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### **Pastor accused of raping girl from church**

By FRANCES ROBLES  
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Daniel Garnicki is a controversial pastor accustomed to his share of negative attention.

He has been sued, accused of brainwashing and even vandalism. But these days the renegade storefront minister has a bigger fight on his hands: He is charged with taking a 15-year-old girl to a Holiday Inn and forcing her to have sex while a porn video rolled.

Garnicki, 35, is the evangelical leader of the Camino de Santidad -- or Holy Way -- church on Calle Ocho and 18th Avenue. It is the kind of place where pedestrians walking down the street are encouraged to attend the nightly services. It is the kind of church where hundreds every day pack in for services that go on for several hours.

Although he has been allowed to continue a four-hour Christian radio program broadcast daily on 1080 AM, Garnicki is temporarily out of the pulpit. House arrest confines him to his Sweetwater home.

"Right now we don't have any comment," said a relative at Garnicki's home who identified himself as Carlos. "Just don't put anything in the paper that's not true, because he's being charged with something that's not true."

His attorney, David Markus, said his client is innocent.

Garnicki was arrested in September when a high school student in Miami Beach told her teacher she had been sexually assaulted. The teacher told a counselor. The counselor told the cops.

"I felt she was credible, and this did occur," said Miami Beach detective Marilyn Tepperberg. "She was very upset about it."

The girl's story was very detailed. And although weeks passed before she came forward, her account was backed up by the evidence and witness testimony, sources said.

The girl, now 16, told police and prosecutors that one night after the 7:30 p.m. service, Garnicki went with her to see her mother in the hospital. She was worried about her mother's illness and Garnicki offered to pray with her.

The two met at a Blockbuster video store on Miami Beach, where one of the girl's teachers allegedly saw her and Garnicki.

Garnicki allegedly told the girl he needed her help with a study on the difference between Christian women and worldly women and pornography. His research was to take place at the Holiday Inn on Collins Avenue in Miami Beach.

He allegedly ordered a pornographic movie called Raw Flesh from the hotel's cable service. As it played, he asked the girl how she felt. As he continued asking her, she said he started touching her.

She told police he forced her to perform oral sex and then had intercourse with her. When it was over, he told her she had sinned and needed to pray.

When police interviewed him, Garnicki denied even going to the hotel. His wife told police it was she who went to the Holiday Inn with her husband.

But sources said Garnicki will have to overcome some obstacles: he registered under his own name; the cable company confirms the pay-per-view was ordered; and the hotel clerk distinctly remembers the girl there with him, and that he refused to pay for the video.

"She knew a lot of things she could not have known if she was not there," one law enforcement source said of the alleged victim.

Markus, Garnicki's attorney, said those are the state's version of events, not necessarily the facts. He said Garnicki was at the hotel -- with his wife.

"He adamantly denies what the girl says. His position is that the girl is a liar," Markus said. "The girl has problems and the jury will hear about them."

After Garnicki's arrest, he was placed under house arrest with orders to stay away from children. Police tailed him and learned he was still preaching every day -- in the company of families with children. Prosecutors went back to court to have a judge order the minister away from his 1,000-member church.

"The church backs him 100 percent," Markus said.

The church is a controversial one in the religious community. Garnicki, whose services were often broadcast on cable television, was suspected by the pastor of a nearby Catholic church of inciting followers to desecrate its religious statues. And Garnicki was one of several pastors who recently urged his membership to fight a county gay rights ordinance. (Excerpted)....