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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Man Found Guilty of Kidnapping and Raping Teen Walking to School**

**ORANGE COUNTY, Fla.** – A jury found an Orange County man, Victor Baten, 30, guilty of Kidnapping and Sexual Battery after he grabbed a child on the way to school and assaulted the teen at gunpoint.

On January 14, 2021, the victim was walking to school in Pine Hills when the suspect, later identified as Baten, approached the victim. Baten grabbed the victim by the arm and showed the teen the handgun in his waistband. He forced the victim toward the backyard of an abandoned home and stated he would kill the victim if they made a loud noise. Baten sexually battered the victim twice and threatened to kill the victim again before he walked away. The victim continued to school and immediately told the first teacher they saw what happened.

The victim provided a brief description of the suspect to Orange County Sheriff's Office deputies. Investigators collected evidence from the scene and DNA evidence from the victim's sexual assault exam, including from the victim's clothing. The DNA was confirmed to be a match to Baten.

Baten was arrested and interviewed by investigators. During his interview, he changed his story about what happened several times. He initially denied interacting with the victim but later claimed the two had consensual sex.

After a four-day trial, it took the jury 45 minutes to find Baten guilty of Kidnapping with Intent to Inflict Harm, Kidnapping with Intent to Commit a Felony with a Firearm and two counts of Sexual Battery with a Firearm. He could get up to life in prison but faces a 50-year minimum mandatory for being a Dangerous Sexual Felony Offender and a firearm minimum mandatory. He will be sentenced the week of February 12, 2024.

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