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DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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District Attorney



07-794

RELEASE NUMBER

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RELEASE DATE

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Goleta Man Sentenced to 48 Years in Prison for Years of Child Sexual Abuse

Re: People v. Gonzalo Gutierrez Cuevas, Santa Barbara County Superior Court Case Number 19CR03022

Santa Barbara County District Attorney John T. Savrnoch announced today that Gonzalo Cuevas, 61, formerly of Goleta, California, was sentenced to 48 years in state prison for three counts of Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child, in violation of Penal Code § 288.5(a), involving victims identified as Jane Doe 1, 2, and 3. The sentence was issued by the Honorable Judge Pauline Maxwell in Department 2 of the Santa Barbara County Superior Court.

Before the Defendant could be arrested for his crimes, he fled to Mexico. However, Detective Martha Sosa of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office worked tirelessly on the case, and as a result of her efforts, he was extradited back to Santa Barbara and arraigned on January 30, 2024. Following his extradition, six more victims came forward and disclosed that they had also been molested by the Defendant. The new victims' molestations by Defendant went back all the way to the late 1970s through the mid-2010s.

While these crimes could not be alleged due to the statute of limitations and the nuances of our extradition treaty with Mexico, the bravery of these victims in coming forward certainly encouraged the Defendant to take responsibility for his actions after decades of having abused young girls within his reach.

All too often, survivors of sexual abuse remain silent out of fear that no one will believe them. Like many others, the historical victims in this case believed their voices would be dismissed. But the three named victims found the strength to come forward, and through their bravery, they brought an end to the Defendant's decades-long pattern of abuse. With the dedicated work of Senior Deputy District Attorney Lauren Franco, who prosecuted the case, these girls and women finally secured the justice they so rightfully deserved. Their courage, combined with Ms. Franco's efforts, ensured that Mr. Cuevas will now serve time in prison—where he can no longer harm young girls.

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