

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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Assistant U.S. Attorney:
PAUL B. MATEY
973-645-2930

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Chilean Man Sentenced to 220 Months in Prison for Bringing
Video of His Sexual Assault of a 7 Year Old into the U.S.

(More)

Public Affairs Office
Michael Drewniak, PAO

973-645-2888

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NEWARK – A Chilean citizen who filmed his sexual abuse of a seven-year-old child was sentenced today to 220 months in federal prison for transporting child pornography into the United States, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Stanley R. Chesler imposed the sentence on Luis Misael Castro Valenzuela, 42, of Union City, an illegal immigrant who was arrested with the video in May 2006.

Valenzuela pleaded guilty before Judge Chesler on May 15, 2007, to a one-count criminal Information charging him with transportation of child pornography. Valenzuela has remained in custody since his arrest by the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office.

"It just shocks the conscience that anyone would engage in such abuse of a young child," said Christie. "The defendant deserves every day of the sentence imposed by the judge."

At his plea hearing, Valenzuela admitted that in March 2005 he arranged a meeting with the 7-year-old daughter of a female friend at his residence in Chile. There, Valenzuela admitted, he forced the girl to undress and engage in sexual acts with him, which he recorded on a video cassette recorder. He then transported the videotape into the United States when he arrived in April 2006.

In determining the sentence, Judge Chesler consulted the advisory sentencing guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The Judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence and can sentence within, above, or below the guidelines range.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

This case was brought in conjunction with Project Safe Childhood. In May 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov

Christie credited Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Kyle Hutchins, in Newark, as well as detectives with the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Edward J. DeFazio, and detectives with the Union City Police Department, under the direction of Charles Everett.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Paul B. Matey of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: John Yauch, Assistant Federal Public Defender