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JURY FINDS GARCIA GUILTY OF LEWD OR LASCIVIOUS MOLESTATION

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Clay County jury has found Jose Antonio Garcia guilty of Lewd or Lascivious Molestation. With the verdict, Garcia faces up to life in Florida State Prison. The Honorable Steven Whittington will sentence Garcia at a November 14, 2023, hearing.

On Nov. 13, 2020, the victim's mother filed a report with Clay County Sheriff's Office after her 17-year-old daughter disclosed Garcia had molested her when she was 7 or 8 years old. The victim says she got in the shower and Garcia — who was in his 50s at the time — got into the shower with her unannounced. Garcia grabbed her hand and placed it on his genitals. The victim left the bathroom and Garcia apologized and asked her not to tell anyone or he would get into trouble. During a recorded phone call, Garcia admitted to the victim's mother there was an inappropriate incident between him and the victim.

The case was investigated by Clay County Sheriff's Office and was prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Cara Devlin and Randi Daugustinis.