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Three Providence men convicted of child molestation charges today

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Juries today in separate Providence County Superior Court trials found two Providence men guilty of first-degree child molestation and a Newport County Superior Court jury convicted a third Providence man of the same crime.



The defendants are Maximo M. Guererro, 54, of 43 Douglas Ave., 23-year-old Heriberto Rosario of 71 Steuben St., and Jonathan L. Moore, 26, whose last-known address was 70 Ralph St. in the capital city. All three defendants were ordered held without bail and immediately remanded to the ACI pending post-trial motions and sentencing.

"Child molestation cases are inherently challenging to prove because of the most obvious factor — the age of the victims. And although every defendant is constitutionally entitled to question his accuser at trial, it is always very difficult to have to watch the anguish of a child being cross-examined by an experienced defense attorney," said Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch.

"Although each case had its distinctive fact patterns, the cases are united by the courage of each of these young victims who came forward and identified their perpetrators, allowing us to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law," Lynch added. "I am very proud of the work that our prosecutors did to reach these successful verdicts today. Moreover, I am hopeful that this success will engender more faith in our system and encourage more victims to step forward."

In Superior Court Judge Judith Colenback Savage's courtroom, the jury deliberated for 90 minutes between yesterday and today before convicting Guererro of five counts — one count of first-degree and four counts of second-degree child molestation — it considered. Over the course of two days, Assistant Attorney General David Prior presented evidence that Guerrero molested the victim over a five-year period between September 2002 and July 2006, when the child disclosed the activity to the authorities. Judge Savage scheduled Oct. 31 as the date for a motion for a new trial and Dec. 12 as the sentencing date. Guerrero had been out on \$2,500 cash bail since his arraignment in January 2007. Providence Police investigated the case.

Superior Court Judge Gilbert V. Indeglia presided over the trial of the State's case against Rosario, who, witnesses testified, met his victim on Migente.com, which is a Spanish-language version of web sites such as MySpace.com or Facebook. Special Assistant Attorneys General Molly Cote and Melissa Larsen proved beyond a reasonable doubt that Rosario engaged in sexual intercourse with a female child under the age of 14. The jury deliberated for about eight hours over two days before finding the defendant guilty of two counts of first-degree child molestation. Rosario had been free on \$2,500 cash bail since his Sept. 17 arraignment in Superior Court. Judge Indeglia is scheduled to hear Rosario's motion for a new trial on Oct. 30 and set a sentencing date of Jan. 23, 2009.

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Meanwhile, a jury's conviction of Moore capped about five hours of deliberations over two days after a five-day trial in Judge Melanie Wilk Thunberg's courtroom in Newport County Superior Court. Moore was indicted on one count of first-degree child molestation for an April 2007 incident that occurred in Middletown, where the Middletown Police investigated. Special Assistant Attorney General Kelly McElroy prosecuted the case for the State. Judge Thunberg scheduled sentencing for Dec. 2. Moore had previously been found to be a violator of his probation on an assault conviction, for which he was serving nine years.

In the cases against Guerrero and Rosario, the child victims were interviewed by the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), a trauma resource center that is a component of DayOne. DayOne is an agency that provides counseling to victims of child molestation and their families and to adult victims of sexual assault. Advocates, police investigators, DCYF caseworkers (when involved), prosecutors, and, in some cases, treating physicians, come together at the CAC to participate in the interview of the child. The result is one interview, which makes the detailed disclosure of the child less traumatic than having to disclose the incident to each of the agencies separately.

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