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# Family Predator Sentenced for Molesting Multiple Relatives over Years

## *Joaquin Ruiz Used Devout Status as Shield*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that a man who over several years molested five different nieces between the ages of 5 and 16 has been sentenced to prison.

Joaquin Ruiz, 45, was sentenced to 102 years to life in prison for 18 counts of sex abuse against a child including forcible lewd acts, oral copulation on a child more than 10 years younger, possession of child sexual abuse material and other counts. A jury found him guilty in August of every count.

“Predators who steal the innocence of a child, creating a lifetime of trauma, have no place in our society.” DA Stephan said. “Today’s sentence is a message to sexual abusers that you will be held to account, and you will not hide in the shadows, no matter what your affiliations are. I am grateful to our expert sexual abuse prosecution team, who delivered a measure of justice to the victims in this case.”

Considered devoutly religious, Defendant Ruiz was known as “the perfect man” in his family, so much so that when the first victim disclosed, her parents and the defendant’s wife did not believe her. This caused the victim to recant her disclosure and apologize to the defendant. A second niece disclosed what Ruiz did to her, but the girl’s mother and sister kept her disclosure secret for months until they confronted Ruiz and his wife at a park. The confrontation became so heated that the police were called, which kickstarted the child abuse investigation. The investigation revealed additional victims, videos from hidden cameras that Ruiz placed in his bathrooms to capture the young children using the toilet, and screenshots of child sexual abuse material from sites the defendant visited.

Child molestation is a very serious crime that can affect a victim forever. Victims suffer higher rates of school difficulty, depression, substance abuse, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, eating or

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sleeping disorders, and suicide. However, child molestation can be prevented, and parents and guardians are encouraged to talk to their children about what is and is not appropriate. For additional resources, visit the District Attorney's page about [molestation prevention](#).

Deputy District Attorney An Dang prosecuted this case.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.