

# Texas Deputy Sheriff Arrested For Cyberstalking 12-year old girl in Massachusetts

A law enforcement officer from Texas has been charged in federal court in Worcester for cyberstalking a minor female residing in Worcester County.

Pasquale T. Salas, 25, a/k/a Gino, a deputy sheriff with the Matagorda County Sheriff's Office, was arrested in Bay City, Texas, this morning. He will appear in federal court in the Southern District of Texas tomorrow and will appear in federal court in Worcester at a later date.

According to the charging document, Salas met the victim through an online video game website in 2014, when the minor was 12 years old. Salas and the girl communicated on a private chat room and then moved those communications to various other platforms, including text messaging, Skype and Snapchat. Salas repeatedly solicited the minor to transmit sexually explicit images and videos of herself.

Beginning as early as 2016, it is alleged that Salas intimidated the victim into maintaining contact with him and sending additional sexually explicit material by threatening that he would publish the minor's sexually explicit images and videos to her family and her friends. As recently as May 2019, when the victim attempted to terminate contact with Salas, he repeatedly sent threatening communications to the victim, using web-based applications to disguise the source of the communications.

Members of the public who have questions, concerns, or information about this case should contact the U.S. Attorney's Office at 617-748-3274.

The charge of cyberstalking carries a sentence of up to five years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Joseph Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; and Douglas Police Chief Nick Miglionico made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Houston Field Office, the Matagorda (Texas) County Sheriff's Office, and the Worcester Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristen Noto from Lelling's Worcester Branch Office is prosecuting the case.

The case is brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In 2006, the Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov/](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/).

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.