

Jackie Lacey

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NEWS RELEASE

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Father Sentenced for Kidnapping, Fleeing From Police in RV

A man was sentenced today to more than 80 years in state prison for kidnapping his two young children and fleeing from law enforcement in a motorhome last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Stephen Merle Houk (dob 5/14/71) was sentenced to 88 years and four months in prison.

Last month, jurors found Houk 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.

Houk pleaded no contest to one misdemeanor count of failing to register as a sex offender prior to trial.

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

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

Houk drove away and stopped at a gas station before going 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.