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L.A. County sheriff's deputy acquitted of child molestation

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A Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy charged earlier this year with child molestation has been found not guilty on all counts, his lawyer said Friday.

A downtown L.A. jury deliberated about an hour before acquitting Oscar Rodriguez of 13 misdemeanor charges of molesting his stepdaughter, defense attorney Randall Rich said.

Rich criticized the Los Angeles Police Department's probe of the allegations, saying the investigation appeared to be more interested in bringing down a sheriff's deputy than determining the truth.

"He is not a child molester," Rich said. "My client is joyful at knowing that the justice system worked and that he will have the opportunity to continue working in the community as a sheriff's deputy helping people."

Rich said a judge, a prosecutor and several lawyers with the public defender's office testified as character witnesses for Rodriguez, who worked for years as a courtroom bailiff in the Airport Courthouse before moving to patrol. He said his client has been on unpaid leave since the charges were filed in June and plans to ask to return to work.

A sheriff's spokesman said he could not comment on Rodriguez's case. He said in cases involving deputies charged with crimes, the department can conduct its own internal affairs investigation into the allegations once the court proceedings are complete.

Rodriguez was also named in grand jury testimony in the case of a fellow deputy, [Henry Marin, who was convicted earlier this year](#) of trying to smuggle heroin inside a burrito to inmates in a courthouse holding cell. Rodriguez, who was not charged in that case, was named as another potential sheriff's employee that an inmate leader believed was willing to smuggle heroin behind bars.

Rich said his client was not involved in any smuggling and told The Times late Friday that a district attorney's official had notified him that the investigation was complete and his client would not be charged. The D.A. official could not be reached for comment.

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