

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An Austin County jury convicted Christopher Kalina, 41, of Victoria, Texas of Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child on Wednesday, July 8, 2015 after a three day trial before District Judge Jeff Steinhauser.

The State presented evidence that Kalina had sexually abused three children at a home in the Lazy River subdivision in 2012 and 2013. The girls were under the age of 9 at the time of the abuse.

The jury deliberated approximately an hour and ten minutes before returning with its verdict of guilty.

District Attorney Travis Koehn and Assistant District Attorney Brandy Robinson presented the case for the State. Defense Attorney Brent Dornburg, of Victoria, represented the defendant.

Continuous Sexual Abuse is a relatively new criminal charge that provides that a defendant convicted of committing two or more acts of sexual abuse in a period of thirty days or more faces a punishment range of twenty-five years to life in prison without parole.

Kalina elected to have Judge Steinhauser, rather than the jury, decide his punishment. Judge Steinhauser assessed punishment at twenty-five years in prison.

“The jury’s decision in the present case demonstrates how the citizens of Austin County are committed to stamping out child sexual abuse. I’m proud to have been a part of that,” Koehn stated.

“I’m also proud of the workers within my office, the victims who had the courage to testify, and Investigator H.C. Riddle with the Austin County Sheriff’s Office for his efforts to bring this defendant to justice.”

Assistant District Attorney Brandy Robinson stated, “Sexual abuse of a child is one of the most despicable crimes a person can commit. We currently have four serious child sex crime cases on our trial docket and will work through them one trial at a time.”

“We will continue to fight sexual abuse wherever we find it, and I look forward to trying the cases that are next on the list,” Robinson added.

“The offense was reported in March of 2014,” Koehn stated.

“We have a limited number of felony trial dates each year, and even if a case is set on a trial date, multiple issues such as competency, attorney schedules, witness scheduling, and pretrial matters can cause a trial to be delayed.”

“From 2011 through the better part of 2013, most of our trial dates and resources were dedicated to the Capital Murder death penalty case against Maron Thomas, as well as the Capital Murder cases for the killers of Dr. Jorge Gonzalez. As a result, several other serious trials were delayed until those cases were done.

“From 2011 to present, we also indicted multiple other serious felonies, including a first degree murder case and many cases of Indecency with a Child and Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child.

“Many of those felony defendants pled guilty. Those who did not were placed on the trial docket list.”

“After our Capital Murder cases were completed, the District Attorney’s Office began actively preparing these pending felonies for trial, working from oldest to most recent whenever possible. We also factor in the severity of the crime and how long a defendant has been jailed.”

“The First Degree Murder defendant was jailed, and as a result, that case has been set as a first priority on multiple trial dockets. The case experienced several delays. Although it is still pending, it is currently off this year’s trial docket due to competency matters.”

“On our open trial dates, we have tried an Indecency with a Child (Capital Felony, Enhanced) where the defendant received Life without Parole, a Competency trial which resulted in the defendant pleading guilty to Indecency with a Child, and a Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child case where the jury acquitted the defendant.

“We are also currently defending the Online Solicitation of a Child statute in a pretrial writ on one of our pending cases with the 1st Court of Appeals in Houston.”

“In addition to our sex crimes prosecutions, the State has also tried and won victories in a Felony Possession of Marijuana trial and a Burglary of a Building trial which we were able to work into the docket when other trials were rescheduled,” Koehn added.