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Ex-Police Officer Guilty of Running Prostitution Ring : Verdict: Charles Gerald Jiles used his 'Beautiful Escorts' service as a front for 'a very active operation in Orange County.'

November 26, 1991 | MATT LAIT | TIMES STAFF WRITER

SANTA ANA — A former police officer was convicted Monday of running a prostitution ring, disguised as an escort service, that catered to Orange County customers.

Charles Gerald Jiles, 38, of Upland was found guilty on 12 counts of pimping, pandering and conspiracy by an Orange County Superior Court jury.

During a three-week trial, jurors heard lurid testimony about steamy sexual encounters between hundreds of clients and their "escorts" at expensive hotels and houses around Orange County and elsewhere in the Southland.

"It was a very active operation for Orange County," said Deputy Dist. Atty. James J. Mulgrew, who prosecuted the case. "I'm very pleased with the verdict." Jiles, who had formerly worked for eight years as a patrol officer with the Upland and Claremont police departments, faces a maximum sentence of 13 years in prison, Mulgrew said. He also faces a second trial, scheduled to begin Dec. 2, on charges that he started yet another escort-prostitution service while out on bail after his arrest.

At his trial, prosecutors contended that Jiles ran an elaborate prostitution operation that employed as many as 30 women and serviced hundreds of men in Orange County, as well as San Bernardino, Riverside and other local areas.

Seven women who said they worked at Jiles' "Beautiful Escorts" business were granted immunity in exchange for their testimony.

According to their testimony, Jiles advertised for customers in local newspapers. When a man called the service, his name and phone number were forwarded to an escort who then made arrangements for a "date."

The escorts testified that they charged between \$250 and \$300 for a one-hour date. Of that fee, \$85 went to Jiles.

Jiles also advertised in newspapers for escorts. When a woman inquired about a job, he would meet them for an interview, according to prosecutors. During the interviews, which were often held at hotels, Jiles would ask applicants if they had experience as an escort, but he carefully avoided discussing the topic of sex, the escorts said.

Throughout the trial, Jiles' attorney, Rodger M. Carey, contended that his client ran a legitimate escort service for men who wanted companionship--for whatever reason.

Jiles took the witness stand and maintained that his employees were "private contractors" who were not told what to do on their dates. He testified that he specifically told his escorts that they were not to engage in any illegal activity, including sex.

"As long as they were not violating the laws, I was not concerned with what they were doing on their date," Jiles testified.

But the jurors, following deliberations of less than two days, said Monday that they did not believe him.

"He should have never taken the stand," said Cynthia Wells, a juror from Orange. "That really hurt him."

Richard Scurr of Costa Mesa, the jury foreman, said: "We believed the girls. . . . We felt the evidence was overwhelming."

Wells said that she believed Jiles lied on too many details. For example, she noted, Jiles testified that he told the escorts to wear lingerie on dates for their own protection. "Give me a break," Wells said with a laugh.

At another point in his testimony, Jiles said that he asked for his escorts' body measurements so he could "identify" them to police if they were ever in trouble.

One of the most damning pieces of evidence against Jiles, jurors said, was a taped conversation between the defendant and a newly hired escort who agreed to wear a recording device after being arrested by Orange County sheriff's vice officers.

During the conversation, the escort told Jiles that she had sex with a customer. Jiles apparently acknowledged that the other escorts had intercourse with customers as well and told the woman that he wanted his \$85 share of her date, authorities said.