

Ex-New Orleans detective pleads guilty to sexually assaulting three girls

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Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office Desmond Pratt was given three years in prison for three sexual assaults that happened in 2013, 2001, and some time between Aug. 1997 and Aug. 1998.

A Louisiana homicide detective is now on the wrong side of the law.

43-year-old Desmond Pratt, a former officer with the New Orleans Police Department's 6th District, agreed to spend three years behind bars after pleading guilty to sexually assaulting three young girls.

As part of a plea deal, the man accepted two counts of sexual battery and one count of felony carnal knowledge of a juvenile in an Orleans Parish court on Friday.

One of the counts of sexual battery had been downgraded from incest, Nola.com reports. An incest charge could have sent the former

detective to prison for up to 20 years.

Pratt has been behind bars since his arrest last April. He's accused of three instances of sexual abuse, each time with a different underaged teen. One case involved a 13-year-old girl and happened some time between Aug. 1997 and Aug. 1998. The second case stems from an encounter with a 15-year-old girl in the fall of 2001. The third underaged girl was allegedly abused in April 2013.

But at least one of his victims may have forgiven him.

The most recent victim told lawyers she wanted the case resolved through a plea deal and "did not wish a severe penalty" on her abuser.

The other two victims had been willing to testify in court until recently. They are now refusing to cooperate.



BILL HABER/AP Jonie Pratt (right) is Desmond Pratt's wife.

"She just stopped on contacting us altogether," assistant district attorney Jason Napoli told the judge about one of the women.

In a hearing earlier this month, Napoli suggested that one of the victims was being "stifled" by her mother.

"Whether these victims have actually forgiven you is something that I don't really know," Judge Franz Zibilich said in court on Friday.

"This is not to suggest that the activity did or did not happen—one can only assume at least some activity occurred," the judge continued, citing Pratt's willingness to agree to a plea deal.

Zibilich agreed to give the ex-officer credit for time served.

Before his arrest, Pratt was working on high profile cases for his department, WDSU reports. He was involved in an investigation of Telly Hankton, one of New Orleans' most dangerous criminals.

Pratt has been suspended without pay. He hasn't yet been formally terminated from the force, an NOPD spokesperson said.