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Little girl molester guilty: Lured kids from Jehovah's Witness group, promised fun at Chuck E. Cheese

POSTED BY RYAN POSNER ON APRIL 28, 2017 IN OC | 1,032 VIEWS | LEAVE A RESPONSE

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Photo by John Schreiber.

A Santa Ana man was convicted Friday of several felony counts for molesting young girls that he met through his Jehovah's Witness congregation.

Jose Luis Aguilera, 42, was found guilty of four counts of lewd acts on a child younger than 14, but jurors deadlocked on one count of kidnapping for child molesting and four counts of lewd acts on a child younger than 14.

Aguilera was acquitted of another count of lewd acts on a child younger than 14, court records show.

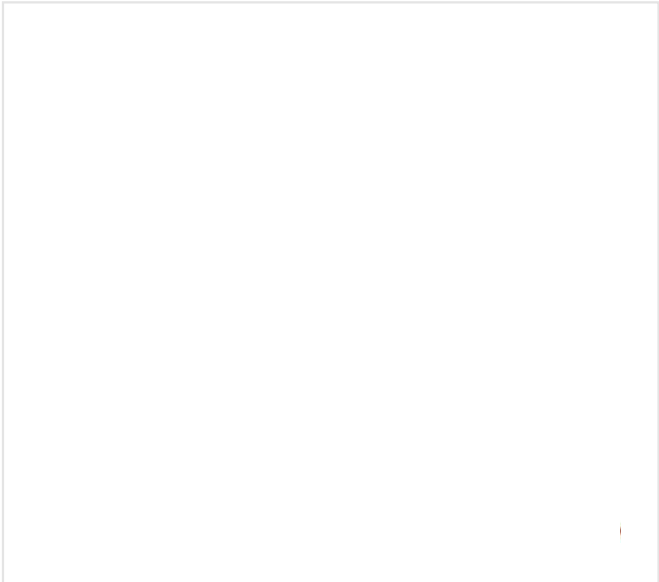
A May 19 sentencing date was set, with a pretrial hearing on the deadlocked counts scheduled for the same date. The prosecutor on the case could not be reached to say whether the defendant will be retried on those counts.

Aguilera was accused of molesting four girls aged 8 to 12, in a period between January 2012 and July 2015.

Aguilera was confronted after he took one of the children to his apartment on July 22, 2015, Senior Deputy District Attorney Heather Brown told jurors.

The defendant told the girl's mother that he planned to take her daughter and his 6-year-old daughter to a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant, but his child wasn't with him when he arrived to pick her up, according to Brown.

Aguilera told the girl he needed to stop by his apartment to change his shirt and then he would pick up his daughter at school so they could all go to the restaurant, Brown said. When they got there, Aguilera changed his shirt and then pulled down the pants of



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the girl, who was so “distraught” that she ran out of the room crying and washed her face in the bathroom, Brown said.

Aguilera took the girl with him to pick up his daughter and sign her out of school, and they eventually ended up at Chuck E. Cheese, where the alleged victim threw up because she was so upset, Brown said.

Aguilera told his daughter that the girl had an upset stomach because she ate a bag of peanuts, the prosecutor said.

When the girl got home, she was inconsolable and wouldn’t talk to her older sister, but told her parents what happened when they got home, Brown said.

The girl’s parents called police the next day, and a “covert call” was set up between the defendant and the youngster, Brown said.

The prosecutor told jurors to listen carefully to the defendant’s responses in the call as Aguilera’s wife comes and goes from the room during the conversation.

Other parents started talking after hearing rumors about the congregation’s elders and a police investigation, Brown said. One of the moms remembered a year earlier babysitting the defendant’s daughter, who said she saw her father kissing another girl, Brown said.

A discussion about that alleged incident led the parents to two other girls who claimed to have been molested, Brown said.

Under questioning from police, Aguilera initially denied touching any of the girls, but later gave confusing and inconsistent replies that included claims that he couldn’t remember whether he molested the girls or not, the prosecutor said.

Aguilera’s attorney, Sara Ross of the Orange County Public Defender’s Office, called it “a case of false stories, false memories and false accusations.”

Ross noted that two of the girls are cousins and three of the four were in the same congregation. Two of the girls go to the same school, she said.

The defense attorney alleged that all of the talking among the congregants prompted the girls to make false allegations, and he also contended that social workers also asked the girls questions in a way that put details into their stories that weren’t there before.

One girl changed her story four times over multiple interviews, she said.

One girl initially denied she was molested, Ross said, adding the girl told police, “He’s nice to me. He gave me a teddy bear.”

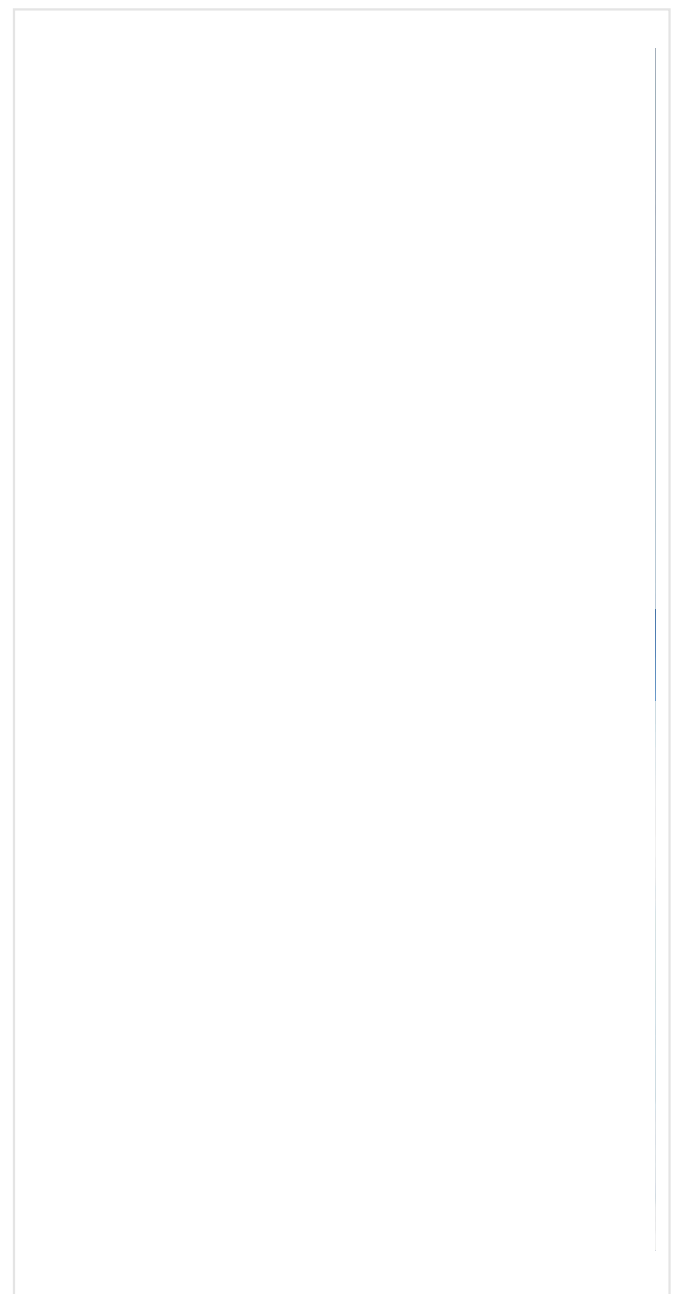
Brown alleged that the defendant plied the girls with money and gifts and took them to eat at Burger King to keep them from saying anything about being molested.

–City News Service

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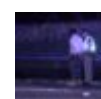
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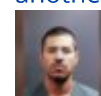
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