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News

## **WITH VIDEOS: Former officer convicted of second-degree criminal sexual conduct**

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Supporters of Thomas Cupples broke into tears Monday when the former police officer accused of molesting a girl was found guilty of second-degree criminal sexual conduct, a felony that carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

While some people welcomed the verdict, Cupples' defense attorney said there were multiple inconsistencies in the girl's testimony and no evidence that his client had done anything improper.

"We were pretty disappointed with the verdict because of all of the inconsistencies and lies that we believe that the victim told," attorney Elias Muawad said. "The verdict should have been not guilty on all counts."

Cupples, of Oxford, was accused of sexually assaulting the girl on different occasions when she was 11 through 13 years old. He was charged with two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, and the jury decided to convict him of two counts of the lesser offense of second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Oakland Circuit Judge Shalina Kumar, who took the verdict in the absence of presiding judge Nanci Grant, revoked Cupples' bond. During the hearing, Cupples was seen turning around from his seat at the defense table and mouthing words to his family members. Later, he said, "I love you, too," as he was being led out of the courtroom by deputies.



In her closing argument Friday, Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Tricia Dare told jurors that the testimony of the girl, who is now 14, was supported by other evidence.

Dare said DNA evidence was found linking Cupples with the scene of the alleged assaults and that a computer taken from his home had images of the girl and evidence showing that two sexual assault websites had been accessed.

Muawad questioned the credibility of the girl and other witnesses. He said the images on the computer showed nothing inappropriate. He also said that the two cookies for pornographic websites found on Cupples' computer came from an infected disc that Cupples had downloaded after he was asked to investigate potential pornography viewing by a municipal employee.