

## Novato police officer charged in child porn investigation

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### 2016 Cop Pedophile Child Porn Michael Manuel Ramirez

A Novato police officer is facing child pornography charges for computer exchanges he allegedly made with a girl in Texas, authorities said.

Michael Manuel Ramirez, a six-year member of the police department, is scheduled to appear in Sonoma County Superior Court on Jan. 29 to enter a plea. Ramirez, 34, is not in custody.

The investigation began last year in Texas, where the parent of a girl discovered she was sending and receiving lewd images with a man online, police said. The parent called police, and the case was referred to a computer crimes task force.

Investigators then took over the girl's account and posed as her to continue the conversations with the man. Detectives eventually traced the man's Internet account to the Rohnert Park residence of Ramirez and his wife, said Rohnert Park police Sgt. Jeff Justice.

Rohnert Park police obtained a search warrant for the home and the computer equipment in the residence. Ramirez was not arrested while police and prosecutors conducted further investigation over several months.

Prosecutors ultimately filed felony charges of possessing child porn and coaxing or coercing a minor to produce lewd images, said Joseph Langenbahn, spokesman for the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office.

Ramirez was also charged with a misdemeanor count of child harassment.

The charges carry a potential prison sentence if he is convicted.

Justice declined to comment on the age of the alleged victim or her city of residence. He said investigators know of no other alleged victims associated with Ramirez.

Ramirez has been placed on administrative leave at the Novato Police Department, said police Chief Jim Berg.

Ramirez's defense attorney, Jane Gaskell, said, "I am not in a position to comment on the charges at this time."

Ramirez is the second Novato police officer to be arraigned on criminal charges in less than a month. Sgt. Dan Jenner pleaded not guilty last month to a charge he embezzled funds from the

Novato Police Officers Association, of which he is a former treasurer. The prosecution estimates the alleged theft at less than \$5,000.

Jenner is on administrative leave pending the resolution of the case. Several other police department members who were investigated but not charged in the embezzlement probe are also on administrative leave.