



## (8-28-02) Former Columbia deacon testifies Friday in molestation trial

(Columbia) August 28, 2002 - After four days of testimony John Hubner took the stand Friday to tell his side of the story. Hubner, a former First Baptist Church deacon denied the claims of a young woman who says when she was 12- and 13-years-old, Hubner repeatedly molested her.

"Did not happen...did not happen," Hubner said, as he was peppered with questions by Deputy Solicitor Johnny Gasser.

Hubner's attorneys have struggled with a case that forced them to deal with his 1983 conviction for sexual contact with another 12-year-old girl in Maine. Hubner suggested the charges were filed in retaliation, after the girl and her brother were caught trying to cash a \$100 check stolen from Hubner's house.

Friday, however, the former deacon had to admit he pleaded guilty, as he put it, "for a number of reasons,"

"Mostly," he told defense attorney Carol McCurry, "because I wanted to get it over with and get back to my family."

Hubner moved to South Carolina and joined the huge congregation of Columbia's First Baptist Church where he became involved in several church programs, including doing carpentry work for the church's annual pageants and acting as a youth and Boy Scout leader.

Gasser, though, says Hubner never let anyone know about his past. When the prosecutor asked who at First Baptist Hubner first told about his previous conviction, Hubner told the jury, "I did not tell that to anyone."

Gasser ripped into the response. "The fact of the matter is, Mr. Hubner, isn't it true that, if it benefits John Hubner, you won't tell the truth, in a court of law or in your church or anywhere, isn't that true Mr. Hubner?"

Said Hubner, "No, it's not."

Thursday former First Baptist Youth Minister Reverend Tad Wilson testified that after he was told about Hubner's actions, "I approached Mr. Hubner and asked him if he would back off of the behavior that was in question, and he agreed to do so." Church officials later removed Hubner from his role in the youth program.

On the witness stand Friday, Hubner said he did not remember meeting with Wilson.

Gasser appeared stunned by the claim. "You want this jury to believe that you have no memory of Reverend Wilson approaching you after the Hilton Head trip and saying, 'John, you're bothering the children, you're touching the children inappropriately. They're scared. Back off.' You just happen to not have a memory of that?"

Hubner responded, "That never happened."

Hubner says he did not believe there is anything in his past that would embarrass the church. "As a Christian, when you have repented and confessed everything in your life and you have nothing between you and the Lord, there is nothing - He holds you accountable for nothing. It is erased. Forgiven. Forgotten."

But Hubner also criticized some in one of South Carolina's largest churches. "No one told me anything," he testified. "That's the problem with First Baptist Church. Nobody wants to talk about anything. They want, you know, to talk amongst themselves, but they never, ever, ever want to be confrontational or if they've got something bothering them, they don't want to talk about it, period."

Testimony ended Friday, and the trial will take a three day break. Closing arguments and jury deliberations will begin Tuesday morning.

The former deacon could face 90 years in prison if convicted of six counts of lewd acts on a minor. He has been free on \$200,000 bail since his arrest last year.

**by Jack Kuenzie**

*updated 6:44pm by [Chris Rees](#)*

#### WISTV License Subsidiary, LCC

1111 Bull St.  
Columbia, SC 29201  
(803) 799-1010  
[countonwis@wistv.com](mailto:countonwis@wistv.com)

**FCC Public File**  
[publicfile@wistv.com](mailto:publicfile@wistv.com)  
803-799-1010  
**EEO Report**  
**Closed Captioning**

#### News

[MOST DISCUSSED](#)  
[SEEN ON TV](#)  
[INVESTIGATES](#)  
[BIRTHDAYS](#)  
[CONTESTS](#)  
[LIVE TRAFFIC](#)  
[GAS PRICES](#)  
[COMMUNITY NEWS](#)

#### Weather

[SEVERE WEATHER](#)  
[WEATHER CAMERAS](#)  
[INTERACTIVE RADAR](#)  
[TEXT ALERTS](#)  
[EMAIL ALERTS](#)  
[CLOSINGS](#)  
[WEATHER APP](#)  
[SHARE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS](#)

#### Sports

[SPORTS HEADLINES](#)  
[GAMECOCKS](#)  
[HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL](#)

#### Video

[LIVE NEWSCASTS](#)  
[LIVE BREAKING NEWS](#)  
[VIDEO ON DEMAND](#)  
[MOST WATCHED](#)

#### Connect

[ABOUT US](#)  
[WIS TEAM BIC](#)  
[ADVERTISE W](#)  
[WIS JOB OPP](#)  
[WIS INTERNSH](#)  
[FCC PUBLIC F](#)



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2014 Worldnow and WISTV. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).