

Department of Justice

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CALIFORNIA MAN SENTENCED FOR ENTICING A MINOR

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Jose Francisco Pineda, 32, of California, who was convicted of coercion and enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by Chief U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Marie P. Grisanti, who handled the case, stated that in November 2008, the defendant, who was residing in Los Angeles, California, used the computer to begin a relationship with a 12 year old minor who was residing in the Buffalo area. Pineda, who was 28 years old at that time, began an online relationship with the victim claiming to be 17 years old. The defendant engaged in online chats of a sexual nature and tried to manipulate the victim into sending him nude photographs by expressing his love for the victim, sending graphic images and videos and threatening to break up if he did not receive nude photographs. The parents of the victim discovered the online activity and alerted law enforcement officials who then executed a search warrant and arrested the defendant.

"This case is yet another example why it is so important for parents to monitor the computer usage of their children, said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "The vigilance of these parents prevented what could have turned into a tragedy."

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafefchildhood.gov.

The sentencing is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Christopher M. Piehota, Special Agent in Charge and the North Tonawanda Police Department under the direction of Chief Randy Szukala. FBI agents from the Central District of California also assisted in the investigation.

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