


Crime & Safety (Https://Patch.Com/New-Jersey/Brick/Police-Fire)

Brick's 'Father Chris' Acquitted On Charges Of Molesting Children; Convicted Of Groping Mother

The charge on which Marukudiyil Velan was convicted is a fourth-degree crime with no presumption of jail time

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Oct 16, 2014 10:30 am ET | Updated Oct 16, 2014 10:32 am ET

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The former Visitation Roman Catholic Church priest accused of molesting two children has been acquitted on those charges by an Ocean County jury, according to APP.com. (http://www.app.com/story/news/crime/jersey-mayhem/2014/10/15/brick-priest-trial/17303301/)

But that jury of six men and six women, which deliberated for two days, found Marukudiyil Velan, better known as "Father Chris," guilty of criminal sexual contact with the children's mother, according to the report. That charge was one of the least serious he faced in the case; he was acquitted on six charges related to the alleged molestation. The verdict was announced about 5 p.m. on Wednesday.

Velan's attorney, S. Karl Mohel, said his client is unlikely to face prison because the offense he was convicted of, a fourth-degree crime, carries a presumption of no incarceration for people who do not have any prior criminal convictions. The crime, which carries a maximum penalty of 18 months in prison, is not a Megan's Law offense, so the priest will not be required to register his whereabouts with police or be on parole for the rest of his life, Mohel said.

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A conviction on the most serious charge against Velan, sexual assault of the woman's daughter, who was 5 at the time of the alleged molestation, would have resulted in a prison term of five to 10 years, lifetime parole supervision and registration with police under

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Velan, 66, who first came to the Brick church in 2001, had been on trial since Oct. 8. At the time of his arrest in July 2012, Ocean County Prosecutor Marlene Lynch Ford said Velan, whose full name is Velanmarukudiyil J. Christudas, was arrested after a woman filed a report saying Velan came to her house and had "inappropriate contact" with her as well as her minor child. He was indicted in February 2013 on a total of seven counts, according to a Patch report (https://patch.com/new-jersey/brick/former-visitation-pri-indicted-on-additional-sex-charges#.VD6lJ_ldVww) at the time.

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The woman and her son testified at the trial but the young girl did not, according to APP.com.

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