



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Butte County Jury Finds Former Vice-Mayor of Paradise Guilty**

Michael Anthony Zuccolillo, 44, of Paradise, was found guilty as charged today by a Butte County jury for engaging in sexually explicit conversations, including sending photographs of his genitals, with a person he believed to be a minor, and arranging to meet that person with the intent to engage in sexual activity.

The jury, made up of eight men and four women reached their unanimous verdict on the charges today after a day and a half of deliberations.

Evidence presented in the case included testimony that on February 24, 2020, the Butte County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) was contacted by a subject alleging he had evidence to prove that Zuccolillo had been sending sexually explicit text messages and photographs of his genitals to a person Zuccolillo believed to be a 16-year-old girl visiting the Sacramento area from China. The reporting party had established the persona of the 16-year-old and her older sister in a "To Catch a Predator" style operation. An undercover Butte County Sheriff's Deputy then contacted the defendant using the previously established persona.

The jury was able to see and read the texts and photos sent during the ongoing conversation that included a discussion of Zuccolillo traveling to Sacramento to have sex with the purported 16-year-old and her adult sister.

Zuccolillo testified on his own behalf, telling the jury that he was engaging in sexual texting relationships with four women, not including his wife. He claimed he believed it was one of these adult women texting him from an unknown phone number, posing as a 16-year-old as sexual fantasy and "role play."

However, during cross-examination by Supervising Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Bennett, the defendant admitted he continued to send pictures of his genitals and engage in sexual conversations even after being told repeatedly he was communicating with a 16-year-old. The defendant later admitted that this was a "bad decision."

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey praised the twelve deliberating jurors and three alternate jurors who sat through sexually graphic evidence and applauded their ability to understand that while there may not have been an actual child victim, it is important to keep predators and opportunists away from children.

Zuccolillo remains out on bail of \$135,000. He will appear on October 5, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. for sentencing. He faces a maximum exposure of three years, four months in state prison on the two felonies and misdemeanor of which he was convicted. He will be required to register as a sex offender.



**Michael Zuccolillo**