

# Jury Convicts Springfield Man for Attempted Child Enticement

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SPRINGFIELD – A federal jury convicted a Springfield, Ill., man, Rafael Mercado Berrios, aka Jose Berrios, 42, of the 1200 block of N. 4th St., on June 4, of attempted enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity and using the internet and cell phone to attempt to transmit information about a minor. The jury deliberated for nearly 90 minutes before returning the guilty verdicts before U.S. District Judge Sue E. Myerscough. Sentencing for Berrios is scheduled on Oct. 15, 2021.

During two and a half days of trial, beginning on June 2, the government presented evidence that in late August 2020, Berrios used a social media application to engage with an individual he believed to be a 15-year-old girl. In addition, evidence was presented that Berrios went to a Springfield residence on Aug. 28, 2020, where he believed he would be meeting a 15-year-old girl to have a sexual encounter.

Berrios has been detained in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service since his arrest on Aug. 28, 2020. At sentencing, Berrios faces a statutory penalty of 10 years and up to life in prison.

The charges are the result of investigation by the FBI – Springfield Division with the assistance of the Sangamon County Sheriff's Office; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations; the Springfield Police Department; and, the Illinois State Police with the assistance of the Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Tanner K. Jacobs and Gregory K. Harris represented the federal government at trial.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative by the Department of Justice to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc).