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MASSACHUSETTS MAN SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

WASHINGTON – Johnny Pires, 24, was sentenced today to five years in prison and five years of supervised release following his prison term for attempting to receive and possessing child pornography, announced Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Lanny A. Breuer and U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts Carmen M. Ortiz. Pires was also ordered to register as a sex offender.

Pires, formerly of Middleboro, Mass., was convicted on July 30, 2009, on one count of attempted receipt and one count of possessing child pornography, following a four-day trial before U.S. District Judge Rya W. Zobel. According to evidence presented during the trial, the case arose as the result of an FBI undercover operation that targeted individuals using file sharing programs to download child pornography. According to testimony at trial, Pires obtained images of children engaged in sexually explicit conduct, through a file share program called Limewire, which allows users to exchange image and video files for free. During the course of the investigation, a federal agent downloaded images from Pires and was able to access Pires' shared folder, which stored numerous images of child pornography depicting pre-pubescent children engaged in various sexual acts. According to testimony at trial, a search warrant was executed at Pires' residence based on this information. A forensic examiner testified that a hard drive seized from Pires' residence revealed numerous images of child pornography, including those downloaded using Limewire software.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice, to combat the growing epidemic of online sexual exploitation of children. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children using the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov.

The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney LisaMarie Freitas of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Kanwit for the District of Massachusetts. The case was investigated by the FBI.

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