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ARKANSAS MAN RECEIVES 30-YEAR PRISON TERM FOR BURGLARY & CHILD SEX ASSAULT

A former Spartanburg County resident received a 30-year prison sentence today after he admitted to breaking into a local home and sexually assaulting a small child.

Jose Javier Salas, 40, of Arkansas, pleaded guilty to first-degree burglary and first-degree criminal sexual conduct with a minor. He will serve 85 percent of the prison sentence or more than 26 years before he is eligible for release. Salas will also have his name added to the sex offender registry.

The break-in and assault occurred Feb. 25, 2006 at a Spartanburg-area home some time between 3:30 a.m. and 7 a.m. Salas woke a 4-year-old child from her sleep and touched her in a sexual manner. During their investigation, deputies discovered the front door of the home had been forced open. Two cars in the front yard were broken into but nothing was reported missing.

Investigators collected DNA evidence from the victim at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center and matched it to sample taken from Salas during an unrelated case. Investigators traced Salas to Arkansas and formally charged him on May 24, 2007. Salas was a stranger to the victim.

After his arrest, Salas told deputies he couldn't remember what occurred the night of the crime.

Salas' prior criminal record included a conviction for trafficking cocaine.

Assistant Solicitor Susan Reese said she was pleased to resolve the case without exposing the child to the stress of a trial.

"The victim in this case is making a remarkable recovery," Reese said. "She was relieved to learn she wouldn't have to publically discuss her victimization in court today."

For more information, contact Murray Glenn at 809-4892.

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