



**SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**INCIDENT DATE/TIME: June 7, 2022 @ 3:30 pm      LOCATION: Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf**

**TOPIC: Arrest for Arranging to Meet Minor for Sex      CASE NUMBER: 22S-03309**

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**INFORMATION:**

On Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at approximately 3:30 pm, the Santa Cruz Police Department (SCPD) responded to a group of concerned citizens live-streaming a "sting" operation involving an adult male confronting another male suspected of being a sexual predator at Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf.

An independent, non-sworn investigator had been impersonating a 14-year-old girl online to catch adult sexual predators. The suspect, Valentin Rodriguez, 62 years of age, exchanged multiple inappropriate messages and photographs and eventually solicited what he thought was a teenage girl to meet him in the City of Santa Cruz to have sex.

SCPD Officers on scene interviewed the independent investigator and requested a text message be sent in their presence to confirm Mr. Rodriguez was in communication with the sting operators. Mr. Rodriguez's cell phone immediately pinged.

The reporting party produced compelling evidence for probable cause to arrest the suspect Valentin Rodriguez for arranging to meet with a person assumed to be a juvenile with the intent to engage in sex and lewd acts.

SCPD Detectives immediately processed search warrants for Rodriguez's home and vehicle to conduct forensics on his cell phone, computers, and electronic devices.

This is an ongoing investigation. Detectives are still sorting through digital forensics. It is not known yet if there are actual underage victims who may have been solicited by the suspect.

Santa Cruz Police booked Valentin Rodriguez into the Santa Cruz County jail on a felony charge of penal code 288.4(B). It is a crime to arrange a meeting with a minor with the intent to engage in sexual conduct.

**For additional information, [Joyce Blaschke](#) | (831) 420-5844  
Santa Cruz Police Department Media & Community Relations**

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