



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Fillmore Man Convicted of Lewd Acts on a Child

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Vidal Vargas Morales (DOB 12/30/60), of Fillmore, was convicted by a Ventura County jury of one felony count of lewd acts upon a child who was 15 years old. The court also found true the special allegation that Morales took advantage of a position of trust and confidence to commit the offense.

In 2013, Morales worked as a youth coordinator for a church in Fillmore. During that time, he met the victim who attended catechism classes. Between October and November 2013, Morales began inappropriate communications with the victim, both verbally and through text messages. In early November 2013, Morales grabbed and fondled the victim. The crime was reported years later. Other victims who had similar experiences with Morales testified during the trial.

Deputy District Attorney Michael Kern, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Unit, prosecuted the case.

"I am grateful to the victim for her courage in reporting the crime and testifying at trial," Mr. Kern said. "I am also thankful to the additional victims who testified about their experiences—dating back to 1999—demonstrating the defendant's continued pattern of criminal conduct. While today's verdict can never fully heal the damage done by the defendant to these victims, I am hopeful that this conviction will help in the continuing healing process and send a message to other offenders that this type of behavior will not be tolerated in our community."

Morales is scheduled to be sentenced on January 23, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in courtroom 23 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He remains out of custody on \$20,000 bail pending sentencing.

Case: 2016023855

Defendant Information:

Vidal Vargas Morales (DOB 12/30/60)

Fillmore

Charges:

- PC 288(c)(1) – Lewd act upon a child

Special Allegations:

- CRC 4.421(a)(11) – The defendant took advantage of a position of trust and confidence to commit the offense

