

# Judge rules in abuse case

## 45-year-old to serve 6 months on reduced charge

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The 6-year-old girl had 42 injuries on her body, from the top of her head to the tops of her feet.

The injuries included scratches, bruises, pinprick marks and cuts to her arms, legs, back, chest and face.

The girl testified Wednesday that her guardian, Joyce M. Christian, 45, of Lynchburg, hurt her using a kitchen knife, a belt and her fingernails.

After listening to nearly two hours of witness testimony, Circuit Judge Mosby Perrow found Christian guilty of misdemeanor contributing to the delinquency of a minor rather than felony child abuse and neglect.

He then sentenced her to 12 months in jail with all but six months suspended.

When asked if Christian could report to jail at a later date so she could take care of some things because she baby-sits other children, Perrow said no.

"I find that frightening, and I'm going to remand you today," he said.

Lynchburg police were called to Christian's house on Early Street around

11:30 p.m. Oct. 29 after a neighbor saw the girl wandering outside alone in her pajamas with no coat or shoes on.

A police officer testified that when he arrived, Christian was reluctant to let him inside her house to check on the child's welfare and that she repeatedly interrupted his private interview with the child.

When a forensic nurse examined the girl early the next morning, she found and documented 42 separate injuries. She tes-

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