

Department of Justice

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FORMER NIAGARA FALLS WOMAN SENTENCED FOR INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Tricia Griffith, 37, formerly of Niagara Falls, N.Y., who was convicted of international parental kidnapping of a child, was sentenced to 18 months in prison by U.S. District Court Judge Richard J. Arcara.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Fauzia K. Mattingly and Trini E. Ross, who handled the case, stated that Griffith admitted taking her child from a residence in Niagara Falls to Jamaica in June 2010. The defendant left the area without the knowledge of the child's father and in violation of a court order of custody issued previously by a Niagara County Supreme Court judge.

Griffith was arrested several months later at JFK International Airport in New York City by agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement when she returned to the United States without the child. The child remains outside of the United States at this time.

“Because the issues surrounding the unauthorized removal of a child by one parent to a destination abroad can be so complex and daunting, the United States Congress, the Hague Convention, and numerous States have all passed legislation forbidding this conduct,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “These crimes involve unspeakable suffering and loss – not the least of which is the cruelty and damage inflicted upon the child. This Office stands fully committed to prosecuting the perpetrators of this crime wherever they may be found.”

Assistance is available to parents of internationally abducted children through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at <http://missingkids.com> and the U.S. Department of State Office of Children’s Issues at <http://travel.state.gov/abduction>.

The sentencing is the result of an investigation by Special Agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge, James C. Spero.

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