

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

TRANSIENT MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: DAVID RABOW

(831) 755-5327

Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Ralph Acosta, Jr., age 41, a homeless man who frequented the city of Salinas, was sentenced to eight years in prison. Acosta had been found guilty of committing lewd acts on an 8-year-old child by Judge Andrew Liu at a court trial in August 2017.

The incident occurred December 14, 2016 at a local elementary school after school was over. The school, which is normally locked and secured, was partially open because of a book fair scheduled that evening. The young girl and her sister were approached by Acosta, who motioned to them to come over towards him. He can be seen on video surveillance looking up and realizing there were cameras present and then moving to a more remote portion of the school. He grabbed the 8-year-old and sat her on his lap and touched her over her clothing. The young victim testified at the court trial about what had happened to her.

After hearing from the victim's family, Judge Liu imposed the maximum sentence of 8 years. The offense is a "strike" offense and he will have to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

The case was investigated by Officer Jeffrey Munoz of the Salinas Police Department.