

Waukeganite accepts plea deal just prior to start of his trial

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By [BETH KRAMER](#) ekramer@stmedianetwork.com

Minutes before his trial was about to begin, a Waukegan man accepted a plea deal in which he admitted to committing sexual offenses against two young girls.

Roy Marquez, 25, pleaded guilty to one count of predatory criminal sexual assault and one count of aggravated criminal sexual abuse. The predatory charge carries a range of six to 30 years in prison and the sexual abuse charge carries a three- to seven-year sentence range.

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Marquez

Marquez's sentence will be capped at 25 years, Lake County Circuit Court Judge John Phillips said.

"There was a significant risk to you that if you were convicted, you have faced life in prison," Phillips said.

Multiple counts of each charge were dropped as a result of the plea deal.

Both victims from the 2002 incident were ready to testify at the trial, Assistant State's Attorney Steve

DeRue said.

Marquez had two girls, ages 5 and 8, lie down in the stairwell of an apartment complex, according to co-prosecutor Kristen Robinson. He sexually assaulted one girl and fondled the other, prosecutors said.

Jury selection was finished Tuesday and prosecutors told Phillips they were prepared to proceed with the trial if the plea deal did not work out.

Sentencing will be in November, Phillips said. A sentencing date will be scheduled today.