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Ex-West Sacramento cop Sergio Alvarez was found guilty Thursday of 17 counts of sexually assaulting women while patrolling the streets of West Sacramento in 2011 and 2012.



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Jury finds West Sacramento cop guilty in sexual assault case

By Darrell Smith

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Former West Sacramento police officer Sergio Alvarez could be imprisoned for life for kidnapping and sexually assaulting women while on patrol in 2011 and 2012.

Alvarez was found guilty Thursday of 18 kidnapping and sex assault counts in what Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig called a "horrific betrayal of trust."

"We are asking that he spend the rest of his life in prison," Reisig said at a Woodland news conference following the verdict.

Alvarez, who grew up in West Sacramento and graduated from River City High School, faces "multiple life sentences," said lead prosecutor Garrett Hamilton, meaning Alvarez is unlikely to be eligible for parole.

Sentencing is scheduled for April 4 in Yolo Superior Court.

Prosecutors called Alvarez a rogue cop who targeted drug addicts and prostitutes, forcing them into sex in his patrol cruiser, back alleys and wooded lots, banking that they wouldn't be believed if they went to authorities.

But after the jury deadlocked on 10 other counts of rape, kidnapping and forced sex acts, some frustrated jurors said they failed to give the victims full justice in the case.

"He sought them out because he knew they wouldn't be listened to," said juror John Overholzer outside the courtroom. "I feel what's ironic is that they go into a courtroom and they still weren't listened to."

Hamilton later said talk of retrying the 10 deadlocked counts was "premature."

Alvarez's defense attorney claimed his accusers lied to authorities about the attacks and said one of the women had a months-long sexual relationship with the former cop. Calls to Alvarez attorney J. Toney's office were not immediately returned Thursday.

Alvarez, 38, showed no reaction as Yolo Superior Court Judge Timothy Fall read the guilty verdicts, one after the other. Minutes later, the disgraced former West Sacramento police officer was led in restraints through the corridors of the old Yolo County courthouse for the ride back to Yolo County jail, where he has spent the last 12 months in custody.

At the District Attorney's Office, West Sacramento Police Chief Thomas McDonald said he is conducting a "line-by-line" review of department policies and procedures in the wake of the Alvarez case.

"We've been looking at everything in the department, talking with the men and women. We're looking at policies, procedures and personnel," McDonald said. "We want to be clear, transparent and take care of business. We want to make sure we maintain the trust of the city and its people. It's important to us and to me personally."

On Thursday, juror Linda Bond of Davis said she hoped the decision offered a measure of

redemption for the women assaulted by Alvarez.

“I hope that our verdict reaffirms the dignity and worth of these women who spoke,” Bond said.

A frustrated Overholtzer, speaking to reporters after the verdict Thursday, said he and other jurors feared the women who came forward were being ignored and were angered by the panel’s impasse on the other 10 counts.

“I hope to God that the DA retries for the hung counts,” he said, calling Alvarez “a serial rapist.”

“We had people who couldn’t or wouldn’t logically look at evidence. It was frustrating,” Overholtzer said. “We didn’t give them full justice and they deserved that.”



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