

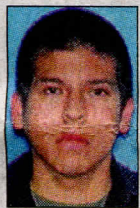
Soldier charged with child solicitation

Eighth arrest as part of Operation Guardian Angel

BY MATT ELOFSON

melofson@dothaneagle.com

Hartford police made their second arrest within a three-day period as part of an ongoing child solicitation investigation called Operation Guardian Angel.



Martinez

Assistant Hartford Police Chief Ben Berry said police arrested Jabier Martinez, 26, of Dothan, Friday night and charged him with two sexual assault-related felony charges.

Arrest

From Page 1A

Hartford police officers charged Martinez with felony electronic solicitation of a child and felony traveling to meet a child for an unlawful sex act. Hartford officers Chris Miranda and Daisy Palmer assisted in the arrest.

"He saw the profile that the Perverted Justice (Foundation) had established on Meetme.com," Berry said. "During the first few hours he had already solicited sex with the decoy."

Berry said the online conversations started on Thursday and police arrested Martinez the next night. He also said the charges alleged Martinez planned to meet who he believed was a teenage girl at the gazebo in the town square of Hartford for an unlawful sex act.

Berry said Martinez is a soldier in the U.S. Army, who was stationed at Fort Riley in Kansas. He said Martinez had just returned from deployment in Afghanistan and returned home to Dothan.

Martinez was taken to the Geneva County Jail.



Manuel

Only two days earlier investigators with the Hartford Police Department arrested another Dothan resident as part of the investigation.

Chief Annie Ward, Berry and Sgt. Tim Goad arrested 31-year-old Jared M. Manuel and charged him with felony electronic solicitation of a child, felony transmitting obscene matter and felony traveling to meet a child for an unlawful sex act.

Berry said police charged Manuel with allegedly soliciting sex from someone who he believed was a 14-year-old girl.

The charges also allege Manuel sent a sexually explicit video, which Berry said involved his allegedly setting up a live web camera showing sexually explicit images.

Berry also said in a statement that the charges alleged Manuel arranged to meet at a Hartford business to pick up the child

to "engage in sexual intercourse." Hartford police arrested Manuel when he arrived at the business, which Berry said was a local scooter store where they had an officer waiting inside.

Manuel was taken to the Geneva County Jail and held on bail totaling \$120,000. Records show attorney William Maddox, who represents Manuel, filed a request with the court Monday for a bail reduction.

Court records show Manuel also has seven pending felony drug charges in Houston County.

The arrests became the seventh and eighth arrests as part of an ongoing investigation with the Perverted Justice Foundation called Operation Guardian Angel.

"I believe if there was actually a 14-year-old child waiting on them in Hartford they would carry out the sexual encounter with them," Berry said. "I would just like for every teenager to know there are predators. When they get online, that anonymity of being online causes their true character to come out."