

# City man acquitted in molestation case

By Zach Lowe  
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STAMFORD — A city man was acquitted yesterday of molesting his ex-girlfriend's daughter when she was 12 and having sex with her when she was a teenager.

[redacted] 46, of [redacted], said he spent the weekend asking friends to take care of his children if a jury sent him to prison for up to 30 years.

Yesterday, he walked out of court a free man, in part because his attorney questioned the mo-

tives of the accuser's mother.

"I'm free, and everything is finished," [redacted] said as he wiped away tears and talked with two friends. "I can have my life now."

He said he hopes to repair his relationship with the accuser and her family, whom he lived with for nearly two decades.

The accuser, now 20, reported [redacted] to police last spring at the end of her freshman year at [redacted].

She first told her mother [redacted] was molesting her in 1997, but nei-

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## Acquitted

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[redacted] ther called police because they wanted to keep the family together, they said.

That left the prosecutor, Senior Assistant State Attorney Richard Colangelo, with no physical evidence. He called two witnesses — the accuser and her [redacted].

[redacted] who said she walked in on [redacted] having sex with the accuser in 2001.

[redacted] attorney, Lindy Urso, said the victim's mother concocted the sexual assault story because she wanted [redacted] her longtime boyfriend, out of their Stamford home last year. She wanted to live alone with her husband, a man named [redacted] who may also be her brother, Urso said.

She forced the accuser and [redacted] to go along with the story in court, Urso said during closing arguments yesterday.

"Would you think the state did not call (the victim's mother) as a witness?" Urso asked the jury. "Because she was the architect of this. She got his daughter to back up the false story, and she got [redacted] out of the house without paying him a dime."

The victim's mother denied hatching the story and expressed shock at the verdict yesterday. She said her daughter had to drop out of [redacted] last year because she was so traumatized by coming forward.

"I cannot believe this," the woman said. "I am surprised and angry."

The accuser, a graduate of [redacted] told police [redacted] had been touching her breasts and buttocks over her nightgown since she was 12, according to court records. She said [redacted] started having sex with her once he heard she lost her virginity when she was 15.

Colangelo acknowledged there were holes in the state's case. The accuser gave no specific dates on any assault and denied knowing anything about her mother's new husband, who

sex with the accuser. She did so minutes after begging court marshals not to take her testify. Colangelo compared the case to a puzzle missing a few pieces — the image might not be completely formed, but a person can see what it is with a high level of certainty, he said.

"There are always going to be pieces missing," Colangelo told the jury. "But there is no reasonable doubt here."

Urso said [redacted] might have been crying for another reason.

"It's equally plausible she was upset because she had to back up the false story of her mother and her [redacted]" he said.

Urso questioned why the accuser's mother didn't call the police in 1997, when the accuser first told her [redacted] was molesting her. He also wondered why the accuser's mother asked [redacted] to pick her up from school every day in 2001 if she already knew about the allegations.

She did so, according to her own testimony, because she did not want her daughter hanging out with her boyfriend after school. The defense team called the mother to testify after the state chose not to.

"Would any mother allow this alleged molester to take her daughter to and from school?" Urso asked. "Does that make sense?"

Afterward, Urso said he was happy with the verdict, which the jury reached after less than an hour of deliberation.

"These were heinous allegations," he said. "I'm glad Mr. [redacted] was vindicated."

Colangelo said it was challenging to work with so little evidence.

"Do I believe these things happened?" he asked himself afterward. "Yes. But the jury didn't believe I proved it beyond a reasonable doubt."

[redacted] said he was happy to resume his life.

He had faced one count of statutory rape and two counts of inappropriate touching of a minor.