



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

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Colorado Man Sentenced for Raping & Sexually Assaulting Multiple Victims

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Charles Edward Gaines III (DOB 07/05/96), was sentenced on May 6, 2025, to 19 years state prison for forcible sex crimes committed against three women and the attempted rape of a fourth victim.

On February 25, 2025, a jury convicted Gaines of forcible sodomy and attempted rape of two victims. The jury deadlocked on other charges. On April 4, 2025, Gaines pled guilty to forcibly raping the two additional victims and admitted that one of the victims was a minor at the time of the attack.

“Gaines preyed on vulnerable women, including a teenager and a person experiencing homelessness, using manipulation, violence, and threats to commit his crimes,” said Senior Deputy District Attorney Brent Nibecker. “His 19-year prison sentence reflects the gravity of his actions and the lasting trauma he inflicted on his victims. I commend the courage of the survivors who came forward and the Simi Valley detectives and crime lab scientists who brought him to justice.”

Gaines attacked his victims between February 2019 and May 2020, in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The first attack happened on February 27, 2019, in Northridge. Gaines used a fake name on a dating app and picked up the victim to go to the movies. Instead of going to the theater, Gaines demanded sexual acts and took away her phone. When she refused his demands, Gaines forced her to orally copulate him and forced her to the backseat where he sodomized her. When he was done, he drove to a fast-food restaurant, returned her phone, and dropped her off. The victim called 911 and was taken for a sexual assault examination where DNA evidence was collected. Weeks after the attack, Gaines contacted the victim again. He sent messages blaming her for what happened and expressing a desire to engage in additional sexual acts. When the victim declined, Gaines sent threatening messages.

On December 10, 2019, Gaines targeted a homeless woman in Encino. He offered to let her warm up in his vehicle. The victim accepted and entered the rear seat of his car. Gaines got in the rear seat as well and grabbed the victim. As she struggled to get free, Gaines threatened the victim and proceeded to rape her. The victim was able to grab Gaines' cellphone and run from the car. She ran towards a closed grocery store and an employee let her in. Gaines followed and began wrestling her for control of his cellphone. Gaines was able to remove the phone from the victim's hand and fled. Later that same day, the victim submitted to a sexual assault examination and DNA from the attack was collected.

Gaines attacked his third victim on March 27, 2020, in Simi Valley. The 16-year-old met Gaines on another dating app where he again provided a fake name. After messaging each other, Gaines picked the victim up from her residence in a vehicle. He drove a short distance away and both entered the backseat of the car. What started out as consensual quickly turned into Gaines forcing himself on the victim. As she yelled "stop", Gaines raped her. She continued to struggle and yell, eventually grabbing the door handle and flinging herself out of the vehicle. Gaines jumped into the driver's seat and drove away. Shortly after the assault, Gaines texted the victim threatening to kill her. A sexual assault examination was conducted on the teen and DNA was collected.

On May 23, 2020, Gaines attempted to force a fourth woman in Canoga Park to engage in sexual intercourse. Gaines and the victim had previously engaged in a consensual sexual relationship. When she refused to have sex with him on May 23, 2020, she began receiving threatening text messages from Gaines. In these messages, Gaines threatened to post printed sexual pictures of the victim for her family and neighbors to see unless she agreed to have sex with him. Gaines also told the victim he was outside her residence and if she didn't come outside and have sex with him, he would ruin her life.

In May 2020 and February 2021, the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) provided suspect DNA matches for the three sexual assaults. The CODIS matches confirmed that all three sexual assaults were committed by the same suspect. In August 2022, Gaines was arrested in Aurora, Colorado on an unrelated matter. During that arrest, a DNA sample was collected and uploaded to CODIS. Based on that upload, Gaines' DNA was linked to the three attacks. In October 2022, detectives with the Simi Valley Police Department arranged to have Gaines arrested in Aurora, Colorado pursuant to a Ventura County arrest warrant. Gaines was extradited to Ventura County and has remained in custody ever since.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Brent Nibecker, who is assigned to handle cold case sexual assaults, prosecuted the case. Funding for Mr. Nibecker's position is provided through a Sexual Assault Kit Initiative grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The investigation was led by Detective Jessica Getchius with the Simi Valley Police Department with support from investigators with the Los Angeles Police Department and the District Attorney's Office Bureau of Investigation.

The Ventura County Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (VCSAKI) is a multi-agency countywide effort to test every sexual assault kit for the presence of DNA and investigate unsolved sexual assault cases. More information on VCSAKI can be found at saki.venturacounty.gov. Victims of past sexual assaults can also utilize this website to access support services including free counseling in some instances, or to get assistance in determining the status of their sexual assault kit.

Case: 2021024415

Defendant Information:

Charles Edward Gaines III (DOB 07/05/96)
Aurora, Colorado

Charges convicted and pled to:

- PC 286(c)(2)(A) – Sodomy by use of force
- (2 counts) PC 261(a)(2) – Forcible rape
- PC 664/261(a)(2) – Attempted forcible rape

Special allegation admitted:

- PC 264(c)(2) – Rape of a minor over the age of 14

