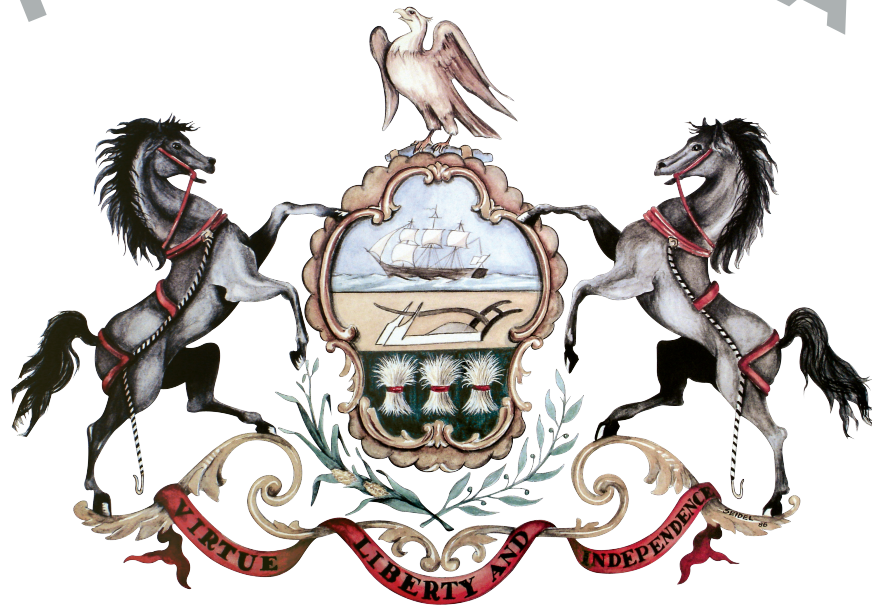


PENNSYLVANIA



OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

Michelle A. Henry, Acting Attorney General

INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Forty-Ninth Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, having received and reviewed evidence regarding violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code occurring in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania pursuant to Notice of Submission of Investigation No. 3, do hereby make the following findings of fact and recommendation of charges.

OVERVIEW

In 2019, the Office of Attorney General received a resource referral from a District Attorney's Office pursuant to the Commonwealth Attorneys Act. As a result, the Grand Jury undertook the investigation into allegations of sexual assault involving members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) religious community.

During the course of its investigation, the Grand Jury determined that Abimael Valentin-Matos (DOB: December 1, 1980) had sexually assaulted J.R., a 15 year-old female within the JW religious community, whom he was supposedly "courting" to be married.

FINDINGS OF FACT

In 2004, J.R. (DOB: June 25, 1994) lived in the city of Lancaster with her mother and two sisters. They were active members of the JW Lancaster "East" congregation. J.R. and her family moved into the home of one of their congregational elders for a year in order to save money to buy a home. While staying in that home, J.R. was molested by the elder.¹ In the course of the investigation into that offense, the Grand Jury learned that J.R. was subsequently assaulted by Matos.

The Grand Jury learned that in 2009, J.R. attended a "circuit assembly," an event that brings together multiple congregations from across a geographic region and occurs over the course of

¹ As will be detailed in Presentment No. 10, J.R. was sexually abused by Norman Aviles.

three days. J.R. explained that JW members are only permitted to marry others within the organization. Accordingly, these assemblies are often viewed as an opportunity to meet members outside of one's home congregation. While at this assembly, Matos began to follow J.R. Eventually, he made contact with her, obtained her phone number, and they began communicating. She asked Matos his age, and he replied "I don't even want to tell you" and "I'm a lot older." J.R. was able to later determine that while she was 15, Matos was 30 years of age.

Matos began to drive to, and attend, meetings at J.R.'s home congregation following the assembly. He began to sit next to her during the meetings, which J.R. indicated was a sign to the congregation that he was "claiming" her and signaling his romantic interest. Congregational elders noticed this conduct and summoned J.R. and Matos for a meeting. The elders noted that Matos's conduct indicated there was a romantic interest, and that they would approve of it if certain conditions were met. Those conditions required the presence of a chaperone and the commitment to eventually marry. J.R. described this as "normal" within the community despite the age difference.

J.R. testified that Matos promised that he would eventually marry her and that they could court in the presence of a chaperone pursuant to the elders' instructions. Through this process, J.R. believed that her contact with Matos was appropriate and normal. However, in a short time, Matos was texting J.R. pictures of his genitals and convincing her to meet him without a chaperone under the guise of looking for wedding rings or going for walks. On one of these meetings in a public park in Lancaster County, Matos convinced J.R. to masturbate him and she complied. Because he was 30 and she was a child, that conduct constituted a crime.

J.R. began to have panic attacks and was convinced that she was "going to die" for what she had done. She testified, "*I worked all of these hours, that I'm putting in going door-to-door*

knocking, preaching, getting baptized, and dedicated my entire life to this, and I just threw it all away because I did this.” She reported herself to the elders, stated what she had done, and indicated she had not complied with their instructions. Matos was interviewed and claimed J.R. was the initiator of the sexual contact.

As the years passed, J.R. began to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and sought counseling. She explained, “I just wanted to die” and that her therapist made a report to the police when she disclosed the abuse. She explained her own lack of a report, stating, “*If it wasn’t for therapy, I wouldn’t have even known that it was bad. It was just – it took me a long time to realize because that is all I have known.*”

INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Forty-Ninth Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, having received and reviewed evidence regarding violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code occurring in Butler County, Pennsylvania pursuant to Notice of Submission of Investigation No. 3, do hereby make the following findings of fact and recommendation of charges.

OVERVIEW

In 2019, the Office of Attorney General (OAG) received a resource referral from a District Attorney's Office pursuant to the Commonwealth Attorneys Act. As a result, the Grand Jury undertook the investigation into allegations of sexual assault involving members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) religious community. In the course of its investigation, the Grand Jury learned of acts of child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by Raymond Shultz (DOB: May 1, 1948) upon his minor granddaughters.

FINDINGS OF FACT

L.S. made contact with the OAG in November 2022, following the arrest of four members of the JW organization. L.S. reported that she had been a victim of child sexual abuse while a member of the organization. She identified her grandfather, Shultz, as her abuser and fellow member of the JW organization. The OAG began an investigation and identified an additional victim, M.S. M.S. is also one of Shultz's granddaughters.

L.S.

L.S. (DOB: March 8, 1995) testified before the Grand Jury. She reported that when she was between five and 10 years old (between 2000 and 2005) she was visiting with her grandfather and her grandmother. They resided in a two story, red, brick home in Butler County. She recalled that she was lying in bed when Shultz entered the room with her grandmother. She testified that

her grandmother laid down on a bed in the room while her grandfather picked her (L.S.) up and carried her to his bed where he placed her on the left side of the bed. Once in bed, Shultz proceeded to masturbate himself with his right hand and touched her genitals with his left hand, penetrating her vagina with his finger tip. At one point Shultz made L.S. touch his penis. L.S. recalled, "I felt like I was doing something wrong." Shultz "orgasmed" and left the bed. He then returned, got into bed and went to sleep without saying a word.

L.S. recalled getting out of bed and going into the kitchen, where her grandmother was now present, and noted that no one said anything. L.S. recalled the teachings of her religious community and remembered "thinking that I wasn't going to live forever" due to what she perceived as her own misconduct.

L.S. explained that she left her religious community approximately five years ago and that she did not truly come to terms with the fact that she had been abused until she was 26 or 27 years old. L.S. explained that she did not report the abuse to the police when she remained in her religious community because she did not fully comprehend what had happened to her, and, because speaking to a police officer in a way that may "bring reproach to Jehovah" was discouraged.

In March 2021, L.S. disclosed her abuse to a therapist. L.S. also told a family member that she was seeking and receiving therapy. That family member subsequently told her grandmother that L.S. was in counseling. Shortly afterwards, L.S. received a check from her grandparents for \$2,500 without any explanation. She recalled it was one of the only gifts she had ever received from them in her life.

M.S.

M.S. (DOB: December 30, 1998) was located by OAG Special Agents following L.S.'s report. M.S. testified before the Grand Jury and stated that when she was in the second grade, she

visited her grandfather, Shultz, in his red brick home where he lived with her grandmother. M.S. was lying in bed in the very early morning hours during the summer. M.S. believed she and her sister had likely stayed over to play in the pool. She recalled wearing a nightgown and no underwear. She also recalled that Shultz was wearing blue plaid boxers and a white tee shirt. Shultz groped her vagina and penetrated her vagina with his finger. M.S. distinctly recalled looking out the window rather than at her grandfather while he was committing the abuse. Based upon M.S.'s recollection, these events would have occurred between 2004 and 2007. M.S. would have been between six and nine years old at that time.

Shortly after LS disclosed she was in counseling, and that information was relayed to her grandparents, MS also received a check from her grandparents for \$2,500 without any explanation. She recalled it was one of the only gifts she had ever received from them in her life. She viewed the payment as "hush money."

INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Forty-Ninth Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, having received and reviewed evidence regarding violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code occurring in Butler County, Pennsylvania pursuant to Notice of Submission of Investigation No. 3, do hereby make the following findings of fact and recommendation of charges.

OVERVIEW

In 2019, the Office of Attorney General received a resource referral from a District Attorney's Office pursuant to the Commonwealth Attorneys Act. As a result, the Grand Jury undertook the investigation into allegations of sexual assault involving members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) religious community.

In the course of its investigation, the Grand Jury learned of acts of child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by Kevin Isovitsch (DOB: May 12, 1971) upon his niece who was a fellow member of the JW religious community. When confronted by the victim's father, Isovitsch did not deny the conduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Isovitsch was associated with the Chicora JW congregation in Butler County. That congregation provided fellowship for a community of members of which Isovitsch and his extended family were a part. The Grand Jury learned that the community is encouraged to socialize within itself, and that problems or disagreements within the community are often taken to the religious elders for resolution.

M.S. (DOB: July 5, 1996) testified before the Grand Jury. She stated that she was visiting her uncle, Isovitsch, when she was approximately nine years old. M.S. recalled she was at his

home in the West Sunbury area playing with her cousins, a common occurrence. She visited the home quite frequently, and on this occasion, Isovitsch was the only adult in the home.

While playing with her cousins, Isovitsch interrupted and led M.S. to his master bedroom. M.S. stated the bedroom was located on the first floor of the home. Once in the bedroom, Isovitsch placed her against the wall and pulled her pants down. Isovitsch exposed his penis and began rubbing it between the labia of her vagina. M.S. remembered that the assault was interrupted when her aunt, Isovitsch's wife, returned from the store. Upon hearing his wife enter the home, Isovitsch discontinued the assault.

M.S. did not tell anyone about the assault initially. However, she eventually disclosed it to her brother. The Grand Jury heard from M.S.'s brother, M.K., who corroborated M.S.'s account.

At some point between 2005 and 2008, M.S. was participating in family worship with her family, including her brother, M.K. During the reading, the subject of sexual contact came up. M.K. asked if that was what "Uncle Kevin" had done to M.S. M.S.'s mother then questioned her and M.S. disclosed the abuse.

Additional Corroborating Information

The Grand Jury obtained records that corroborated the timeline of these events and the manner in which M.S. disclosed the abuse. Records also indicated that the offenses occurred when "Kevin's age at the time was 32 to 35. [M.S.] seven to nine years old." These records further indicated that M.S.'s father confronted Isovitsch but that Isovitsch remained "quiet about it all."

INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Forty-Ninth Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, having received and reviewed evidence regarding violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code occurring in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania pursuant to Notice of Submission of Investigation No. 3, do hereby make the following findings of fact and recommendation of charges.

OVERVIEW

In 2019, the Office of Attorney General received a resource referral from a District Attorney's Office pursuant to the Commonwealth Attorneys Act. As a result, the Grand Jury undertook the investigation of allegations of sexual assault involving members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) religious community.

In the course of its investigation, the Grand Jury learned of acts of child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by Marc Brown (DOB: October 15, 1957) upon girls for whom he was legal guardian between 2004 and 2006.¹

FINDINGS OF FACT

Brown was associated with a congregation in Allegheny County. Brown molested two female minors, G.W. and R.W., between 2004 and 2006. Documents show that a timely complaint was made by G.W. and R.W. at the time of their abuse.

G.W. & R.W.

The Grand Jury heard testimony from sisters, G.W. (DOB: October 30, 1991) and R.W. (DOB: October 27, 1993). G.W. disclosed that she had regularly been sexually assaulted by Brown between 2004 and 2006, beginning when she was 12 or 13 years old. G.W. estimated that 20 of these assaults or attempted assaults happened in the shower and the rest occurred throughout the

¹ Brown was married to the mother of his victims.

house, or when Brown would come into her bedroom at night to touch her. She explained that Brown usually focused on her breasts and genital area in the shower or in the course of what Brown called "horse play." G.W. further explained that Brown used the horse play as a way to grope her and R.W. These assaults often occurred when their mother was working the night shift.

G.W. stated that the assaults in her bedroom primarily involved her genitals being groped by Brown. Brown would perpetrate these acts when G.W. was in bed for the night. G.W. recalled one occasion when Brown instructed R.W. to come upstairs to lie in bed with him to watch television. G.W. knew Brown was in his underwear and her sister was in her pajamas at the time, and she herself had been regularly assaulted by Brown in a similar manner. G.W. ran up to Brown's bedroom and found Brown and R.W. curled up in bed watching television. G.W. began screaming at Brown and grabbed R.W. by the hand, pulling her out of the bed. R.W. testified before the Grand Jury and corroborated these events.

Brown often threatened G.W. to keep her silent. He threatened that if she stopped him from abusing her, or if she reported his abuse of her, he would abuse her sister. Unbeknownst to G.W., he was sexually abusing R.W. during the same time-frame. G.W. knew that Brown's threats were real threats. On one occasion, Brown strangled G.W. until she urinated herself. Brown then stopped and made G.W. mop up the urine. For these reasons, G.W. complied and kept the abuse a secret.

R.W. testified that her abuse was similar to G.W.'s abuse. However, Brown engaged in multiple incidents where he also further penetrated her vagina with his fingers. Once in bed with R.W., Brown would grope her body. Brown touched her breasts, buttocks and vagina. R.W. described how this touching was over her clothing and under her underwear, making skin-to-skin contact. R.W. recalled that these assaults regularly occurred when her mother was at work and

Brown was the only person at the house with her and her sister. R.W. recalled a specific incident where Brown forced R.W. to sit on his lap while he was on the toilet and urinate on him.

In 2006, Brown attempted to sexually assault R.W. in an automobile. R.W. was able to cover her breasts as Brown attempted to grope them. Brown stated that she should not tell anyone and that she was merely a child and no one would believe her. R.W. was at a breaking point. She had been documenting her abuse in her diary. R.W. left her diary in a spot where she knew only her mother would find it. Her mother found the diary and Brown moved out of the home. The sisters' mother, C.B., testified before the Grand Jury and corroborated this account.

Only after these events did both G.W. and R.W. learn that Brown had been abusing them both. Information was provided to leaders in their religious community shortly thereafter. Both G.W. and R.W. were assaulted by Brown within their Forrest Hills, Allegheny County, home.

Additional Corroborating Information

The Grand Jury obtained records that revealed a timely and consistent report of abuse by G.W. and R.W. in 2006 and additional records corroborating these events which were generated in approximately 2009, 2016, and 2020. The records further revealed that Brown admitted to harassing both G.W. and R.W. in the shower.

INTRODUCTION

We, the members of the Forty-Ninth Statewide Investigating Grand Jury, having received and reviewed evidence regarding violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code occurring in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania pursuant to Notice of Submission of Investigation No. 3, do hereby make the following findings of fact and recommendation of charges.

OVERVIEW

In 2019, the Office of Attorney General received a resource referral from a District Attorney's Office pursuant to the Commonwealth Attorneys Act. As a result, the Grand Jury undertook the investigation into allegations of sexual assault involving members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) religious community.

In the course of its investigation, the Grand Jury learned of acts of child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by Norman Aviles (DOB: December 24, 1978) upon young females within the JW religious community. It was determined that Aviles sexually molested at least three minor females, including two victims against whom he perpetrated felony sex acts. As detailed below, the Grand Jury finds that Aviles used his position of trust within his religious community to prey on vulnerable children. Aviles has made statements that if he committed the acts as alleged, he does not remember doing so.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Aviles was associated with various JW congregations in Lancaster County and was a member of the Lancaster "East" and "West" Spanish-speaking congregations. Aviles was an elder in the Lancaster "East" congregation and advised members, including minors, on matters of faith. For these reasons, Aviles was able to build a rapport with congregational members. Ultimately, Aviles gained the trust of several parents, including his own relatives, and was permitted extensive

access to congregational juvenile females. This included babysitting and even acting as a guardian to one of his victims. Aviles molested three female minors, J.B., J.C., and J.R., between June 1, 1998 and December 31, 2004 by indecently contacting intimate areas, and assaulted J.B. and J.C. by penetrating their vaginas with his fingers.

J.B. & J.C.

The Grand Jury heard testimony from twin sisters, J.B. and J.C. (DOB: July 6, 1993). J.B. testified that in the 1990s, she and her family were members of the JW Lancaster “West” Congregation. Due to its size, the congregation had been split into the “West” and “East” congregations. However, the “West” and “East” congregations regularly interacted, and, through that interaction, J.B. and J.C. came to know J.R. Through that contact, J.B., J.C. and J.R. also came to know Aviles.

J.B. explained that her mother was very active in the JW community and that she was very subservient to men in positions of power in the community. She stated that her mother worked very hard to meet religious expectations – including providing aid to fellow JW members. In approximately 1998, her mother became aware that Aviles was coming to Lancaster and needed a place to stay. J.B. testified, “My mom would always let people from the religion come if they needed a place to stay.” J.B. believed Aviles was also distantly related and this furthered the sense of trust. J.C.’s testimony corroborated her sister’s testimony. J.C. explained that their mother was a single parent and worked very hard as a night shift Wal-Mart employee to make ends meet. Aviles was a trusted member of the religious community and was left alone with both girls while their mother was at work.

J.B. and J.C. each testified that Aviles groped their bodies and penetrated the labia of their vaginas while they were in their home in Lancaster County. J.B. and J.C. recalled that the Disney

movie "Mulan" had been released in the months surrounding these events. Aviles had purchased the movie when it was newly released on home video and insisted the girls watch it with him. J.B. recalled having a "Mulan" Happy Meal toy from McDonald's restaurant – a small figure of the young female warrior with snap-on armor. Investigators with the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General determined that the film was released on June 5, 1998 in the United States. The promotional "Happy Meal" toys were released in June 1998, and the film was released on VHS and DVD by November 1999. During this timeframe both J.B. and J.C. would have been approximately five to six years old. These findings are corroborative of the testimony of J.B. and J.C. J.B. stated that shortly after Aviles had assumed temporary residence in their home, Aviles came into her room while she was sleeping. J.B. explained that she was sleeping in her regular "Barbie" nightgown and was awoken to Aviles caressing her buttocks. Aviles then moved his hand to her front and manipulated her vagina, opening it to make contact with the opening of her vagina and clitoris. J.B. was shocked and although she did not understand exactly what he had done to her, she was struck by a sense of the conduct being wrong.

J.C. testified that Aviles crawled into bed with her and began to "spoon" her. Aviles reached around her front, ran his hand down her stomach, and rubbed his fingers between her labia. After a period of time, Aviles got up and left the room. J.C. laid very still and felt great fear. While she did not fully comprehend what had happened, she knew that it had scared her greatly.

J.B. and J.C. initially disclosed the abuse to their mother after Aviles moved out of the home but she dismissed the allegation. J.B. explained to the Grand Jury that her mother had been aggressively working to maintain good standing within the JW congregation and with its leaders and therefore she initially did not want to level such an allegation against a fellow member.

J.R.

J.R. (DOB: June 25, 1994) lived in the city of Lancaster with her mother and two sisters. By 2004, Aviles was married and serving as an elder within his congregation with children of his own. J.R.'s mother was attempting to save money to buy a house and Aviles offered to allow J.R. and her family, who were fellow JW members, to live with his family for a year so that money could be saved to buy a home. J.R.'s mother took him up on this offer and moved into his home in Lancaster County with J.R. and her siblings.

J.R. recalled that Aviles would lead worship in congregational meetings and she often recorded his performances. She stated that she was proud of Aviles, loved him, and viewed him as both a father figure and a religious guide. The Grand Jury reviewed these recordings and they corroborated J.R.'s account.

J.R. testified that Aviles told her that she was "special" and that he doted on her. J.R. explained that she was "heartbroken" when at the age of 10, it "clicked" and she understood why Aviles was showing her so much affection and attention. J.R. stated that she began developing at an early age. Aviles began making J.R. sit on his lap. He would then slide his hand under her shirt and "play" with her breasts while stating that she was going to get in "trouble" for "not wearing a bra." J.R. testified that on one occasion when Aviles was groping her breasts under her shirt, he told her that she was "developing" now and that by not wearing a bra she was "tempting men" and that it was "her fault." These incidents so unnerved J.R. that she began demanding that her mother buy her bras. J.R. said she felt "guilty."

Aviles would also "wrestle" with J.R. During these sessions, he would grope her breasts and her genitals. These occurrences began happening as a pattern of conduct, along with additional unwanted touching. Aviles would also play with J.R.'s hair and touch her face. J.R. became

increasingly resistant to the contact and asked, “Why don’t you play with your own daughter like this?” Aviles responded he would never play like that with his own child.

As the assaults continued, J.R. began running away from Aviles and hiding in places in or around the house until he would go away. This often put her in conflict with Aviles and his wife who would then scream at her or discipline her.

J.R. was friends with J.B. and J.C. J.B. and J.C. were often left with Aviles to babysit them despite their protests to their mother. On one occasion when J.B., J.C. and J.R. were together, J.R. told them what Aviles had done to her. J.B. and J.C. likewise disclosed the assaults they had suffered approximately five years earlier when Aviles was living with them.

In the course of investigating this matter, the Grand Jury learned that J.R. had also been sexually assaulted by a member of another JW congregation in 2009 when she was 15 years old. That matter will be addressed in a companion Presentment.

Additional Corroborating Information

The Grand Jury obtained records that corroborated Aviles’s pattern of abuse following a *complaint made to the congregation by J.B. and J.C.’s mother*. The records show that Aviles has made statements to other individuals that confirm both the opportunity and means to commit the offenses as alleged. In one instance, the documents indicated that when confronted with the allegations of child abuse Aviles “hung his head in shame.”

In 2010, the Lancaster City Police initiated an investigation. That investigation was triggered after J.B. began counseling to deal with the long-term trauma caused by his abuse. She disclosed the abuse and the counselor reported it via ChildLine. During that investigation, Aviles was interviewed and admitted that between June and September 1999 he resided with J.B. and J.C. in Lancaster. He admitted that he often had sole and exclusive custody of the girls while their

mother worked at night. Aviles identified himself as a JW “minister” since 2003. He admitted he had been following J.B. and J.C. on social media since he had moved out of their residence and noted that in some images one could see their “cleavage” or what he identified as “inappropriate dress.” With respect to the abuse, he stated, “If it did happen, I must have done it unconsciously.”

The Grand Jury found the Lancaster City Police investigation to be credible and comprehensive. However, the matter was closed, due in part, to a lack of information which this Grand Jury has since obtained.