



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



Follow us @VenturaCountyDA
vcdistrictattorney.com

Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@ventura.org

Approved: SW
Date: May 24, 2024
Release No.: 24-056

Former Ojai Teacher Sentenced for Sex Crimes Against Student

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Paul Herder (DOB 03/20/58), of Pahoa, Hawaii, was sentenced on May 23, 2024, to 6 years 8 months prison. Herder previously pled guilty to six felony counts involving sexual conduct with a student, which included luring, digital penetration of a minor, and unlawful sexual intercourse. He also admitted special allegations that he took advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit these offenses.

An investigation into Herder began in February 2023, when detectives with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Major Crimes Unit learned of the allegations from a former student who came forward as an adult. The unlawful relationship occurred from 2013 to 2017. During that time, Herder was employed as a teacher at Oak Grove School, in Ojai, and engaged in numerous sexual acts with the underage victim.

In June 2023, detectives located Herder in Hawaii, where coordinated efforts with detectives from the Hawaii Police Department were conducted. Herder was arrested June 12, 2023, and extradited back to Ventura County on July 31, 2023.

"The defendant's actions represent a grave betrayal of trust, exploiting the position of authority to manipulate and victimize a student," said Supervising Senior Deputy District Attorney Melissa Suttner, of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Unit. "This sentence serves as a clear message that such egregious violations will be met with the full force of the law."

Case: 2023016623

Defendant Information:

Paul Herder (DOB 03/20/58)

Pahoa, Hawaii

Charge pled guilty to:

- (2 counts) PC 288.4(b) – Luring
- PC 289(h) – Anal & genital penetration by foreign object
- PC 288a(b)(1) – Oral copulation of a person under 18
- PC 261.5(c) – Unlawful sexual intercourse
- PC 311.4(c) – Using minor for sex acts

Special Allegation:

- 4.421(a)(11) – The defendant took advantage of a position of trust or confidence to commit the offense

