

Ex-WSP lieutenant pleads guilty to sex abuse

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2014 Cop pedophile

Former Washington State Patrol Lt. Kenneth S. Garrison pleaded guilty Wednesday in Clark County Superior Court to charges related to the sexual abuse of two relatives.

"I'm very sorry for my actions and the harm I brought to (the victims') entire family for the past 15 years," Garrison said in a statement read aloud by Judge Scott Collier.

"Is this a true and accurate statement?" Collier asked.

"Yes," Garrison replied.

In an agreement with prosecutors, Garrison, 52, of Vancouver entered guilty pleas Wednesday to first-degree child molestation, first-degree incest and possession of depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct. He is scheduled to be sentenced at 11 a.m. March 20 in front of Judge Robert Lewis.

He faces between eight and nearly 11 years in prison, said Garrison's defense attorney, Shon Bogar.

In exchange for his guilty plea, Senior Deputy Prosecutor Camara Banfield dropped charges of another count of first-degree incest, second-degree incest, second-degree rape and eight counts of possession of depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The child pornography was found on Garrison's phone when he was arrested, Banfield said.

Clark County sheriff's deputies arrested Garrison in January 2014 at the Rodeway Inn and Suites, 2323 N.E. 181st Ave. in Gresham, Ore., on suspicion of sexually assaulting a relative between 2006 and 2013 in Clark County.

He was held in the Clark County Jail in lieu of \$1 million bail and has not been free since his arrest more than a year ago.

The case prompted the Cowlitz County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to review a 2001 case in which Garrison was accused of touching the private parts of a 6-year-old relative while the child was sleeping, according to court papers. The victim in the Cowlitz County case was different from the victim in the Clark County case. Garrison was charged with the crime in Cowlitz County more than 10 years ago, but the charge was later dismissed.

The 2001 allegation against Garrison led to an internal investigation by State Patrol that ended in Garrison's termination, according to personnel records requested by The Columbian. Garrison was fired in 2003 and then decertified as a peace officer, State Patrol spokesman Bob Calkins

has said.

In an internal investigation, the burden of proof is lesser than in a criminal court case. Garrison's supervisor at the time reviewed the 2001 allegation and determined that there was enough proof that the sex abuse happened, Calkins said.

However, when Garrison appealed his termination, an arbitrator ruled in his favor, awarded him some back pay and ordered him back to work, according to his personnel records. He returned to duty with the State Patrol in 2008 and remained with the agency until his resignation in December 2013, when the new sex abuse allegations surfaced, Calkins said.

Prosecution of the Cowlitz County case was handed over to the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney's Office for efficiency purposes, Banfield said. The first-degree child molestation conviction was related to the older case, according to court papers.

Garrison also served as a lieutenant colonel in the Washington Army National Guard but retired Jan. 27, 2014.

The State Patrol hired Garrison in 1989. Before his resignation, he served as the lieutenant responsible for supervising troopers who patrol the Southwest Washington district, which is headquartered in Vancouver.