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## Former police officer convicted in indecent liberties case

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A former Wichita police officer waived his right to a jury trial Thursday and was found guilty by a judge of sexually abusing two young children.

District Judge Jeff Syrios found Joseph McGill, 28, guilty of two counts of aggravated indecent liberties with a child after a five-minute bench trial that saw the prosecution and defense stipulate to a set of facts that were presented at McGill's preliminary hearing in June. Syrios set sentencing for March 1.

Defense lawyer Mark Schoenhofer said he plans to appeal the conviction and an earlier decision by Syrios to allow prosecutors to admit into evidence incriminating statements that McGill made to his wife, a counselor and a polygraph examiner. Schoenhofer argued that the statements were privileged and inadmissible.

McGill pleaded guilty in January 2012 in an unrelated case to sexual battery while on duty as a police officer and was sentenced to three years probation. Those charges stemmed from separate incidents in November 2010 and February 2011. McGill, who had been with the Wichita Police Department for about three years, resigned after those charges were filed.

At his preliminary hearing in the indecent liberties case, McGill's wife testified that her husband confided to her after a therapy session that he had committed a sexual act on a 3-month-old child and a 1-year-old child. The stipulation made at the bench trial said McGill also made incriminating statements to a counselor and on a set of written questions that were given in preparation for a polygraph exam that was ordered in McGill's earlier case.

Schoenhofer argued in a motion to suppress those statements that Kansas law requires that criminal charges be based on more than just a confession.

Prosecutors countered that McGill's multiple confessions were admissible in court, and they said the age of the victims was sufficient evidence to corroborate the confessions.

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