Beat: News

El Paso School Teacher Sentenced to Life in Prison

Coercion and Enticement of a Minor

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USPA NEWS - An El Paso school teacher was sentenced today to life in prison for coercion and enticement of a minor.

According to court documents, Ricardo Ortiz, 31, began chatting with a 14-year-old on social media when the conversation quickly turned sexual in nature. Ortiz arranged to meet with the minor for a sexual encounter but when he arrived at the meeting place, Ortiz was arrested by law enforcement. Ortiz was actually speaking with an undercover FBI employee instead of a minor.

Upon further investigation it was discovered that Ortiz also engaged in sexual activities with at least three minors in the El Paso area. Agents also found child pornography on Ortiz's electronic devices.

On March 9, 2022, Ortiz pleaded guilty to three counts of coercion and enticement of a minor and one count of possession of a visual depiction involving the sexual exploitation of a minor.

"Our office will continue to prioritize the prosecution of those who prey upon children in our communities," said U.S. Attorney Ashley C. Hoff. "We are incredibly grateful for our law enforcement partners in this case for their tireless efforts in identifying victims and working to hold Ricardo Ortiz responsible for the unspeakable harm he has caused."

"Ricardo Ortiz, a local teacher in El Paso, was trusted by students and parents alike to serve as a role model and not a sexual predator going after teens," said Jeffrey R. Downey, Special Agent in Charge, FBI El Paso Office. "I want to thank our partners on the El Paso Child Exploitation & Human Trafficking Task Force for their dedication to the mission to protect the children of our community. They were able to stop Ortiz, who attempted to meet a 14-year-old, whom he met via social media, for sex. This case reminds all of us to remain vigilant about our children's online behavior and social media presence. We encourage parents to speak with their children about the dangers of online predators who use popular apps, games, and websites and to report any suspicious activity to law enforcement."

The FBI investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mallory J. Rasmussen and Kristal Wade prosecuted the case.

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 U.S. Attorneys' Offices and 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.justice.gov/psc.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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