

## **To protect his rights, Pana man gets yet another attorney**

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TAYLORVILLE-A 43-year-old Pana man whose case represents a conflict of interest for several local attorneys was appointed a Springfield attorney as defense counsel.

A conflict of interest exists when an attorney has competing professional interests, such as having represented another party involved in the case, which could adversely affect a defendant.

During a hearing Tuesday, Circuit Judge Ron Spears appointed Mark Wykoff to represent John C. Grimes, indicted March 19 for illegal possession of methamphetamine manufacturing material and possession of a methamphetamine precursor. The same grand jury returned a separate indictment against Grimes for Class X aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

Grimes had told the court he would hire his own attorney, and Grigsby had spoken on Grime's behalf during hearings held prior to March 26. On that date, however, Grimes said he did not have the financial means to hire a private attorney, and Grigsby bowed out.

Spears appointed attorney Hal Alexander and Public Defender Michael Havera, but both had conflicts of interest, as do other attorneys on the court's list of conflict public defenders.

With his prior criminal court experience, Wykoff filled the bill. In Christian County, he has served as co-counsel in a recent aggravated criminal sexual abuse case and in a 2006 murder case.

If Grimes is convicted in either case, he is eligible for Class X extended sentencing for prior convictions on illegal possession of methamphetamine manufacturing chemicals and residential burglary.

Spears set a bond reduction hearing for Grimes, now held on \$250,000 bond, for April 7. The judge scheduled pretrial for June 11 and jury trial for June 29.

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