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TODD SPITZER

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Man who Accused Identical Twin Brother of Kidnapping, Raping 9-year-old Girl and Female Jogger Two Decades Ago Convicted in Attacks

Kevin Konther is also convicted of molesting 12-year-old daughter of a former girlfriend; investigative genetic genealogy led Sheriff's investigators to suspect.

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A man who accused his identical twin brother of kidnapping and raping a 9-year-old girl on her way home from buying school supplies and a woman jogger in separate attacks was convicted Thursday of carrying out the crimes more than two decades ago. He was also convicted of molesting the 12-year-old daughter of a former girlfriend.

Kevin Michael Konther, 57, of Highland, was convicted by a jury of two felony counts of forcible rape, two felony counts of forcible oral copulation, one felony count of a forcible lewd act upon a child, and one felony count of a lewd and lascivious act with a minor. The jury also found true the allegations that Kevin Konther kidnapped both rape victims and committed each of the charged offenses against multiple victims.

He faces a maximum sentence of 140 years to life when he is sentenced on March 21, 2023.

Kevin Konther was arrested in January 2019 along with his identical twin brother after an investigative genetic genealogy investigation connected the pair to DNA collected from the rape of a 9-year-old girl in Serrano Creek Park in Lake Forest and the 1998 rape of a female jogger who was pulled into the bushes and assaulted in Mission Viejo.

Identical twins share the same DNA, but conversations covertly recorded between the two brothers following their arrests revealed multiple incriminating statements made by Kevin Konther, including admissions that he carried out the crimes.

On October 21, 1995, a 9-year-old girl was walking home by herself after buying school supplies when a man grabbed her and covered her mouth while pulling her down an embankment and into a secluded wooded park. He told the girl not to scream and threatened that he had a knife. She begged him not to hurt her, telling him she was just nine years old. He ignored her pleas and instead forced her to orally copulate him and then raped her.

The girl was forced to cover her naked body with the notebooks and pencils she had just bought as she ran home naked to tell her mother about the rape. DNA was recovered from the girl's body as part of the investigation.

On June 2, 1998, a 32-year-old woman was jogging on a running trail in Mission Viejo when a man, naked except for his shoes, jumped out of the bushes, grabbed the woman while covering her mouth, and told her not to scream and that he was going to rape her. He dragged her down an embankment also into a secluded wooded area next to the trail, removed her clothing, and then forcibly raped her before running away. DNA collected from the attack matched the suspect's DNA in the 1995 rape of the 9-year-old girl.

In 2018, Orange County Sheriff's Department investigators began using investigative genetic genealogy to develop leads on the unknown suspect in the 1995 and 1998 rapes. During the investigation, allegations that the daughter of a former girlfriend had been molested by Kevin Konther surfaced.

Kevin Konther was charged with the two rapes and molesting his former girlfriend's daughter after the covertly recorded calls revealed incriminating statements he made while his brother expressed complete shock at the arrest. He was also charged with molesting his ex-girlfriend's daughter while she pretended to be asleep between 1999 and 2003.

"What monster jumps out of the bushes to rape an innocent little girl and then forces her to walk home naked while this child desperately tries to cover herself with anything she can until she can get home to the safety of her mother's arms?" said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "And when he doesn't get caught he pulls another jogger into the bushes and rapes her. And when he doesn't get caught again, he preys on an innocent young girl who has no choice but to be in the same house as him. Without the advances in DNA technology, we may have never been able to solve this case. But because of DNA and the persistent pursuit of justice by the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the Orange District Attorney's Office, this monster has a name – and his name is Kevin Konther."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Juliet Oliver of the Sexual Assault Unit is prosecuting this case.

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