

Molestation ‘ring’ cases in Kern County during the 1980s

The following chart lists cases, defendants and outcomes of several notorious cases.

Kniffen-McCuan

In 1984, four people were sentenced to 168 to 214 years each. Convictions were overturned after 12 years in 1996 for improper questioning of children and other misconduct.

Alvin McCuan — Conviction reversed.

Deborah McCuan — Conviction reversed.

Scott Kniffen — Conviction reversed.

Brenda Kniffen — Conviction reversed.

Betty Palko — Charges dropped.

Larry Walker — Charges dropped.



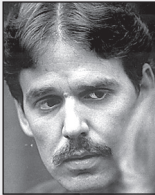
Alvin McCuan



Brenda Kniffen



Deborah McCuan



Scott Kniffen



Larry Walker

Kelly-Duncan

In 1984, four people were sentenced in an alleged molestation ring.

David Kelly — Serving 61-year sentence, upheld on appeal.

David Duncan — Conviction reversed in 1988. Served four years.

Donna Sue Hubbard — Conviction reversed in 1995 for improper questioning of children. Served 10 years.



David Kelly



Donna Sue Hubbard

Satanic molestation ring

Four people were charged with hundreds of counts each of molestation in 1984 in what would become the most infamous case including accusations of satanic worship.

All charges were dropped after two men agreed to plead to one count each of lewd conduct with a minor and were released from jail after being held for nearly three years.

Leroy Stowe — Stowe’s case was tried separately. He was convicted and sentenced to 30 years but the conviction was overturned on appeal and sent back to the Kern County DA, which never refiled the charges.

The Rev. Willard Thomas — Pleaded to a single count of lewd conduct in 1987.

Gerardo Gonzales — Pleaded to a single count of lewd conduct in 1987.

Cheryl Gonzales — Charges dropped.

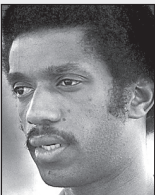
Brad Nokes — Charges dropped.

Mary Nokes — Charges dropped.

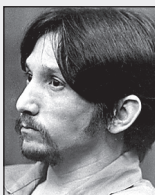
Kathy Scott — Charges dropped.



Leroy Stowe



Willard Thomas



Gerardo Gonzales



Cheryl Gonzales

Stoll-Self

In 1984, three men and one woman were sentenced to hundreds of years in prison. All four convictions were overturned.

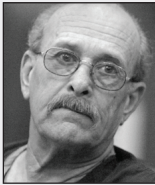
Marjorie Grafton — Conviction reversed.

Timothy Palomo — Conviction reversed.

John Stoll — Served 20 years. Sentence vacated in 2004 for improper questioning of children. Five of the six alleged victims recanted their testimony in

an emotional retrial in which Stoll was found not guilty. Stoll sued Kern County and received a \$5.5 million settlement in 2009.

Grant Self — Paroled in 2000 from his 31-year term, which was upheld on appeal. Was sent to state mental hospital as a sexually violent predator. Released in 2009 and charged again with molestation in Oregon in 2012. Self won a \$726,000 settlement from Kern County in 2013 for the 1984 conviction.



John Stoll

Pitts

Seven people were sentenced to 285 to 405 years each in 1985. Reversed on appeal in 1990 for “gross prosecutorial misconduct.” All were exonerated. The Pittses sued but lost their case against Kern County.

Ricky Pitts

Marcella Pitts

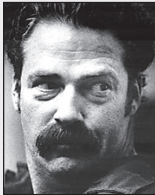
Coleen Bennett

Grace Dill

Wayne Dill

Gina Miller

Wayne Forsythe



Ricky Pitts



Marcella Pitts



Wayne Dill



Grace Dill



Gina Miller

Wong

Plea bargains starting in July 1985 drastically reduced charges after testimony by alleged victims was not as incriminating as expected.

Hazel Wong — Charges dropped.

Stephen Wong — Served a six-year sentence.

George Wong — Probation.

Lyman Fred Leavitt — Probation.

Victor Surber — Probation.

Modahl-Cox

Seven people were convicted in 1986 after a child told her father she had been molested by her uncles. The allegations grew to include the father, grandparents and another family. Kern County was later sued and settled for \$4.25 million in 2003.

Jeffrey Modahl — Conviction reversed in 1999 due to new evidence.

Ruth Ann Taylor — Conviction reversed as her attorney wasn’t licensed. Took a plea for six years, which was reversed in 2000, clearing her name.

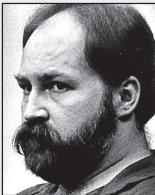
Richard Cox — Conviction reversed due to incompetent attorney. Took a plea for time served, which was reversed in 2001, clearing his name.

Jo Hanna Cox — Sentenced to 12 years. Died in prison.

Theresa Cox — Conviction reversed.

George Leroy Cox — Conviction reversed.

Anthony Louis Cox — Conviction reversed.



Jeffrey Modahl

Weatherly

The case ended in 1986 with plea bargains that allowed six of the defendants to be released, with officials citing flaws in the investigation. (Two were given prison terms but were released on credit for time served.)

Stephanie Jenkins

Pamela Weatherly

Melvin Weatherly

Ralph Lopez

Allen LeCaine

Kelly Leroy