

## **Driver in deadly Chattanooga bus crash arrested on rape charge in Nashville**

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*Reported by Briona Arradondo*

NASHVILLE, TN (WSMV) -

A man convicted of killing six children in a Chattanooga school bus crash is now in a Davidson County jail.

Johnthony Walker, 25, faces an aggravated statutory rape charge of a 14-year-old girl. He was arrested Thursday night at the victim's house after her parents called the police.

In an affidavit, Walker admits to having sex with the girl and it allegedly happened five times while he was staying with the family over the last few months.

He's been out on bond while his conviction goes through the appeals process. He was found guilty of killing six children in a December 2016 Chattanooga school bus crash.

News4 sent emails to his attorney and made calls to the prosecutor to find out whether he should have stayed in jail, but they would not talk about it.

Nashville defense attorney David Raybin said the Chattanooga judge probably weighed Walker's history and the risk, allowing him to leave.

"It's my understanding that the judge encouraged him to leave because he was under death threats down there," said Raybin.

With the new rape charge, the question is whether his appeal bond will be revoked. News4 found out Hamilton County District Attorney General Neal Pinkston moved to file a motion to have it revoked on Friday. But this week, the judge who heard the case filed a motion saying he doesn't have jurisdiction anymore. Walker's appeals case is now up to the Criminal Court of Appeals.

"I don't think this guy will be out on bond anytime soon. I'm sure he'll stay in jail in Nashville while his case is pending here and then his appellate bond will be revoked in the Chattanooga case," said Raybin.

Attorneys said a person charged with statutory rape faces two to four years in prison for every count.

Walker is being held on a \$350,000 bond. He is scheduled to be in court Monday.

Walker was found guilty on six counts of criminally negligent homicide in connection with the bus crash in December 2016.



Johnthony Walker was arrested in Nashville on aggravated statutory rape charge. (Source: Metro Nashville PD)