



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

**CHURCH DEACON CHARGED WITH TRYING TO HAVE ORAL SEX
WITH 14-YEAR-OLD BOY HE MET ON GRINDR APP**

*Defendant Allegedly Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conversations
With Undercover Detective Posing as Teen;
Accused Faces Up to Seven Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Rogelio Vega, 50, has been charged with attempted use of a child in a sexual performance and other crimes for allegedly meeting a “teen” with the intent to engage in a sex act.

District Attorney Katz said, “This defendant by all outward appearances is a church-going family man. Sadly, the real person under the sheep’s clothing is an alleged sexual predator who sought out a teenage boy to fulfill his needs. The arrest of this individual should serve as a warning to all those who think they can prey on youngsters online without being caught. And parents, please, be mindful of whom your children interact with on their computers and especially their mobile phones.”

Vega, of 59th Drive in Maspeth, Queens, was arraigned Wednesday night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Danielle Hartman on a four-count complaint charging him with attempted use of a child in a sexual performance, attempted criminal sexual act in the second degree, attempted disseminating indecent material to a minor in the first degree and attempted endangering the welfare of a child. Judge Hartman set the defendant’s return date for January 25, 2021. If convicted, the defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

According to the charges, on July 22, 2020, the defendant began using the app Grindr to communicate online with a detective acting in an undercover capacity as a teen boy. The undercover investigator identified himself to the defendant as being just 14. The defendant allegedly continued to chat online with the teen and used sexually-explicit language. For several months, the chats on the app continued with the defendant asking the boy to send him nude pictures. On three separate occasions, Vega is accused of sharing photos of his genitals with the “boy” and made several requests to meet the “teen” in person for oral sex. On one occasion when the defendant requested to meet, the detective responded that his mother was not at home and he could get in trouble for going out.

Continuing, DA Katz said, on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, the defendant again requested an in-person meeting with the “teen” and drove to a pre-arranged place in Queens to meet for oral sex. When the defendant arrived at the location, he flashed his car’s headlights and the undercover officer got in the car. The defendant confirmed his name when asked and after asking the person he believed to be a teenager about sexual acts he enjoyed, the defendant was arrested.

Assistant District Attorney Kateri Gasper, Chief of the Computer Crime Unit within the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Joseph Conley, Bureau Chief, Herman Wun, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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