



NEWS RELEASE

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RIDE-SHARE DRIVER FOUND GUILTY BY A JURY OF MULTIPLE COUNTS RELATING TO THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A JUVENILE

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

September 21, 2023

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that Julio Mejia, age 43, from Wharton, New Jersey, was found guilty of second degree Sexual Assault, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2c(4), fourth degree Criminal Sexual Contact, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:14-3b, third degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:24-4a(1), and second degree Luring or Enticing a Child, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:13-6a, after a jury trial before the Honorable Joseph A. Portelli, J.S.C.

On November 19, 2019, the Prospect Park Police Department received a report that a minor victim was sexually assaulted by a ride-share driver later identified as the defendant, Julio Mejia. Thereafter, evidence was collected and multiple witnesses were interviewed, including the child victim. The victim disclosed that Mr. Mejia and the victim had sexual intercourse after she took a Lyft ride on August 30, 2019, that they continued to communicate via text message over the next several weeks, and that they later had sexual intercourse for a second time. At the time of his arrest, Mr. Mejia was an active member of the armed services.

On September 20, 2023, a petit jury convicted Mr. Mejia of second degree Sexual Assault, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:14-2c(4), fourth degree Criminal Sexual Contact, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:14-3b, third degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:24-4a(1), and second degree Luring or Enticing a Child, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:13-6a. A sentencing hearing is scheduled before Judge Portelli on February 9, 2023. Mr. Mejia was remanded to the Passaic County Jail pending sentence.

The sentencing exposure on second-degree Sexual Assault is five to ten years in New Jersey State Prison; on fourth-degree Criminal Sexual Contact it is a maximum of eighteen months in New Jersey State Prison; on third-degree Endangering the Welfare of a Child it is three to five years in New Jersey State Prison; and on second-degree Luring or Enticing a Child it is five to ten years in New

Jersey State Prison. Mr. Mejia will be subject to Megan's Law registration requirements and Parole Supervision for Life.

Passaic County Assistant Prosecutor Alanna M. Jereb represented the State and Anthony Alfano, Esq., represented Mr. Mejia during the jury trial before Judge Portelli.

For media inquiries concerning this case, contact Assistant Prosecutor Alanna Jereb of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office at ajereb@passaiccountynj.org or at (973) 837-7695.



(PHOTO: JULIO MEJIA)