

Local

Jury finds correctional officer not guilty in sexual assault case

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A correctional officer who was accused of sexually assaulting a teenage inmate at Juvenile Hall sobbed as a jury found him not guilty on all counts Wednesday.

Cesar Navejar hugged family members, many also in tears, as he left the courtroom following the verdict. He said, "Not now," when asked for comment.

His attorney also declined comment, saying other legal matters in the case need to be handled.

Jurors deliberated about four hours before acquitting Navejar of all charges including sexual battery and assault by a public officer.

There was no DNA evidence linking Navejar to the alleged sexual assault.

Prosecutor Kim Richardson told the jury during her closing argument Monday that either it believed the alleged victim or it didn't.

Navejar's attorney, Shawn B. Collins, has said his client's accuser is a chronic liar who has previously made false accusations of sexual abuse.

He noted even her own family testified against her, while numerous co-workers of Navejar spoke of his upstanding character.

Navejar's accuser told investigators he touched her inappropriately on several separate occasions in September 2014 while she was in custody at Juvenile Hall, court filings say.

The teen, 17 at the time, said the touching culminated in a sexual assault on Sept. 29, 2014.

Despite the verdict, the teen's law-

suit against Kern County will go forward, attorneys representing her at Chain Cohn Stiles said Wednesday afternoon.

Attorney Neil K. Gehlawat said he had hoped for a conviction, but he believes the lawsuit will succeed and prove the assault did in fact happen. He said further investigation, including questioning of Navejar, can take place now that the criminal case is over.

Gehlawat said the teen has suffered significant emotional distress stemming from the alleged assault.

Chain Cohn Stiles is also representing another teen who was allegedly sexually assaulted by a different correctional officer at Juvenile Hall from September 2014 to January 2015.

A trial date for the civil case has not yet been scheduled.

Medical Board withdraws accusation against doctor

THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

A California Medical Board accusation filed against a Bakersfield doctor last June alleging poor treatment of patients has been withdrawn, according to medical board documents the physician provided The Californian Wednesday.

A spokeswoman for the

Medical Board said she could not confirm the agency had withdrawn the accusation against Dr. William Bichai but stressed there is nothing negative in the licensing information it has for him.

In general, when the Medical Board withdraws an accusation against a

physician, she said, the agency removes accusation documents from its website and there are no public records available on the case.

But the medical board documents Bichai forwarded The Californian are clear that "the first amended accusation in the above-entitled case is hereby

withdrawn."

They're dated March 3 of this year.

In a statement, Bichai's attorney, Peter Osinoff, said: "Dr. Bichai presented evidence showing he acted within the standard of care and the medical board acted responsibly by withdrawing its case against him."

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