

Ex-police investigator convicted of sexually abusing child | Picayune Item

By Staff Report

picayuneitem.com

2005 Cop Pedophile Tom Pustay

A former Pass Christian police investigator faces up to 120 years in prison after being found guilty of sexually abusing a child.

A Harrison County jury deliberated nearly seven hours Friday before finding Tom Pustay guilty on five of the six counts he faced.

Circuit Judge Steve Simpson ordered Pustay into custody. A sentencing date was not immediately set.

Jurors found Pustay guilty on two counts of touching of a child for lustful purposes and guilty on three of the four counts of sexual battery.

“Maybe he was a good cop, but that made him a better criminal, a better child molester,” Prosecutor John Gargiulo said to jurors.

Pustay, his face slack and eyes glazed, turned around to face his wife of more than 30 years and asked to see her before he was taken away by deputies. His request was denied.

The victim, a family acquaintance, wept as she left the courtroom with relatives. She had accused the former chief investigator of the Pass Christian Police Department of sexual misconduct that started when she was 9 and lasted seven years.

Pustay worked in law enforcement for 23 years before he resigned after being arrested in March 2005. Pustay denied the accusations and said he lied to Harrison County sheriff’s investigators about giving the child a flavored condom. Initially, he told investigators he gave her the condom because he knew she liked to play with them. The packaged condom was submitted as evidence. Pustay testified he gave it to her for protection, saying she had a boyfriend.

In a recorded interview played in court, Pustay’s wife, Karen Pustay, said her husband had confessed having sex with the girl when the child was about 12 or 13. During the trial, Karen Pustay testified she had told investigators that because she was in a panic.