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DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

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PRESS RELEASE

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Man Convicted of Molesting Two Children, Arranging to Have Four-Year-Old Child Drugged, Brought to Orange County Motel to Molest Her

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 60-year-old man accused of grooming women to babysit children as young as four years old and bring them to hotels so that he could molest them has been convicted of molesting two young children and arranging for a four-year-old child to be brought to an Orange County motel for the child to be drugged and sexually assaulted. The woman he thought he was communicating with turned out to be a Huntington Beach police detective. The sexual offenses on young children are suspected to have occurred over several decades.

Jason Valentine Esparza, 60, was convicted last week of five felony counts of oral copulation of a child 10 years old or younger, three felony counts of contacting a minor with the intent to commit a specific offense, two felony counts of attempted forcible lewd act on a child under 14, and three felony counts of attempted oral copulation or sexual penetration of a child 10 years old or younger. He faces a maximum sentence of 75 years to life plus an additional 18 years and 8 months in state prison.

He is scheduled to be sentenced February 27, 2026, in Department C12 at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana.

The Huntington Beach Police Department (HBPD) began investigating Esparza after receiving an anonymous cyber-tip from the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) program in September 2022.

During the eight-month investigation, HBPD Crimes Against Persons Unit detectives began communicating with Esparza while posing as an adult female who was babysitting a four-year-old girl. During those communications, Esparza is accused of expressing his desire to perform very specific sexual acts on the child, and he employed tactics that were later learned to be consistent with how a 2006 five-year-old victim was sexually assaulted.

On April 7, 2023, Esparza was told that the child was at a Huntington Beach hotel room, and he was arrested by undercover detectives when he entered the room. Subsequent investigation located child victims spanning decades in both Los Angeles County and Orange County.

“Someone who preys on the innocence of children for their own sexual gratification is the embodiment of evil,” said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “We are grateful for the incredible work by the Huntington Beach Police Department and Deputy District Attorney Devin Crowley, and for their unwavering dedication to

ensuring justice – for these young victims and all victims of pedophiles. We must continue to do the work to protect the most vulnerable of victims – our children.”

Deputy District Attorney Devin Crowley of the Sexual Assault Unit is prosecuting this case.

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