



JUSTICE

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Senior not guilty in sex rap

Jury acquits man, 74, of abuse charges related to his troubled girlfriend's children

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A tall, elderly man wept tears of relief Friday after a jury acquitted him of all charges alleging he instigated sexual abuse, including group sex, upon his troubled girlfriend's children.

The jury cleared the 73-year-old retired gas meter reader after only three hours of deliberations over a case that alleged he orchestrated and participated in sexually abusing his girlfriend's two rescued children while they were

living with him.

The 55-year-old woman obtained custody of her two youngest children after Children's Aid Society workers plucked them from her second husband, who was their biological father, in the early 1990s.

She said the husband was abusing them and the woman's older daughter from a previous marriage.

"This has been hanging over his head ... since December 2009," his lawyer, Phil Norton, said after the verdict was read and as his client cried openly.

"He had to uproot himself and leave the GTA because he was completely ostracized."

Norton told the jury that after Christmas dinner 2009, the mother's son and daughter falsely blamed the accused for the repugnant sexual abuse they endured.

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Lawyer Phil Norton

The children feared their mother would go to prison, Norton said.

"The children simply transferred what their father had in fact done to them to the accused," Norton said in his closing address.

The testimony of the mother, son and daughter

— who can't be identified — was "so riddled with inconsistencies" that they can't be believed, Norton argued.

The man, who has no prior criminal record, maintained he was innocent of three sexual charges involving the woman's son, now 31, from Jan. 1, 1993, to Aug. 18, 1998.

He also pleaded not guilty to the three sexual charges involving the daughter, now 27, from Oct. 17, 1995, to Dec. 26, 2002.

Justice Lois Roberts praised both Crown attorney Tara Brun and Norton for "their excellent advo-

cacy. You are a credit to your profession."

Brun suggested the accused molested the older brother until he was 14 or 15, then began sexually abusing his younger sister.

He also "paid her for her sexual services" and plied the girl with alcohol and marijuana, the Crown alleged.

The mother pleaded guilty to sexually abusing her son in 2011 and received a two-year conditional sentence plus three years probation.

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