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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bordentown Man Arrested for Attempting to Lure 14-Year-Old Boy Online *Child was actually an undercover officer*

Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri reported that a Bordentown man was arrested yesterday for allegedly attempting to lure a 14-year-old boy he met online to a local park for a sexual encounter. The 14-year-old child was actually an undercover detective with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office.

Joseph Coleman, 54, of Bordentown, NJ, was arrested on Wednesday, September 5, by members of the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office. He is charged with second-degree luring of a child and second-degree attempting to engage in an act of sexual penetration with a child. Coleman is being held in the Mercer County Correction Center in Hopewell pending a detention hearing.

"We want offenders to know we are out there online, protecting our children," Prosecutor Onofri said. "We will aggressively pursue and prosecute those predators that attempt to exploit and harm the most innocent of victims."

In July 2018, detectives with the MCPO began an investigation into individuals trying to exploit children online. A detective working in an undercover capacity, posing as a 14-year-old boy, responded to an online ad and triggered more than 100 email exchanges with Coleman. The email conversations included graphic sexual discussion and multiple attempts by Coleman to arrange a meeting.

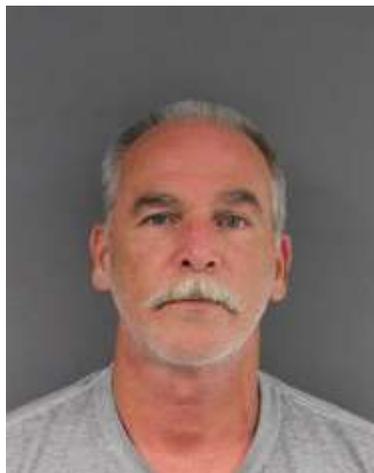
At approximately 3:15 p.m. yesterday, Coleman arrived at a park in Robbinsville Township to meet the “boy.” After a conversation, Coleman allegedly walked with the undercover officer to a more secluded area of the park in order to engage in sexual conduct. Coleman was then taken into custody without incident by officers with the Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office.

Second-degree crimes carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000.

Prosecutor Onofri urged anyone with information about suspected improper contact by unknown persons communicating with children via the internet or possible exploitation or sexual abuse of children to please contact his Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Unit at 609-989-6568 or the New Jersey Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force tipline at 888-648-6007.

Despite having been charged, every defendant is presumed innocent until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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Joseph Coleman