



## CRIME

# The store appeared ideal for music lessons. Until the teacher molested their daughter

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They thought the Fresno music store would be the ideal place for their 11-year-old daughter to get piano lessons.

A sign posted on each music room at Legend Music Sound Stage said: “All activities are recorded on video and/or audio device to aid in the prosecution of any crime committed against this facility.”

But while in the room, the girl was sexually assaulted by her music teacher, Gabriel Argote, according to a lawsuit filed in Fresno County Superior Court.

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**FRESNO POLICE ARRESTED GABRIEL ARGOTE INSIDE LEGEND MUSIC SOUND STAGE ON BLACKSTONE AVENUE ON FEB. 18, 2016.**

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In April this year, Argote, 67, was sentenced to 18 years in prison after pleading no contest to six felony counts of lewd acts with two girls under the age of 14.

One of the victims and her parents are now seeking unspecified damages for personal injury against Argote and Legend Music Sound Stage. The owner of the store declined to comment.

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The lawsuit was filed on July 24 by San Diego attorneys Stephen J. Estey and R. Michael Bomberger. Estey said Thursday that the girl's parents are upset because the store sign indicated it would have cameras to ensure their daughter's safety. "As it turns out the cameras were not working at all," he said.

To protect the girl's identity, she is identified in the lawsuit as Alexandra Doe.

According to the lawsuit the girl's parents took a tour of the music store prior to enrolling her in piano lessons. The music room's sign regarding the recording of activities convinced the parents to enroll their daughter and pay the required fees, Estey said.

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## **IN APRIL, GABRIEL ARGOTE, 67, WAS SENTENCED TO 18 YEARS IN PRISON AFTER PLEADING NO CONTEST TO LEWD ACTS UPON A MINOR.**

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According to the lawsuit, Argote engaged in the act of "grooming," in which "a sexual predator gradually and methodically builds trust with a child and the adults around them to gain increased access and alone time with their future victim."

Estey said his client had been taking music lessons from Argote for several months. Then on Feb. 14, 2016, the girl "was sexually assaulted against her will" by Argote inside the music store, the lawsuit says. Fresno police arrested Argote at the store at Blackstone Avenue and Lansing Way four days later, court records say.

The lawsuit accuses Argote of battery and the music store of negligent supervision of Argote. The music store also is accused of fraud because "if the video/audio equipment" had been working, Argote's "grooming" of Alexandra Doe could have been discovered and the assault on her could have been prevented, the lawsuit says.

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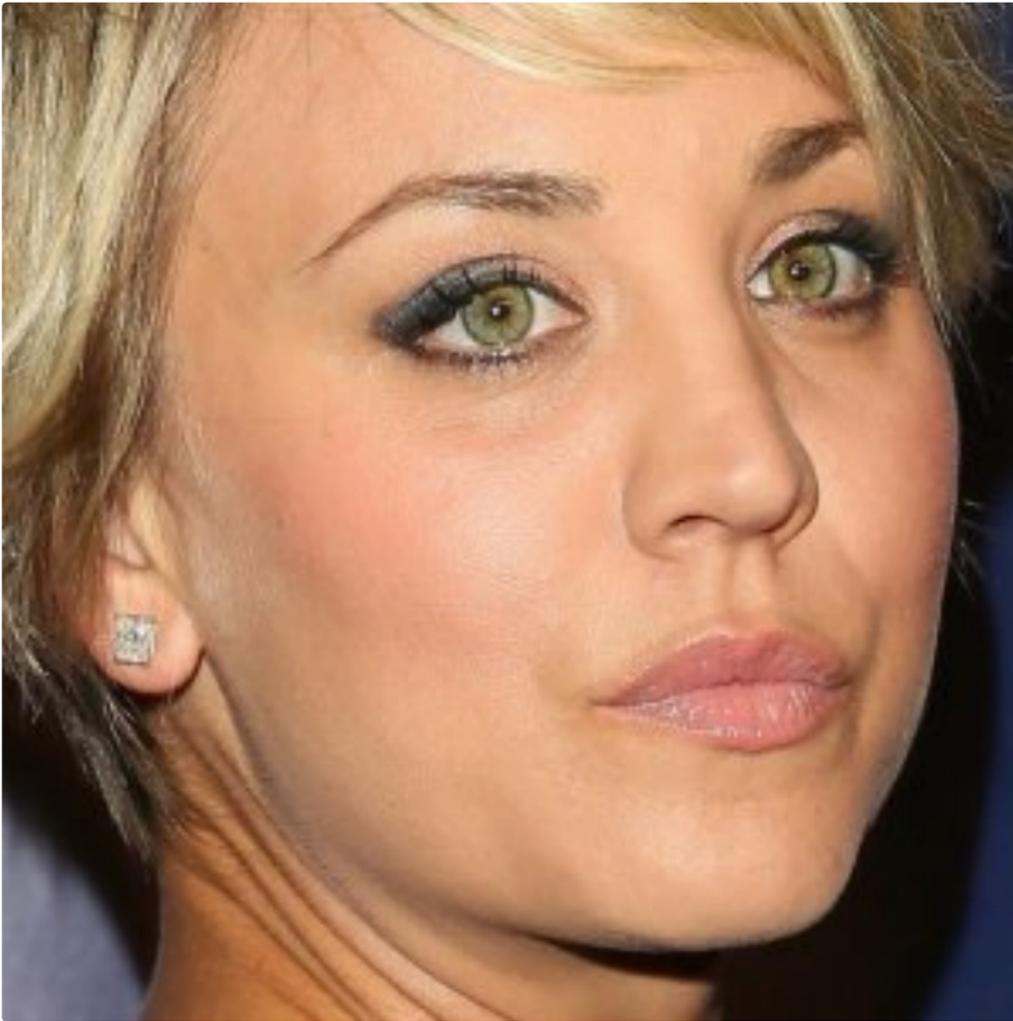
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