



Former CHP Lt. John Swaim found guilty of child molestation

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John Swaim, a former California Highway Patrol lieutenant, was found guilty of four counts of child molestation Tuesday after days of jury deliberations.

The verdict comes even though the youngest of his victims recanted claims that she was molested, a key part of Swaim's defense.

Swaim worked at the Highway Patrol station in Winterhaven and was accused of two counts each of a lewd act upon a child and oral copulation of a person under 14.

The victims in the case are now 20 years old and 17 years old, and the acts that prompted Swaim's conviction happened more than a decade ago.

Deputy Imperial County District Attorney Heather Trapnell said Swaim faces up to 10 years in state prison and will have to register as a sex offender.

Swaim, who is related to both victims, had pleaded not guilty to the charges and was free on bail up until Tuesday, when the court remanded him into custody on the prosecution's request.

This request was disputed by defense attorney Bob Espinosa.

Espinosa asserted that the safety of the victims wasn't at risk and noted that "Mr. Swaim has never once shied away from any of the accusations ... he (has) not shied away from going forward with everything that may come down upon (him)."

Espinosa then asked Imperial County Superior Court Judge Christopher Plourd to allow Swaim to remain free on his own recognizance until his sentencing hearing.

Trapnell rebutted and referred to the accusations and the allegations brought forward by various victims before calling once again for Swaim being taken into custody.

"He (Swaim) faces substantial prison custody as a result of the jury's findings," Plourd said before explaining that his "overwhelming" concern is that evidence presented suggests that Swaim "has a problem and is a threat to the public."

"So for all of those reasons, I am going to remand your client," Plourd said, setting the sentencing for March 5

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