

A Seymour couple was assigned a jury trial date of September 17 in Scott Superior Court after they were charged in an alleged assault on their adopted 12-year-old son while at Hardy Lake.

The incident was reported by the youngster, who called 9-1-1 on a cell phone on June 17 and said he was being abused. Deputy Shawn Mayer of the Sheriff's Department was dispatched to the popular state recreational area to investigate.

When the officer arrived at the lake's entrance to the camping facilities, he saw a young male walking at a fast pace. Deputy Mayer said the child was "...clearly distraught..." and had been crying. He asked the child to get into his patrol car, which he did as Conservation Officer Neal Brewington pulled up behind the patrol car. The officers observed a black passenger car pull alongside the road across from the officers' cars.

While the child was in his car, the deputy asked the boy for an explanation. The child said his parents had accused him of wetting the bed last night. he said he tried to explain that he had not, but his mother, identified as Loretta Jade Hamblen, 54, had slapped him on the face and neck twice and his father had grabbed him by the neck and had pushed him into a camper door, where the child had struck his head.

Deputy Mayer then approached the black car, where he found Randall Hamblen, 56, the child's father behind the wheel. When he asked the father what had happened, Hamblen allegedly told the officer that the parents and confronted the child and "...things basically escalated from there..."

Deputy Mayer directed the father to return to the family's campsite, and he called the

Department of Child Services (DCS) for assistance. In talking to the mother and getting her description of what happened, Deputy Mayer said he told the parents that, though the State of Indiana allows parents to discipline their children, parents cannot hit them in the face or choke them.

Advised they could pack up their belongings and notify family members or friends to come retrieve them, the Hamblens began doing so. While the couple was cleaning up the campsite, Deputy Mayer said he heard Randall Hamblen stated, "He's not coming back here." His wife reportedly said, "We've raised one child and never had to smack them like that."

Deputy Mayer was joined by Deputy Justin Cheatham. Deputy Cheatham placed the couple into custody and drove them to the Scott County Security Center in Scottsburg. The child was placed in the custody of a DCS staff member.

At their initial court hearing on June 18, the couple entered not guilty pleas. Randall Hamblen is charged with one count each of battery resulting in bodily injury to a victim less than 14 years of age and strangulation, both Class D felonies. Loretta Hamblen faces one count of battery to a child, also a Class D felony.

Their bonds were each set at \$15,000 corporate surety/10% cash. Each filed cash bonds on June 22.

Neither is allowed to have contact with the child pending their trials.