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**For Immediate Release**

**March 26, 2026**

**JOSEPH MARTINEZ, (AKA JUPITER JOE) SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS TO LIFE  
IN PRISON FOR 1999 MURDER OF MINERLIZ SORIANO**

**Defendant Convicted by Jury on November 14, 2025**

**First Indictment in New York City That Used Familial DNA To Solve Case**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced that Joseph Martinez (AKA Jupiter Joe) was sentenced today to 25 years to life in prison for the 1999 murder of 13-year-old Minerliz Soriano, the first case in New York City solved using familial DNA.

District Attorney Clark said, “The defendant sexually abused Minerliz and killed her. He left her body in a dumpster in Co-op City, where she was found on February 28, 1999. Bronx detectives and my ADAs never gave up in the quest for justice for this beautiful little girl. Their relentless dedication and compassion, coupled with advanced technology in DNA, led to the arrest and conviction.

“Today is the final chapter, after 26 years of anguish, and I hope this sentence brings solace to Minerliz’ family and the childhood friend who compellingly testified at trial. Minerliz’ dream of flying to the stars as an astronaut was dashed, but her light will never dim for her loved ones.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Joseph Martinez, 54, of New Rochelle, N.Y., was sentenced today to 25 years to life in prison by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Audrey Stone. He was found guilty by a jury of two counts of second-degree Murder, felony and intentional, on November 14, 2025.

According to trial testimony, on Feb. 24, 1999, Minerliz was last seen alive walking home from school in the Pelham Parkway section of the Bronx. Four days later her body was found wrapped in a trash bag in a dumpster behind a video store in Co-op



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City. Minerliz had been sexually abused, and her neck was compressed, causing her death.

Martinez, known as Jupiter Joe, because he taught astronomy to kids in parks and at community events, was arrested on November 29, 2021. The NYPD and the Bronx District Attorney's Office in April 2019 submitted a joint application to get results from the familial DNA system. A DNA sample from a semen stain on the victim's sweatshirt was submitted and led to Martinez. Investigators then obtained a DNA sample from the defendant, which matched the DNA found on the victim's sweatshirt.

It was the first case in New York City that was solved using familial DNA.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney John Miras, Senior Homicide Counsel, and Assistant District Attorney Che Van Eer of Trial Bureau 30, under the supervision of Burim Namani, Deputy Chief of the Homicide Bureau, Christine Scaccia, Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and under the overall supervision of James Brennan, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division, and Theresa Gottlieb, Chief of the Trial Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Senior Homicide Advocate Laura Ramirez of the BXDA Crime Victims Assistance Bureau, Assistant District Attorney David Slott, Chief of the Forensic Sciences Unit, and Lindsey Cooper, Forensic Analyst, for their assistance in the investigation.

District Attorney Clark thanked NYPD Detective Dominic Robinson, retired Detective Malcom Reiman, both of Bronx Homicide Task Force, retired Detective James Menton, and retired NYPD Detective Bernard Ryan of the 45th Precinct, who was the original case investigator.