



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
QUEENS COUNTY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568
718-286-6000**

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE
(718) 286-6315

FINANCIAL ANALYST CHARGED IN INTERNET “SEX STING”

Allegedly Tried to Lure Undercover Detective Posing as 14-Year-Old Queens Girl to Meet For Sex

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a 26-year-old Ozone Park resident has been arraigned on charges of attempting to meet for sexual relations a person he had met online and who he believed to be a 14-year-old girl. The alleged victim was actually a New York City Police Department undercover detective assigned to its Vice Enforcement Division.

District Attorney Brown said, “It is no secret that the Internet has become an integral part of our children’s lives. Unfortunately, Internet safety has not evolved at the same pace as the technology. In order to protect children from sexual predators, parents should closely monitor their children’s online activities and report any inappropriate activity to the proper authorities.”

The District Attorney continued, “My office considers cases of Internet child luring to be a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children and a vital part of our efforts at controlling the human trafficking problem. Over the past several years, we have had thirty-seven consecutive guilty pleas or verdicts – of which thirty-six, or more than ninety-seven percent, have been felonies.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Joseph Sulker, 26, of 135-56 121st Street in the Ozone Park section of Queens. Sulker, who lists his occupation as financial analyst, was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge Stephanie Zaro on charges of attempted use of a child in a sexual performance, second-degree attempted rape, second-degree attempted criminal sexual act, first-degree attempted dissemination of indecent material to minors, attempted promoting of a sexual performance by a child, third-degree attempted patronizing a prostitute and attempted endangering the welfare of a child. Sulker, who faces up to seven years in prison if convicted, was ordered held on \$15,000 bail and to return to court on August 26, 2009.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, a NYPD Vice detective was operating in his undercover persona as a 14-year-old girl from Queens between January 19, 2009, and July 28, 2009, during which he received numerous instant messages from Sulker – who initially stated he was 21 but then indicated he was 26. The defendant’s messages allegedly were sexual in nature and expressed a desire to meet for a sexual encounter, and included offers by the defendant to pay the undercover persona to perform oral sex on him and to have sexual intercourse and oral sex with both a male and female while he watched.

Sulker was arrested yesterday afternoon when he appeared at a pre-arranged Queens location for what he allegedly believed would be a sexual encounter with the 14-year-old he had been instant messaging.

The investigation and arrest were conducted by NYPD Detective Damon Gergar, of the Department’s Vice Enforcement Division, under the supervision of Sergeant Robert Minca, and the overall supervision of Deputy Chief Brian J. Conroy and Chief Anthony Izzo of the Organized Crime Control Bureau.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Kateri A. Gasper, of the District Attorney’s Computer Crimes Unit, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Robert D. Alexander, Chief of the Computer Crimes Unit, Anthony M. Communiello, Bureau Chief of the Special Proceedings Bureau, and Oscar W. Ruiz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org