



PARKER POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Sexual Exploitation of Minors Investigation

This Press Release is to inform the community of the investigation regarding Lance Palma, a former La Paz County Sheriff's Deputy (Refer to Parker PD DR# P21120127). In December 2021, a Cyber tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) indicated images depicting the sexual exploitation of minors were sent to the Phoenix PD Internet Crimes Against Children Unit (ICAC). It was determined the pictures were being shared from a location in our jurisdiction through KIK, a social media app. Search Warrants were executed to identify the suspect and the suspect's location. Information received from the search warrants identified Palma and his residence in Parker.

With assistance from The Arizona Attorney General's Office (AGO), La Paz County Sheriff's Office (LPCSO) and Lake Havasu City Police Department a search warrant was served at Palma's residence on 2/11/22. Several items were taken as evidence. At the time, we were advised to not make an arrest by the AGO Investigator. The evidence was turned over to the AGO as they had access to the technology needed to view data in electronic devices.

On 3/3/22, it was discovered that Palma had several images depicting sexual exploitation of minors. Due to a conflict of interest, it was decided that the AGO would be the prosecuting agency for this case. All information was turned over to them.

Multiple attempts to speak with the lead prosecutor were met with unreturned calls and empty promises to keep us informed of the status of the investigation. In September, our office was notified by AGO that the case was taken to a Grand Jury. No further information was given at the time.

On November 14th, we were advised Palma had his Initial Arraignment for 10 counts of Sexual Exploitation of a Minor (ARS 13-3553) in La Paz County Superior Court. We were also notified that he had been booked into the La Paz County Jail and immediately released on 11/3/22.

I want to commend our Investigator and support staff for the tremendous job they did on this investigation. These cases are particularly difficult to investigate. Predators that share these types of images are a danger to our community. Although he is not in custody now, we are confident that justice will be served against Lance Palma for the egregious acts he has committed.

Michael Bailey
Chief of Police