

Exchange student helped husband lure underage sister to Miami and molest her, cops say

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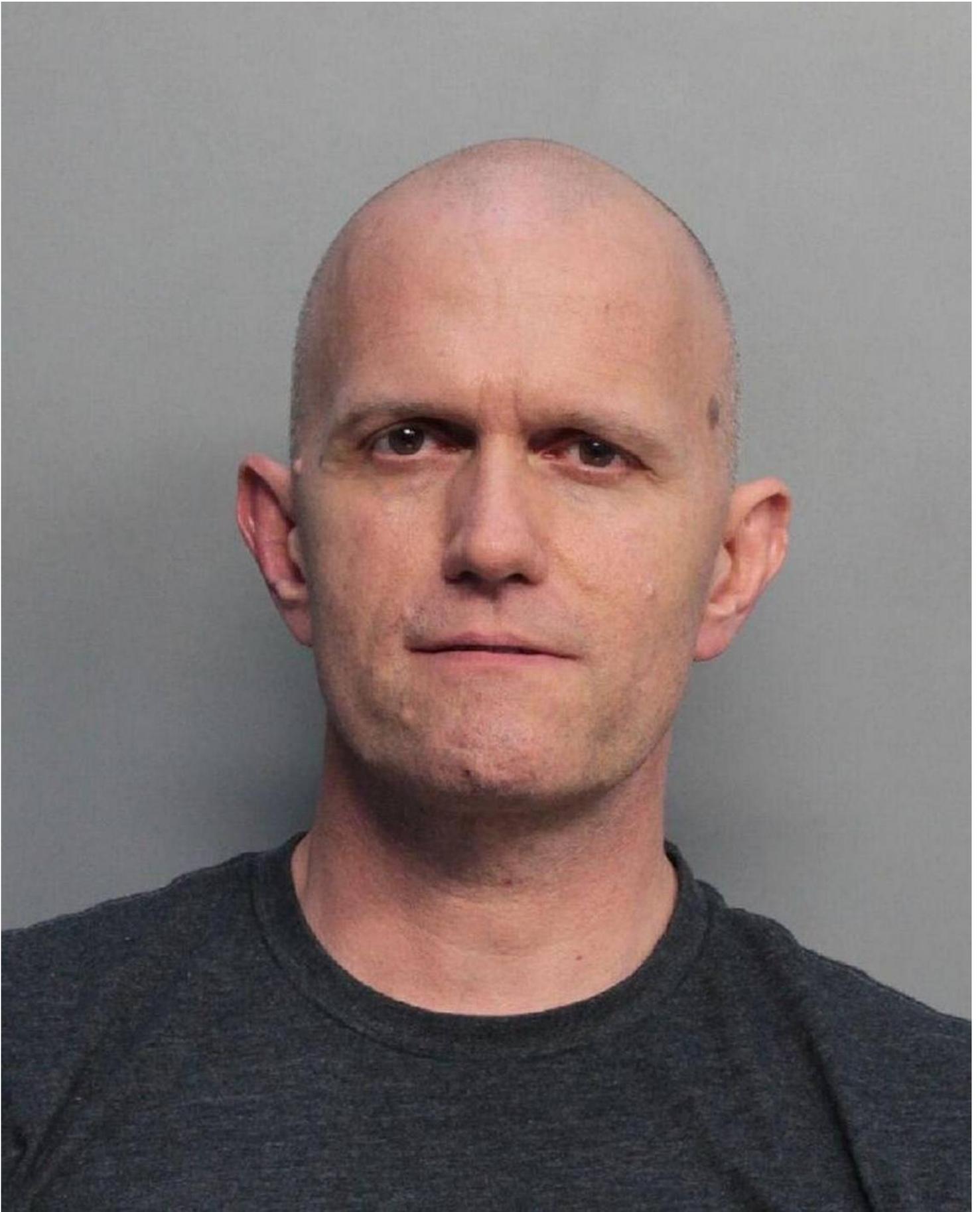
Dale Leary was convicted of breaking into a Coral Gables house in the mid-1980s, tying up a woman at gunpoint and sexually attacking her.

Decades later, that conviction on his record didn't prevent Leary from becoming a host for young foreign-exchange students.

Leary's past is now under scrutiny after Miami-Dade police this week said the 50-year-old seduced one teenage exchange student from Spain named Marta San Jose, then divorced his wife to marry her. Shortly after, police say, the newlyweds lured another young exchange student to their Cutler Bay home, where she was sexually abused over a period of years. Police identified the victim as San Jose's own then-14-year-old sister.

Leary, a marketing and tech consultant, was arrested this month along with his one-time foreign-exchange student, San Jose, who is now 21. On Wednesday, she pleaded not guilty to a host of sex charges. Leary issued a written not guilty plea to similar charges last week.

There could be more victims. Miami-Dade police detectives are asking for any other girls to come forward.



Dale Leary

Miami-Dade Corrections

How long Leary had been a foreign-exchange host — and how many students he had hosted over the years — remains unclear. Although the San Jose attended a Miami-Dade public school, exchange programs are run by any number of outside companies and police did not immediately name the company that placed the girls with Leary.

Where the victim went to school was not made public on Wednesday. High school exchange programs are accredited by the U.S. State Department, which requires that hosts provide a “safe and secure environment,” according to its website.

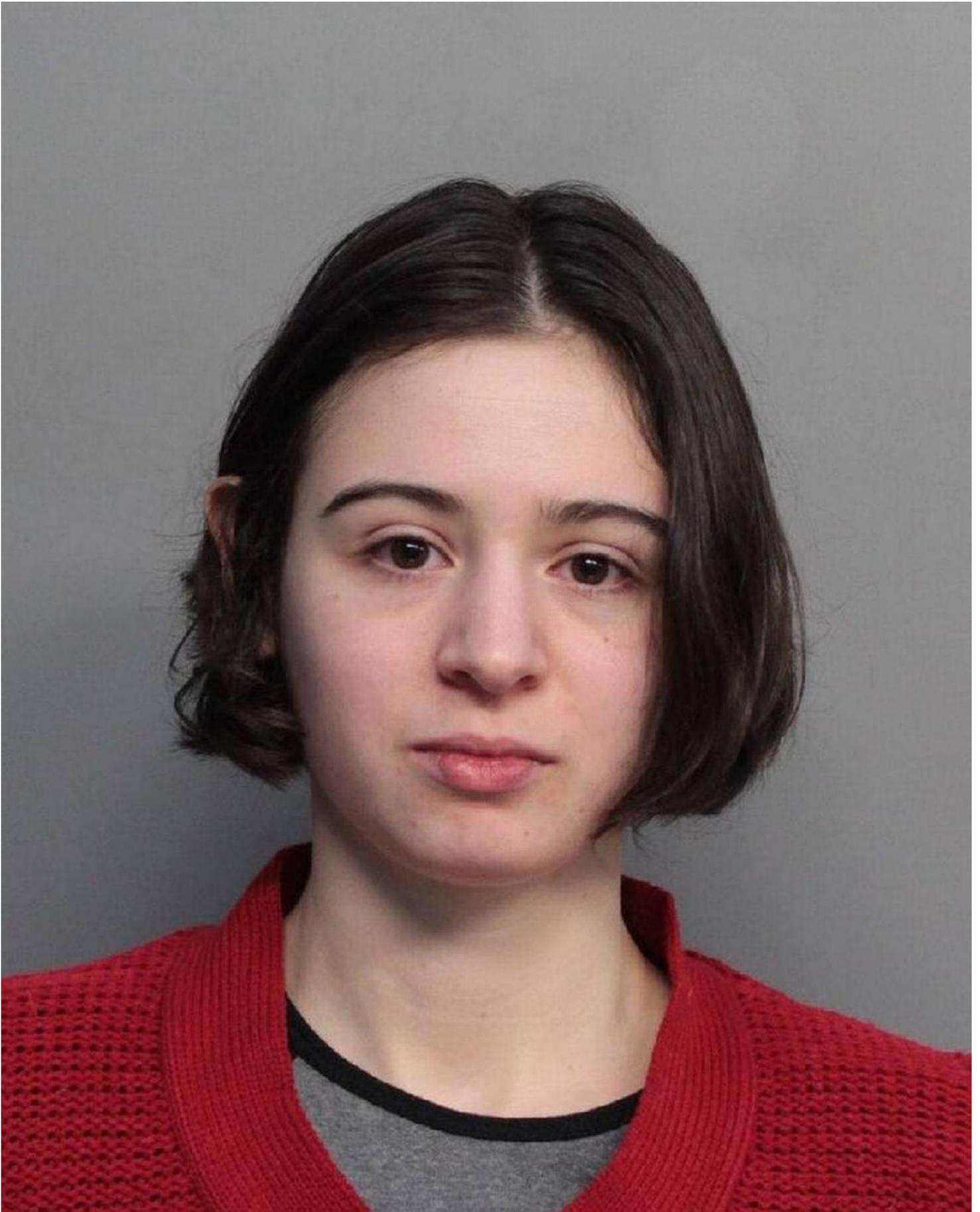
Also unknown: what, if any, background checks were done on Leary. His previous conviction is recorded in a publicly available search through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, as well as in Miami-Dade court records

Leary himself was a student when, at the age of 19, he was arrested in October 1985. Coral Gables police said he and another man broke into a home on the 700 block of University Drive. A woman told police that Leary bound her and forced her into the bathroom before sexually attacking her. The following year, Leary pleaded guilty to armed robbery, armed burglary, kidnapping, and lewd and lascivious behavior. He did 60 days in jail and was put on probation for the next 13 years.

Afterward, according to online records, he went on to found a branding and marketing company called Prodigy Professional Group. On its website, the company claims to have created advertising software for major companies such as Daimler, Siemens and Coca-Cola.

His assistant public defender could not immediately comment on Tuesday. San Jose’s lawyer, Jorge Viera, also declined comment. Both defendants remain in jail.

As for his latest arrest, Miami-Dade police outlined a sordid plot that started when Leary began hosting San Jose in 2012.



Marta San Jose

Miami-Dade Corrections

At the time, Leary was married for over a decade to Claudia Leary, who identifies herself as a Miami-Dade schools employee and is just two years younger than him. They began hosting San Jose when she was a 16-year-old high-school student. On her Facebook page, San Jose said she had attended Palmetto High.

After San Jose finished her junior year of high school in 2013, Leary and San Jose flew to Spain to convince her parents to allow her to stay in Miami for her senior year, police said. The parents agreed.

Before San Jose's senior year was done, he divorced his wife and married San Jose, 20 days after she turned 18, records show. Her Facebook page features a photo of her sitting in a restaurant, kissing the bald-headed older man.

One former co-worker told the Miami Herald that around 2014, San Jose came to the office every day purporting to be an "intern" — and no one knew the two were married, or that he had even divorced his previous wife.

Miami-Dade detectives said San Jose's parents had no idea the two had become lovers. The couple returned to Spain and convinced the parents to allow her younger sister, 14 at the time, to move to Miami, too.

Back in South Florida, according to police, Leary and San Jose began "manipulating" the younger girl into believing she had been sexually abused by her parents, something that didn't really happen.

San Jose's sister, now 16, told police the two began to have sex in front of her and asking her to let Leary perform sex acts on her, saying it would help her deal with being a sex-abuse victim. They convinced her to join them in sex acts more than seven times. Another time, the sister told police, they plied her with alcohol before shooting photos of her only in high heels.

San Jose and Leary are charged with lewd and lascivious conduct with a child under 16, possession of child pornography, engaging in a sexual act with a familial child and contributing to the delinquency of a child.