

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cherokee County Jury Convicts Florida Man of
Attempt to Commit Child Molestation and Other Charges
State vs. Jesus Franco Arroyo**

August 24, 2021 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that on August 17 a Cherokee County jury found Jesus Franco Arroyo, 24, of Lakeland, FL, guilty of computer pornography, criminal attempt to commit a felony (child molestation), and fleeing or attempting to elude police officers.

The charges stem from an investigation conducted October 30-31, 2020, during which Arroyo used a messaging app called *MeetMe* and text messaging to seduce, solicit, and entice a 14-year-old girl in order to commit an act of child molestation.

The girl was actually a fictitious child created by an undercover Woodstock police officer from the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force. Undercover agents on this task force receive training and education about current trends in child exploitation and offender behavior, which aids them in creating decoy profiles online that mimic the circumstances under which real children have been exploited. This strategy enables officers to detect individuals seeking to exploit children before they are able to harm a real child.

During the course of Arroyo's communications with the fictitious child, he invited her to meet him in person at Dupree Park on Neese Road in Woodstock, for the purpose of sexual intercourse.

At nearly 2 a.m. on October 31, Arroyo arrived at the park to wait for the 14-year-old child to sneak out of her mother's house and walk through the woods to his car. While he waited, Arroyo continued to send text messages to the child utilizing his cell phone.

When Woodstock Police arrived, Arroyo sped out of Dupree Park toward Highway 92, eventually wrecking into the carport of a private residence where officers arrested him.

"Arroyo's actions demonstrate the dangers that children face online every day. We are fortunate that the child was a fictional child, rather than a real 14-year-old," said Deputy Chief District Attorney Katie Gropper, who prosecuted the case on behalf of the State. "Undercover operations like these are critical in detection and prevention of child exploitation and we are fortunate to work with the Woodstock Police Department to protect the children of our community."

Senior Judge Frank C. Mills III sentenced the defendant on August 18 during a remote court proceeding. Arroyo received a sentence of 15 years, with 5 years to serve in prison and the remaining 10 years to serve on probation.

While on probation, Arroyo will be subject to the general conditions of probation, including no possession of firearms, alcohol, or illegal substances. He will also be subject to sex offender conditions of supervision, including no contact of any kind with minors under the age of 18.

“Many children are safer tonight, thanks to the excellent work of an undercover Woodstock police officer who identified this sick individual before he was able to hurt an innocent child, and to the Cherokee County jurors, who found this defendant guilty,” said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “This sentence ensures that this defendant will be confined, monitored, and unable to hurt a real child.”

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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