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## Ex-cop faces up to 25 years after pleading guilty to rape, other charges

March 27, 2012, 7:22 p.m. EDT

McClatchy/Tribune - MCT Information Services

WEST CHESTER, Pa. — A former Kennett Square, Pa., police officer who told young female victims that he was possessed by a spirit that needed to have sex with them has pleaded guilty.

Just before his trial was scheduled to begin Monday, Jose Manuel Santiago, 56, of Newark, Del., pleaded guilty in Chester County Court, admitting to three counts of rape, three counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse and one count of aggravated indecent assault.

The offenses will subject him to an evaluation to determine whether he qualifies as a sexually violent predator under Megan's Law.

Under the terms of a plea agreement negotiated between Assistant District Attorney Kimberly A. Callahan and defense attorney Christian J. Hoey, Santiago will spend 12½ to 25 years in prison, followed by 10 years of probation.

Hoey said his client had struggled with the decision. "It was very difficult for him," Hoey said, explaining that Santiago weighed the plea offer against the risk of time he could have faced if convicted.

Prosecutors said the county's Child Abuse Unit began an investigation in August 2009 after receiving complaints from three of the victims, who were all younger than 14 when the abuse began. They said Santiago repeatedly molested them, usually at his former residence in Toughkenamon.

The assaults occurred from 1992 through 2000 for periods ranging from two to seven years, Callahan said. Investigators found other victims, but the statute of limitations had expired, she said.

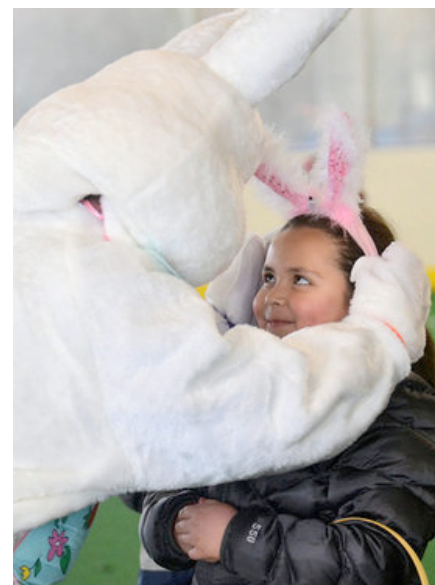
In October, President Judge James P. MacElree II granted Callahan's request to introduce limited evidence related to four other victims. Although the statute of limitations had expired, she argued that the assaults demonstrated a 30-year criminal pattern by the defendant and were needed to support the credibility of the four main victims, who did not make prompt complaints.

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3:33 PM

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Callahan said Santiago, who practiced the religion Santeria, told his victims he was possessed by a spirit who needed to have sex with the victims to protect them and their families from harm.

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- [SOUTH](#) March 31, 2012, 3:33 p.m. EDT
- [Bruins-Islanders Sums](#) March 31, 2012, 3:32 p.m. EDT

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