

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Oct. 2, 2015

**Rhode Island Man Charged with Arranging to Meet
Palmdale 12-Year-Old Girl for Sex**

An 18-year-old Rhode Island man accused of flying to Southern California to have sex with a child is scheduled to be arraigned today, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Joel Rivera (dob 8/7/97) faces one count each of meeting minor for lewd purposes, distributing or showing pornography to a minor, distributing or showing child or youth pornography to a minor, contact with minor for sexual offense and arranging meeting a minor for lewd purposes.

Deputy District Attorney Jon Hatami said case MA066878 was filed on Sept. 4.

Arraignment is scheduled this afternoon in Department A1 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Antelope Valley Branch.

According to the criminal complaint, Rivera began contacting the 12-year-old girl through an anonymous webcam chatting app on Aug. 7. For nearly a month the defendant exchanged sexually explicit images with the child through various messaging apps, the prosecutor said.

When the girl's mother became aware that the defendant planned to fly in from Rhode Island to have sex with the victim, the mother contacted the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the prosecutor added. Rivera was arrested at Burbank Bob Hope Airport on Sept. 3.

The recommended bail is \$140,000. If convicted as charged, the defendant faces a possible maximum sentence of eight years in state prison.

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Special Victims Bureau.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.