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San Diego News

Police Officer Convicted Of Soliciting Sexual Favors

POSTED: 11:02 am PDT March 28, 2007
UPDATED: 5:52 pm PDT March 28, 2007

SAN DIEGO -- An El Cajon police officer was convicted Wednesday of using his position of authority to persuade women in his custody to have sex with him or perform sex acts in his presence.

William Robert Taylor, 27, was denied bail and locked up pending sentencing, which is set for April 26. He faces up to eight and a half years in prison.

Jurors deliberated for more than three days before finding the three-year officer guilty of two counts of asking for or taking a bribe and one count each of sexual penetration under the color of authority, sexual battery and petty theft.

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Taylor was acquitted of four charges -- three counts of asking for or taking a bribe and one count of intimidating a witness.

The panel was unable to reach an unanimous decision on five other charges -- two counts of sexual battery and one count each of sexual penetration under the color of authority, sexual penetration with a foreign object and requesting or taking a bribe.

Judge Charles Ervin scheduled an April 9 hearing, at which prosecutor Robert Kearney is expected to announce if his office would seek to retry the unresolved counts.

"There's still work to be done and we're going to do it," defense attorney Alec Rose said outside the courtroom. "I have a client who's asked me to fight for him."

As a clerk read the verdicts, Taylor's mother shouted at the jury.

"You stupid idiots! He's not guilty," the woman said. "I love my son. He didn't do any of this."

But Taylor, who had been placed on unpaid leave pending the resolution of the case, was stoic as the verdicts were read. He looked at each juror as the panel was polled on the verdicts.

Taylor could have been eligible for an 18-year term if convicted of all the charges.

Taylor's attorney said his client, who is married and has a daughter, was mainly concerned for his family and their welfare. The defendant's wife was not in court for the verdicts.

According to trial testimony, DNA found on the tip of Taylor's service baton matched that of a woman

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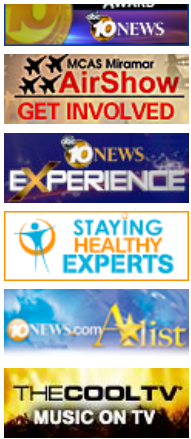
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who said she was made to strip naked and masturbate in the back of a patrol car while Taylor watched.

Among other things, the prosecution accused him of making another woman strip and masturbate in a police vehicle, forcing a teenager to remove her clothes in her apartment, and fondling a woman as he frisked her.

A number of women testified that the officer repeatedly asked them what they would do to avoid going to jail.

Rose told jurors in his closing argument that investigators decided too early that his client was guilty. He claimed they ignored all the other female detainees who had no complaints about Taylor.

"I do not believe the witnesses were credible," Rose said outside court.

The El Cajon Police Department issued a statement following Taylor's conviction.

"We all sympathize with Mr. Taylor's family members and friends for what they are going through," the statement read. "However, the victims in this case are our primary concern. All of these women demonstrated courage and personal strength as they participated in the judicial process.

"The men and women of the El Cajon Police Department believe we are caretakers of the public confidence and trust, and as such are responsible for enforcing the laws in an ethical manner," the statement continued.

"It is a travesty that this officer chose to violate that trust and betray the code of law enforcement ethics. His actions are not indicative of the commitment and dedication demonstrated by police officers serving this community."

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