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## Former minister appears in court on sexual assault charges after missing teen found in Monette

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MONETTE, AR (KAIT) – A former minister facing sexual assault charges appeared in a Craighead County courtroom Monday.

According to the Craighead County Prosecutor's Office, Charles Hughes had his trial continued until a later date.

Sheriff's Department, Charles Hughes was arrested on March 21, 2012 after a cell phone ping from a missing 17-year-old Nebraska girl hit in a mobile home park in Monette.

The teenager told Region 8 News off camera that she is the cousin of Hughes' wife. The teenager had changed her appearance, and went on to say she was not kidnapped and came to Arkansas on her own free will. Deputies say she was found at 310 Braden Drive in Monette.

The Monette Police Department was contacted in March 2012, by Nebraska authorities in regards to the missing 17-year-old girl from Fairbury, Nebraska. Local authorities had been searching for the girl ever since.

Deputies say a woman in Monette alerted them of the missing girl after receiving an e-mail alert from Region 8 News.

"When I received that alert on my cell phone from Ch. 8 as breaking news, my heart broke because I thought I recognized her. I did alert the city police here in Monette as soon as I recognized her picture," said the neighbor.

The FBI is also involved and exploring state and federal charges.

Hughes was the minister at Monette Church of Christ, and was terminated after the arrest.

Hughes is charged with sexual assault in the first degree, obstructing governmental operations, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Region 8 News will continue to track this story and being you the latest details as soon as they become available.

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