

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Father Found Guilty of Kidnapping, Fleeing From Police in RV

A man was found guilty today of kidnapping his two young children and fleeing from law enforcement in a motorhome last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Jurors deliberated for two hours before finding Stephen Merle Houk (5/14/71) guilty of two counts each of kidnapping, child abuse, injuring a spouse and child detention, and one count each of assault with a firearm, criminal threats, fleeing a pursuing peace officer's motor vehicle and possession of a firearm by a felon.

Prior to the jury trial, Houk pleaded no contest to one misdemeanor count of failing to register as a sex offender.

Deputy District Attorney Tal Kahana of the Child Abduction Section prosecuted the case.

Sentencing is scheduled on Sept. 4 in Department 115 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center. He faces more than 78 years in state prison.

On May 1, 2018, Houk and the mother of his children got into a fight in the family's RV parked in Malibu. The defendant pointed a loaded firearm at her and threatened to kill her. The two children, one 10 months old and the second 3 years old, were awakened by the attack on their mother, the prosecutor said.

Houk drove away and stopped at a gas station before driving to a Santa Clarita coffee house where he forced her to panhandle. The victim eventually asked for help from a passerby who called law enforcement. Houk fled when Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies responded and a pursuit ensued.

The defendant eventually fled from the RV after stopping near Bakersfield, the prosecutor said. He was later found in Barstow and arrested.

Case BA467774 was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Major Crimes Bureau.

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.