

Attorney: Salinas man sought in child molestation case surrenders

Rene Cruz turns self in after mom, sister urge him to return

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Rene Cruz / Provided Photo

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A man wanted in a child molestation case turned himself in Monday, days after his mother and sister went to the media urging for him to surrender.

Attorney Thomas Worthington said Rene Cruz showed up about 11:30 a.m. at his law firm in Salinas.

"He came into our office like we recommended," Worthington said. "We talked to him and he agreed to surrender."

He said Cruz showed up at the law office with his sister, Zoila Cruz. Worthington said they called the police department after he agreed to turn himself over to authorities. An investigator with the law firm drove Cruz to the Monterey County Jail after they were unable to reach the detective assigned to the case.

Worthington said his firm has agreed to represent Cruz if any criminal charges are filed against him.

On Friday, Worthington — on behalf of Cruz's mother, Raquel Cruz, and his older sister, Zoila Cruz — had urged him to call or come into the law office. Worthington said at that time that he was representing Raquel and Zoila Cruz, advising them of what they should do in this situation.

Salinas police had been looking for Cruz since Jan. 25 on an \$800,000 arrest warrant. He left his job and disappeared with his girlfriend, Nelida Vega Gaytan, 28, and her daughters, 5 and 9 years old. Detectives said she also has a third child, a 5-year-old son.

Last week, Gaytan, accompanied by her attorney, arrived at the police station with her children. She was released and her children were handed over to Child Protective Services, police said.

Cmdr. Dave Shaw confirmed that Cruz was booked about 2 p.m. at the jail and will be charged with child molestation crimes.