



**Rod Underhill, District Attorney**  
**1021 SW Fourth Avenue, Room 600**  
**Portland, OR 97204-1193**  
**Phone: 503-988-3162 Fax: 503-988-3643**  
**www.mcda.us**

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**James Keith, 57, receives a jail and probation sentence after a jury convicts him of strangling his 85 year old mother**

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that 57-year-old James Keith received a six month jail and 24 month probation sentence for assaulting and choking his 85 year old mother at her residence less than a month after being ordered by a judge not to have any contact with her.

“Just weeks prior to this assault, because of his escalating and alarming behavior, the court ordered Mr. Keith not to have any contact with his mother, but he completely disregarded that order and viciously attacked his mother,” said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Kate Molina, who prosecuted this case. “He purposefully took advantage of someone who is particularly vulnerable. The state has significant concerns for the safety of the community and Mr. Keith’s mother.”

A jury convicted Keith on October 30, 2019 of one count of assault in the fourth degree constituting domestic violence and one count of felony strangulation constituting domestic violence.

This investigation started on August 31, 2019 when the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office responded to reports of an assault. At trial, the state proved that Keith, without provocation, approached his mother in her kitchen and placed both hands around her throat.

The victim told law enforcement that she was unable to breathe for about 20 seconds and that the attack caused severe pain and that she feared that Keith was going to kill her.

In this case, a neighbor called 9-1-1 on behalf of the victim. While being contacted by a deputy, Keith opened a beer can and started drinking it, according to trial testimony. Law enforcement learned that Keith threatened to burn down the neighbor’s house if the incident was reported.

At trial, law enforcement testified that the victim is extremely frail and is a vulnerable person.

On June 27, 2019, Keith was formally served with an *Elderly Persons and Persons with Disability Abuse Prevention Act*, which was intended to prevent him from contacting his mother and from coming within 150 feet of her residence in Fairview, Oregon.

On July 4, 2019, Keith knowingly went to his mother’s residence in violation of the protection order.

The court found him in contempt on October 16, 2019 of violating the restraining order.

The court sentenced Keith to six months in jail for violating the no contact order. He will have to serve the entire jail sentence day-for-day unless his probation officer deems him eligible for early release for housing or treatment.

On the felony strangulation case, the court put Keith on 24 months of formal probation.

As part of his probation, Keith will be supervised by the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice’s Domestic Violence Unit and will not be allowed to have contact with his mother and cannot go within 150 feet of any location that she frequents, such as a doctor’s office. Furthermore, Keith will have to complete any drug and alcohol treatment, program, classes and counseling that is ordered and must remain offense-free while on probation.

If he violates any part of his probation, he could be sentenced to an additional 10 months in prison.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit is committed to ending family abuse. The unit engages in evidence-based prosecution of domestic violence. It emphasizes the importance of victim advocacy services for all victims and their children. Even when a prosecutor decides to proceed with a case without a victim's participation, every effort is made to offer the victim advocacy services from available resources.

The *Elderly Persons and Persons with Disability Abuse Prevention Act* was passed in 1995 to protect elderly and persons with disabilities. Under the act, an "elderly person" is "a person 65 years of age or older who is not subject to ORS 441.640 to ORS 441.665.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office recognizes Multnomah County Sheriff Deputy Mark Farmer for his dedicated efforts investigating this case and Multnomah County Victim Advocate Emma Kane for the advocacy and support she provided the victim and her family throughout this case.

**Resources:**

- [Multnomah County District Attorney's Office: Victim Assistance Program](#): 503-988-3222
- [Call to Safety](#): 1-888-235-5333
- [The Gateway Center for Domestic Violence Services](#): 503-988-6400

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Contact: Brent Weisberg, Communications Director  
Multnomah County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: 503.988.6567 | Email: [Brent.Weisberg@mcdca.us](mailto:Brent.Weisberg@mcdca.us)