



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JAN. 31, 2023

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**COURT DISMISSES THREE CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES
INCLUDING ONE WITH A POTENTIAL LIFE SENTENCE**

COUNTYWIDE – In less than a week, Riverside County Superior Court Judges have dismissed three separate felony child sexual assault cases, including one where a conviction would result in a possible life sentence.

On Jan. 25, the DA's Office announced ready to begin the trial in *People v Norman Martinez Garcia*, RIF2101260. When the court announced that there were no judges available to hear the trial, prosecutors asked the court to postpone the trial until a judge became available. The court denied that request. The next day, Jan. 26, Riverside Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Prevost dismissed the case due to the court's inability to begin the trial within the timeframe required by law. Our office opposed Judge Prevost's decision, arguing that the court's decision to leave several courtrooms closed while their judges attended training, along with other judges being out ill, justified a short continuance of the case. Judge Prevost rejected that request and dismissed the case entirely. The case was immediately refiled under case number RIF2300325.

Five days later, on Jan. 30, Judge Helios J. Hernandez dismissed two additional child sexual abuse cases: *People v Daniel Cintron*, RIF2002317, and *People v Angel Torres Salas*, RIF2002269. As with the Garcia case, the District Attorney's Office announced that it was ready for each of those trials. Again, the court did not send those cases to a trial courtroom, citing their inability to begin those trials within the time required law. The District Attorney immediately refiled both cases, RIF2300354 and RIF2300353.

In the Garcia case, our office has filed six felony counts pertaining to two underage victims – including charges of rape and oral copulation involving one of the young victims. Because there are two different victims in this case, the defendant faces a possible life sentence if convicted as charged.

"I understand the need for ongoing training, however, when our courts are experiencing a crisis and engaging in the mass dismissal of cases, victims of crime deserve the right to be the priority," said DA Mike Hestrin. "Over the last three months, the courts have dismissed over 1,500 cases, some of which are serious felonies such as these three sexual assault cases involving children.

"The courts being aware of this shortage of courtrooms should be able to anticipate the needs of public safety and reschedule their trainings until the courts are fully operational," Hestrin added.

On Oct. 10, 2022, Riverside County Superior Court judges began dismissing criminal cases based on a lack of available trial courtrooms. These cases range from misdemeanor to felony cases and include all crime types. Misdemeanor cases dismissed cannot be refiled. To date, the court has dismissed more than 1,500 felony and misdemeanor cases.

The DA's Office is taking every available action to safeguard our community, such as arguing the dismissals in court, refiled dismissed felony cases, and filing appeals when appropriate.

The DA's Office is committed to keeping the public informed regarding this public safety crisis and will continue to periodically release updated information regarding case dismissals as the information becomes available.

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