



BCPO News



LaChia L. Bradshaw, Prosecutor
Brenda Román Maneri, First Assistant Prosecutor

Joel Bewley
BCPO Public Information Officer
Desk: 609-265-5777
Cell: 609-820-4407

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Somerset Man Charged with Sexual Extortion of Burlington County Youth

Burlington County Prosecutor LaChia L. Bradshaw and Cinnaminson Township Police Chief William Obuchowski announced that a 27-year-old Somerset man has been charged with engaging an underage male he met online in a sexual conversation and convincing the youth to accept electronic gift cards in exchange for nude photos and videos of himself.

Furthermore, police allege, Sebastian Romero had arranged to meet the victim for a sexual encounter and began making threatening statements toward his family after he failed to appear. Romero was taken into custody August 2 at his residence during the execution of a search warrant. Multiple electronic devices and other items of evidentiary value were seized.

Romero was charged with Production of Child Sexual Abuse Material (First Degree), Impairing/Debauching the Morals of a Child (Second Degree), Luring (Second Degree), Aggravated Sexual Extortion (Second Degree), Possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material (Third Degree) and Obscenity to a Minor (Third Degree).

The investigation began last month after the victim's family contacted the Cinnaminson Township Police Department to report the interaction with Romero. The investigation revealed that Romero initially contacted the victim in a chat room of an online gaming platform. The investigation further revealed that Romero was aware of the victim's age, and obtained personal information about the victim before offering to purchase nude photos and videos.

Romero was lodged in the Burlington County Jail in Mount Holly. He was denied release during a detention hearing held today in Superior Court. The case will now be prepared for presentation to a grand jury for possible indictment. Information concerning the victim is being withheld in an attempt to protect his identity.

The investigation was conducted by the BCPO High-Tech Crimes Unit and the Cinnaminson Township Police Department, with assistance from the Franklin Township (Somerset County) Police Department, the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office, and United States Homeland Security Investigations – Cherry Hill Office.

The lead investigators are BCPO HTC Unit Detective Tiffany Lenart and CTPD Detective Mark Berardis. Romero will be prosecuted by the BCPO Special Victims Unit.

The Burlington County Prosecutor's Office is a member of the New Jersey Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

All persons are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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