



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For Immediate Release
May 22, 2006

Contact: Mark Plowden
803-734-3670
mplowden@ag.state.sc.us

Attorney General to Prosecute Darlington Sex Offender

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster and Fourth Circuit Solicitor Jay Hodge announced today that the Attorney General's Office will take the lead in the prosecution of Kenneth Hinson, the Darlington County man charged with raping two teenage girls in a dungeon behind his home earlier this year.

McMaster and Hodge agreed that the Fourth Circuit Solicitor's Office and Darlington County would greatly benefit in the prosecution by utilizing the additional resources and manpower of the Attorney General's Office. Hodge noted that he is restricted in his ability to prosecute all cases due to limited resources in Darlington County.

McMaster, along with prosecutors from the Attorney General and Fourth Circuit Solicitors' offices, will prosecute the case on behalf of the state.

Hinson, 47, of 2705 White Ridge Road in Hartsville, is charged with two (2) counts of Kidnapping (§16-3-910), two (2) counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct – First Degree (§16-3-652), and two (2) counts of Assault and Battery With Intent to Kill (§16-3-620), and three (3) counts of Burglary – First Degree (§16-11-311).

According to arrest warrants, Hinson broke into the homes of two girls on March 14, 2006, kidnapped them, and took them to an underground dungeon on his property. There he bound them with tape, raped them, and left them confined in the underground chamber with no fresh air supply. After their escape, both girls required medical attention.

Due to the nature of these charges and prior convictions for similar crimes, Hinson would be sentenced to Life Without Parole if found guilty.

"These crimes are disturbing to the people of Darlington County, and I am grateful to Attorney General McMaster for his assistance in this case," said Fourth Circuit Solicitor Jay Hodge.

"The crimes alleged in this case are troubling and this office will provide a vigorous prosecution," said McMaster. "If found guilty, the people of Darlington County and South Carolina will be able to rest easier knowing that this man will never harm another child for the rest of his life."

This case is being investigated by the Darlington County Sheriff's Office.

A trial date for this case has not yet been scheduled.

McMaster stressed that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

###