

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor

Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter

UPDATE: March 31, 2025

CASE FILE: John Whisonant



AGE: 70 (born 1/25/1955)

INCARCERATED: Marion Correctional Institution

PAROLE HEARING: April 2025 (sixth parole hearing)

SENTENCED: Aggregate sentence of 15 to 75 years

Whisonant was convicted by a jury in 1985 in the rapes of four family members — three girls and one boy ages 5 to 9 — in Howland. A count involving a fifth family member — a 4-year-old girl — was dismissed to spare her the ordeal of testifying at trial.

Sentencing laws were different back then for those convicted of raping young children, Prosecutor Dennis Watkins said. Today, those offenders would face a maximum life in prison.

Watkins wrote that Whisonant is a serial rapist and a “textbook pedophile.” He stated an examination of three of Whisonant’s female victims found healing lacerations and tears in their private areas.

While in prison, Whisonant still has trouble controlling himself. Since 2022, he has been written up for various prison rules infractions five different times, including stealing and assault. His latest write-up was November 27, 2024.

Marcia Tiger, former executive director of Trumbull County Children Services, wrote in a letter that: *“The Whisonant case became the standard bearer for horrific sexual abuse cases in our county.”*

QUOTE:

“If released from prison, this guy who has assaulted others in prison may have the urge to once again prey on the youngest among us! Let’s make sure not to give him that opportunity by continuing the long remaining sentence the court saw fit to give him in 1985.”

- **Dennis Watkins, Trumbull County Prosecutor**

Members of the public may submit comments about the potential parole of John Whisonant. Comments can be made through the ODRC website: <https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/1-parole/parole-board-hearing-input> For more information, contact Guy M. Vogrin, public information officer/investigator for the Trumbull County Prosecutor’s Office at 330-675-2485.