



## NEWS RELEASE

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**Release #:** 2026 - 006

### **Cuban National Illegally in the U.S. Sentenced 6-Years in Prison and then Deportation for Sexually Assaulting a Minor**

BUNNELL, Fla. — Wednesday morning, Jose Valerio-Rodriguez, 70, a Cuban national illegally in the U.S., plead guilty to unlawful sexual activity with a minor and two counts of lewd or lascivious touching of a minor.

Following a plea agreement, Circuit Judge Dawn Nichols sentenced Valerio-Rodriguez to six years in Florida Department of Corrections, followed by nine years of sex offender probation and registration. He will likely be 75 years old when he is deported. Following the completion of his sentence, the Department of Homeland Security will deport Valerio-Rodriguez.

"Valerio-Rodriguez is a disgusting pervert who coerced and sexually assaulted a teen through drugs and fear," said Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly. "Valerio-Rodriguez came illegally into this country and later assault a teenager. Had he committed these crimes in his homeland of Cuba, he would have faced the death penalty and likely not given the rights he exercised in America, so instead of taking advantage of America and assaulting our citizens, he should have been thankful."

In exchange for pleading guilty on three counts, prosecutors dropped one count of child abuse against Valerio.

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*Jose Valerio-Rodriguez (Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility mugshot)*

*Original Release Date: March 5, 2025*

*Original Release #: 2025 – 034*

## **Cuban National Illegally in the U.S. Arrested for Human Trafficking, Set to be Deported**

BUNNELL, Fla. — The Flagler County Sheriff's Office has arrested a 70-year-old Cuban national after an investigation by the FCSO Major Case Unit determined he committed human trafficking and sexual activity with a minor. Following the arrest, detectives contacted the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to request a detainer for deportation.

On February 17, deputies made contact with a 16-year-old female, who had previously been reported missing, after she returned home. The juvenile female disclosed that she was with a homeless male named Jose in a tent behind a gas station in Palm Coast and that a sexual incident had occurred between them.

The investigation was assigned to the Major Case Unit, with Detective First Class Kathryn Gordon as the lead investigator. Upon speaking with the victim, detectives determined the Florida Department of Children and Families needed to be involved and made arrangements for an emergency forensic examination and interview with the First Coast Child Protection Team.

Through investigative means, detectives identified the male as Jose Valerio-Rodriguez, who was living behind and frequents the gas station.

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Detectives obtained a search warrant for Valerio-Rodriguez's tent, as well as his DNA. On March 3, Detective First Class Gordon and Sergeant Frank Gamarra made contact with Valerio-Rodriguez and served the search warrants.

Valerio-Rodriguez was arrested for Human Trafficking and Unlawful Sexual Activity with Certain Minors. He was transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility, where he is being held without bond.

Valerio-Rodriguez, who is a Cuban citizen, was found to be living in the country illegally. Due to his immigration status, detectives contacted the Department of Homeland Security, who determined there was probable cause for deportation and issued an immigration detainer. A Flagler County detention deputy, who was also a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Warrant Service Officer, served the detainer on Valerio-Rodriguez. He will be transferred into DHS custody and deported by U.S. Customs and Border Protection when the local arrest is resolved through the courts.

"This predator was living in the country illegally and took advantage of a child," said Sheriff Rick Staly. "He has earned himself not only a trip to the Green Roof Inn, but also a flight out of our country. The Sheriffs of the State of Florida stand united against criminal aliens. We pray the child victim receives the help she will need from this attack."

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