



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, JULY 2, 2010
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV

CRM
(202) 514-2008
TDD (202) 514-1888

FIVE DEFENDANTS SENTENCED FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CRIMES UNCOVERED AS A RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON – Four defendants were sentenced today in connection with their participation in an online child pornography conspiracy, while a fifth defendant was sentenced for receiving child pornography, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Timothy M. Morrison of the Southern District of Indiana.

Michael Baratta, 49, of Sacramento, Calif., was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in the conspiracy as an administrator of an online bulletin board dedicated to the advertisement and distribution of child pornography. Scott Van Dorp, 51, of Nashville, Ind., also was sentenced to 15 years in prison for the role he played in the conspiracy and for his criminal conduct related to a second Internet bulletin board containing child pornography. William Watkins, 39, of Lake Worth, Fla., was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in the conspiracy as a moderator of the Internet-based bulletin board. March Beren Reeder, 33, of Harrisburg, Pa., was sentenced to 10 years in prison for his participation in the conspiracy.

All four defendants pleaded guilty in Indianapolis before U.S. District Court Judge William T. Lawrence to one count of conspiracy to advertise child pornography, one count of conspiracy to distribute child pornography, two counts of advertising child pornography and two counts of distributing child pornography. Van Dorp also pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to advertise child pornography and one count of conspiracy to distribute child pornography for his role in the second Internet bulletin board. Each defendant was sentenced to a lifetime of supervised release following their release from prison.

According to court documents filed in the Southern District of Indiana, the 26 co-conspirators participated in a sophisticated, password-protected Internet bulletin board group, which existed to allow members to meet like-minded individuals with a sexualized interest in children, to discuss that interest and to trade images of child pornography. The defendants are charged with conspiring to advertise and distribute child pornography, along with substantive counts of advertising and distributing child pornography. Twenty-two of the 26 defendants charged in the conspiracy have been arrested. Twenty of the 22 individuals arrested have been convicted or have pleaded guilty. Nine of the 20

individuals who have pleaded guilty for their role in the conspiracy have been sentenced to prison on previous dates.

Four of the 26 individuals charged in the conspiracy remain at large and are known only by their online identities. Efforts to identify and apprehend these four individuals continue.

In a separate case, Christopher Philpot of Rushville, Ind., was sentenced today to 60 months in prison and lifetime supervised release following his prison term for receiving child pornography. Philpot, 32, pleaded guilty on April 17, 2009, in Indianapolis before Judge Lawrence to one count of receipt of child pornography.

The charges against Baratta, Van Dorp, Watkins, Reeder and 22 co-defendants, as well as against Philpot, are a result of "Operation Nest Egg," an ongoing and joint investigation led by the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Indiana, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Operation Nest Egg, launched in February 2008 targeted approximately 500 additional individuals located throughout the world for their involvement in an online group dedicated to trading images of child pornography.

As a result of Operation Nest Egg more than 80 searches have been conducted to date in the United States. In total, more than 50 individuals have been arrested and 38 individuals have been convicted. The investigation is ongoing. Numerous members of the Internet-based bulletin board were found to have been personally sexually abusing children, sometimes producing images of the sexual abuse. For example, lead administrator Delwyn Savigar of the United Kingdom was identified and arrested in partnership with the U.K.'s Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre for his involvement in the conspiracy. After his initial arrest, Savigar was identified through DNA testing as the perpetrator of a previously unsolved sexual assault against a minor female in Great Britain, to which he pleaded guilty. Following this discovery, Savigar was linked to additional incidents of sexual assaults. Ultimately, he pleaded guilty to either abusing or attempting to abuse three minors from 1999 to 2002. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison in the United Kingdom. To date, 16 child victims have been identified through Operation Nest Egg.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and CEOS, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven D. DeBrota of the Southern District of Indiana, Assistant U.S. Attorney of the Eastern District of

Virginia and former CEOS Trial Attorney Elizabeth M. Yusi and CEOS Trial Attorney Alecia Riewerts Wolak. CEOS Trial Attorney Anitha S. Ibrahim also prosecuted the case against Philpot. The investigation was conducted jointly by CEOS' High Technology Investigative Unit, USPIS and ICE, with assistance provided by the Indiana Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Taskforce, Indiana State Police and numerous local and international law enforcement agencies across the United States and Europe.

###

10-772