher or someone with an authoritative position got charges like that," McIntosh Co. Deputy, Tonya French said.

Working as a detective, Tonya French has seen and heard all kinds of criminal cases, but it's not something that ever gets easier.

"Nothing shocks you, you think the next case won't shock the one before but people will shock you," Dep. French said.

It's hard not to handle a case like this with a heavy heart; thinking of everyone how her hometown will take the shocking allegations.

"It's shocking, it's shocking to anybody who's looked up to him, his congregation, the kids at school," she said. "He sits on several different committees and works with a lot of youth."

"We all know each other and we all go to church," Eufaula resident, Tina Hile said. "You think you know them but you don't know unless you're there every minute."

Church families know sanders as a man of God; standing up every week, as the pastor at North Fork Baptist Church.

But in Sanders' arrest warrant, he is known as "daddy" to a teenage girl who stayed with him and says over a three year period "daddy/daughter dates" were when he touched her inappropriately.

She told police it started when Sanders bought her a promise ring around her 16th birthday, a promise to stay pure until marriage.

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Detectives tell FOX23 none of the alleged sex abuse happened at the church.

"Several places they allegedly took place," Deputy French said the investigation is on-going. French says there are no other known victims and the defendant has no prior record.

"We're here to prove whether it did or did not happen," she said. "Protecting people who can't protect themselves."

Initial emotions in town are mixed.

"It's so scary to find out something like that is happening so close to home," 20-year-old Jessica Francis said.

"He'll be judged one way or another," church-going man, Clifford Tucker said.

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Clifford feels for the North Fork church family, "A lot of people are going to have trouble with this," he said. "If he's proven guilty, then I think they should throw the book at him."

Defendant, Bruce Sanders is scheduled to have an initial appearance in McIntosh County courthouse Wednesday afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

According to the affidavit, the victim has also turned over several recorded conversations with Sanders, telling him she was not comfortable with the touching and text messages from Sanders telling her he is in love with her.

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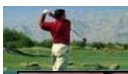
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