



## Full report: Youth mentor arrested on charge of raping girl

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**Katherine Sayre, Press-Register**



Sherman Tate, 33, was being held in Mobile County Metro Jail on charges of second-degree rape and second-degree sodomy.

MOBILE, Ala. -- A mentor in a program that works with Strickland Youth Center to help troubled teens was arrested Friday and charged with raping a young girl, prosecutors said.

Sherman Fitzgerald Tate, 33, was being held in Mobile County Metro Jail on charges of second-degree rape and second-degree sodomy.

He worked in the Mobile Youth Advocate Program, a branch of a national program aimed at helping teens in juvenile court.

During the six-month program, advocates try, through an intense mentoring relationship, to improve their youths' behavior and keep them from committing more crimes.

Mobile County Assistant District Attorney Keith Blackwood said the victim was someone Tate met "as a result of his duties with the Youth Advocate Program." He said there is no evidence that the case involved force.

Blackwood said the girl is between 12 and 16 years old, and an investigation as to whether there were other victims is ongoing.

Mobile County Circuit Judge Edmond Naman said that the Youth Advocate Program contracted with Strickland Youth Center starting in December.

Naman said he was "terribly upset about these allegations" and the court immediately notified Department of Human Resources and the Child Advocacy Center when the accusations were reported.

"We're seeing very good results from this program, dealing with very difficult kids who we don't often see good results from," Naman said. "So, it's my desire to keep this program going ... I certainly want to assure everyone that we're doing everything we can to make sure our kids are safe."

Naman reported earlier this week that an employee of the mentor program was being investigated on allegations of "inappropriate behavior," but declined to identify him at that time.

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