



Department of Justice

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TWO INDIVIDUALS PLEAD GUILTY TO ENGAGING IN CHILD EXPLOITATION ENTERPRISE

WASHINGTON – Two individuals pleaded guilty for their participation in an international group of child pornography collectors who used a social networking site to share thousands of sexually explicit images, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer for the Criminal Division and Acting U.S. Attorney Robert Cessar for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Ryan Chiles, of Hampton, Va., pleaded guilty today in federal court in Pittsburgh before U.S. District Court Judge Arthur A. Schwab to one count of engaging in a child exploitation enterprise. Stephen Sims, of Palm Springs, Calif., pleaded guilty yesterday before Judge Schwab to one count of engaging in a child exploitation enterprise. Information presented during the plea hearings established that Chiles, 21, and Sims, 56, engaged in a child exploitation enterprise from Jan. 1, 2007, to Sept. 22, 2009. Specifically, Chiles, Sims and others distributed images and videos of children being sexually abused to other members of an international group that had restricted membership and was formed on a social networking website. Members of the group distributed to one another thousands of sexually explicit images and videos of children, many of which graphically depicted prepubescent, male children, including some infants, being sexually abused and sometimes sodomized or subjected to bondage.

Sentencing for Sims has been set for Feb. 4, 2011, and sentencing for Chiles has been set for Feb. 11, 2011. Chiles and Sims each face a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison, as well as the possibility of lifetime supervised release. Chiles and Sims also face a fine of up to \$250,000.

These cases were 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 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 via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the High Tech Investigative Unit of CEOS conducted the investigation that led to the prosecution of Chiles and Sims. CEOS Trial Attorney Barak Cohen and Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig W. Haller prosecuted the cases.

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