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ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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**Man Sentenced to 140 Years to Life in State Prison for Kidnapping, Raping
9-Year-Old Girl and Female Jogger**

Kevin Konther blamed the crimes on his identical twin brother

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 58-year-old man has been sentenced to 140 years to life in state prison for the brutal, decades-old kidnapping and rape of a 9-year-old girl in Lake Forest and a rape of a female jogger in Mission Viejo – crimes the man tried to blame on his identical twin brother – along with the molestation of a former girlfriend's daughter.

Orange County Superior Court Judge Richard M. King imposed the maximum sentence against Kevin Michael Konther of Highland on Friday.

Konther was convicted by a jury last February 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, for sexual assaults against three female victims. The jury also found true the allegations that he kidnapped both rape victims and committed each of the charged offenses against multiple victims.

As a result of investigative genetic genealogy, Konther and his twin brother were arrested in January 2019 and connected to the crimes through DNA.

On October 21, 1995, Konther raped a 9-year-old girl walking home by herself after buying school supplies in Lake Forest. He grabbed the girl, covered her mouth while pulling her down an embankment and into a secluded wooded park. Konther told the girl not to scream and said he had a knife. Despite the victim pleading with Konther not to hurt her and that she was only 9 years old, he forced her to orally copulate him and then raped her. With only her notebooks and pencils she had just bought covering her naked body, the girl ran home naked and told her mom about the rape.

He also raped a 32-year-old woman who was jogging on a trail in Mission Viejo on June 2, 1998. Konther – naked except for wearing a pair of shoes – jumped out of the bushes, grabbed the woman and covered her mouth, telling

her not to scream and that he was going to rape her. She was dragged down an embankment where Konther took off her clothing and then forcibly raped her and orally copulated her before running away.

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 were revealed.

Konther was charged with the two rapes and with molesting his former girlfriend's daughter while the girl pretended to be asleep. Conversations that were covertly recorded between Konther and his twin brother following their arrests disclosed incriminating statements the defendant made while his brother was shocked by the arrest.

"Only a monster jumps out of the bushes to rape an innocent little girl and then forces her to walk home naked while desperately trying 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. "But raping and humiliating a little girl wasn't enough for him. When he didn't get caught he hid in the bushes, stalking his next prey – an unsuspecting jogger who he pulled into the brush and raped. And when he still doesn't get caught again, he victimized another innocent young girl who had no idea she was living under the same roof as a monster. DNA was the lynchpin that gave that monster a name – and that name is Kevin Konther. The relentless pursuit of justice by the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the Orange County District Attorney's Office has ensured that another monster who preys on young girls and young women will never be free to jump out of the bushes again."

Senior Deputy District Attorney Juliet Oliver of the Sexual Assault Unit prosecuted the case.

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