



## See No Evil

### Judge sets trial date for ‘Sarge’ McFarland on kidnapping and extortion charges

By [André Coleman](#) , [Myles Williams](#) 06/16/2011

As parents and children picketed outside, inside a Pasadena courtroom neither a 14-year old girl nor her aunt could identify Kelvin “Sarge” McFarland as the man who allegedly handcuffed the child, drove her to her aunt’s home and demanded money for her release.

“I find it very unusual both witnesses could not identify him while he was in the courtroom less than 50 feet from them,” said McFarland’s attorney, Bill Paparian, a former Pasadena City Councilman.

Nevertheless, the girl’s father was able to single out McFarland, and Judge Stanley Blumenfeld bound the popular youth boot camp operator over for trial on charges of kidnapping, false imprisonment and extortion. McFarland, who is not in the military but wears military clothing, including a drill instructor’s hat, operates the Family First Growth Camp for troubled teens.

McFarland was released from custody Wednesday morning after Blumenfeld lowered his bail from \$285,000 to \$185,000 the previous day, according to Paparian.

On Tuesday, the courtroom was packed with McFarland supporters. Outside, about 25 people demanded his release. “I can’t believe they’re accusing him of false accusations,” said 19-year-old Albert Johnson. “They also have the statements of parents willing to testify against what the other parents say. He’s like a father to me.”

McFarland allegedly encountered the victim, identified only as “Lady M,” on Orange Grove Boulevard and Mentor Avenue on May 16.

On the witness stand, the girl, who police say previously picked McFarland out of lineup, said her assailant “started asking me a lot of questions, and when I asked him why he wanted to know, he screamed he would be the one asking questions. He told me he worked for the Police Department and handcuffed me. I was scared, and he put me in the car.”

But when asked if she saw the man who had handcuffed her, the teen looked around the room nervously before answering, "No I don't."

In previous testimony, the girl's aunt said she also could not identify McFarland, who appeared in court wearing a blue, jail-issued jumpsuit. "He told me she had been arrested and they were trying to contact her parents," Nelly Maldonado said through an interpreter. "He said he had filled out the paperwork to take her to Sylmar," a reference to LA County Juvenile Hall.

When the father arrived, McFarland said he would release the girl for \$100. In previous testimony, the father identified McFarland as the person he paid. A teenage friend of the victim also testified to seeing McFarland with the victim on May 16.

*Intern Myles Williams contributed to this report.*

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