



# NEWS RELEASE

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## PASSAIC COUNTY JUVENILES ARRESTED AND CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND CYBER HARASSMENT

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PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

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Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes, Passaic County Sheriff Richard H. Berdnik, Paterson Police Deputy Chief Troy Oswald and North Haledon Police Chief Robert Bracco announce the arrest and charging of six (6) juvenile Passaic County residents.

Six (6) Passaic County juvenile residents were charged in connection to an investigation regarding various social media "Purge" accounts hosting child pornography. Three (3) juvenile "hosts" created social media accounts utilizing a form of the title "Purge" requesting nude photographs of other users. The other three (3) juveniles provided nude photographs of other juvenile individuals who had not consented to their images being utilized on the social media accounts. The hosts were identified as a 14 year old male and two (2) 15 year old females. The individuals who provided the images were three (3) males ages 14 and 15.

Three (3) juvenile victims were identified during the course of the investigation as Passaic County residents; a thirteen year old and two (2) fifteen year old females.

Once law enforcement became aware of the pages, the Passaic County Sheriff's Office, Internet Crimes Against Children Unit (ICAC) contacted the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the social media accounts were taken down.

The host juveniles were charged with: 2C:24-4b(5)(a)(i) Distribution of Child Pornography 2nd Degree; 2C:24-4b(5)(a)(iii) Maintaining Child Pornography/file sharing 2nd Degree; 2C:24-4b(5)(b) Possession of Child Pornography 3rd Degree; 2C: 14-9c Invasion of Privacy 3rd Degree; and 2C: 33-4.1 Cyber Harassment 4th Degree.

The juveniles who provided the images were charged with:

2C:24-4b(5)(a)(i) Distribution of Child Pornography 2nd Degree; 2C:24-4b(5)(b) Possession of Child Pornography 3rd Degree; 2C: 14-9c Invasion of Privacy 3rd Degree; and 2C: 33-4.1 Cyber Harassment 4th Degree. The exposure on a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree juvenile charge faces up to 3 years of a custodial term, the exposure on a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree juvenile charge is 2 years of a custodial term, and the exposure on a 4<sup>th</sup> degree juvenile charge is 1 year of a custodial term to the care and custody of the Juvenile Justice Commission.

**The complaints that have been filed against the juveniles are docketed within the Superior Court-Family Division. Juvenile proceedings pursuant to New Jersey law must remain confidential. Therefore, the juveniles cannot be identified. A juvenile complaint is merely an accusation. Despite these accusations, the juveniles are presumed innocent unless and until proven delinquent beyond a reasonable doubt.**