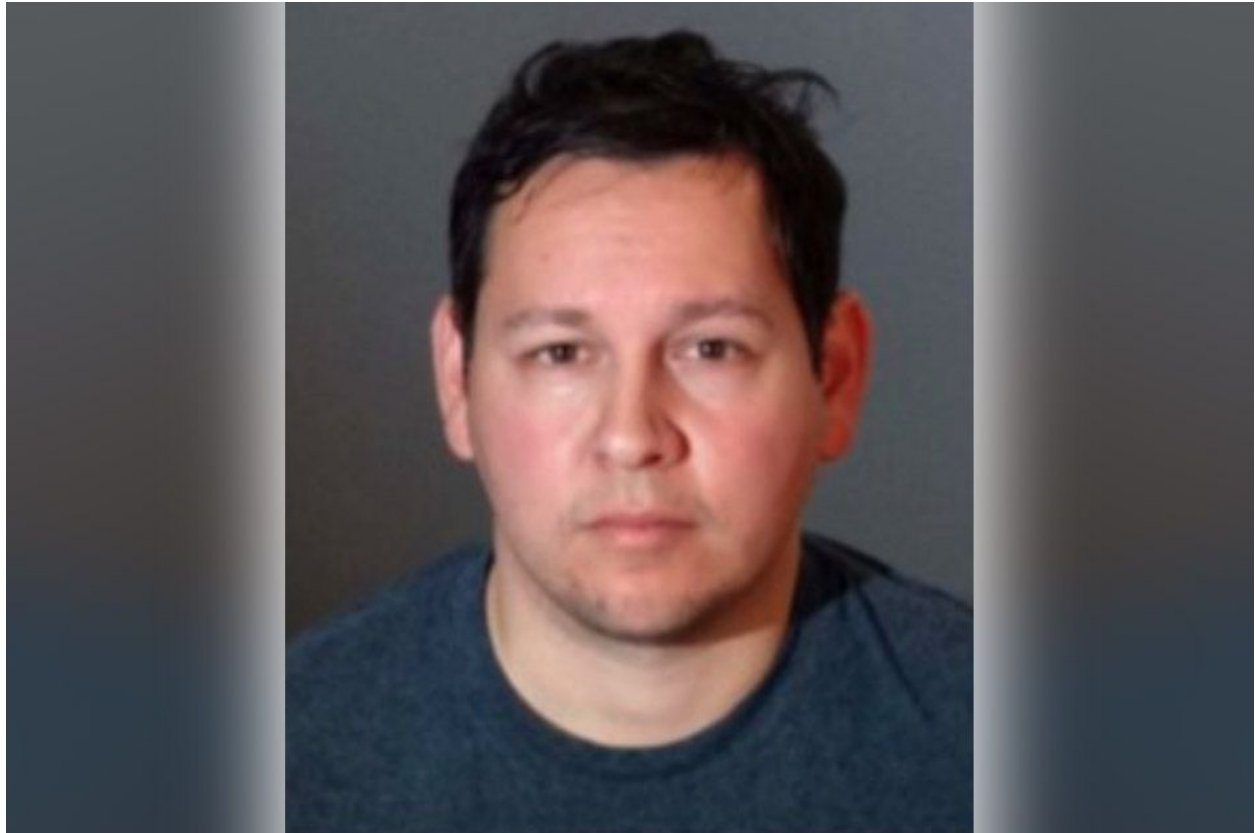


# Los Angeles Man, 35, Targeted Kids on TikTok App Posing as 13-Year-Old: Police

By Jason Murdock On 2/15/19 at 11:40 AM EST



James Anthony Gonzales, 35, allegedly posed as a 13-year-old boy on the application to strike up "sexual and vulgar conversations" with at least 21 girls, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Police in Los Angeles County fear a man who allegedly preyed on kids using a mobile app called TikTok may have targeted dozens of underage children.

James Anthony Gonzales, 35, allegedly posed as a 13-year-old boy on the application to strike up "sexual and vulgar conversations" with at least 21 girls. Some were as young as 9, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Deputy Grace Medrano said yesterday.

Police released a bulletin this week suggesting that Gonzales may have approached additional victims. The department published his mugshot and stills of surveillance footage. The suspect was arrested last Thursday on suspicion of lewd acts on children, officials confirmed.

"In one instance, he learned of the address of a 9-year-old female and arrived at her doorstep unannounced posing as a delivery driver," Medrano said in a media notice, adding: "It is feared that Gonzales has made contact with other children in the same or similar manner."

At the time of his arrest, child abuse material was allegedly found on his phone. The suspect's next court date is currently scheduled for February 27 at Torrance Municipal Court.

According to local media outlet KTLA, Gonzales has pleaded guilty to two sex offense charges. His bail was set at \$100,000 pending the court date, the outlet added, citing court records.

TikTok, formerly known as Musical.ly, is used to create short videos and is highly popular with teenagers. It is in the top 10 free downloads of both the Apple and Google app stores.

Due to its trendiness, some security experts have warned children using the service could be targeted by online predators, WSPA reported last year. On Monday, the U.K.-based children's charity Barnardo's named TikTok as potentially leading to the sexual exploitation of kids.

On its website, TikTok, which is owned by Chinese web company ByteDance, says all users should be over the age of 13. It advises parents to "oversee [their] teen's internet use." The app also notes that accounts can be made private and messaging capabilities can be restricted.

Boosted by celebrities like Jimmy Fallon and Tony Hawk, the software has more than 500 million users, The Verge reported.

Police said Gonzales had used different account names online across a variety of platforms. On TikTok, he was known as "Lanzo," "lanzostiles," "lanzostiles4322" and "lanzostiles77." On Snapchat, he was "lanzostiles." On Instagram, he used "yamakisaki."

Medrano said: "If you have further information or you suspect your child has been in contact with Gonzales either in person or via social media, you are asked to call the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Human Trafficking Bureau at (323) 526-5155."