

Department of Justice

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WOMAN CONVICTED OF INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPING CHARGES

BUFFALO, N.Y.– U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Jacqueline Bontzolakes, 38, of Tonawanda, N.Y., was convicted after a jury trial of international parental kidnaping and making a false statement on a passport application. The defendant faces a maximum penalty of 11 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine when sentenced.

According to Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Fauzia K. Mattingly and Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric M. Opanga, who handled the prosecution of the case, it was shown by the evidence at the trial that in February 2010, Bontzolakes took two minor children out of the country in violation of the custody arrangements set by the Erie County Family Court and without the knowledge or permission of their fathers. The defendant also concealed the identity of the father of one of the minor children in applying for a passport for that child. Through the efforts of Homeland Security Investigations agents and officials of the Diplomatic Security Service of the U.S. Department of State, Bontzolakes was returned to the U.S. and arrested in Miami, Florida, on March 24, 2010. The two minor children were located and reunited with their fathers.

The verdict is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero.

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