

Local/State 

Kennett Square cop admits to raping girls

Tuesday, March 27, 2012



55-year-old Jose Manuel Santiago pleaded guilty to three counts of rape, three counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, and one count of aggravated indecent assault.

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 Action News

WEST CHESTER, Pa. - March 27, 2012 (WPVI) -- A former Kennett Square police officer pleaded guilty Monday to the rape and sexual assault of four young girls, and was sentenced to 12½ to 25 years in prison.

55-year-old Jose Manuel Santiago pleaded guilty to three counts of rape, three counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, and one count of aggravated indecent assault.

The incidents and victims were spread over several years, spanning from January 1992 to November 2000. As part of a plea agreement, Santiago was sentenced to 12½ to 25 years in state prison followed by a 10-year probation period.

Prosecutors say the victims, ages 9 to 19, would go to Santiago's Toughkenamon home and to a location in Chester where they practiced the Caribbean religion Santeria, which including the use of trances for communicating with spirits and gods, as well as animal sacrifices and sacred drumming.

Santiago would allegedly sacrifice animals, set his hands on fire and claimed to be possessed by a spirit named Elegua, who needed sex. Fearing the wrath of Elegua the girls were forced to submit to Santiago's advances.

Santiago was a part of the Kennett Square police force from 1998 to 2010, but resigned following his May 2010 arrest.

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