

JUSTICE NEWS

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Illinois Couple Indicted for Kidnapping and Transportation of a Minor With Intent to Engage in Sexual Activity

A federal grand jury indicted an Illinois couple on charges of kidnapping and transportation with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity with a minor, announced Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney James A. Lewis of the Central District of Illinois and Special Agent in Charge Sean Cox of the FBI's Springfield Division.

"Parents with adopted children who are struggling are all too frequently targets for those willing to say and do whatever it takes to gain access to those vulnerable children," said Assistant Attorney General Caldwell. "The Criminal Division is committed to bringing to justice anyone who seeks to exploit children and risk their safety. Every child in America deserves a safe home."

"Protecting children is a community responsibility," said U.S. Attorney Lewis. "Law enforcement relies on the assistance of proactive neighbors, school officials and parents to protect our kids."

"The FBI is dedicated to the protection of children," said Special Agent in Charge Cox. "We will continue to use our resources to pursue those who would exploit them for their own benefit."

Nicole Eason, 37, and Calvin Eason, 46, formerly of Danville and Westville, Illinois, were charged in an indictment unsealed today with two counts of kidnapping of a minor and one count of transportation of a minor. They were previously charged by a criminal complaint and arrested on April 3, 2015, in Tucson, Arizona. The couple has remained in custody since their arrest.

According to allegations in the criminal complaint, Nicole and Calvin Eason participated in an online adoption discussion board in 2006 and 2007, and sought to adopt a child through a process sometimes referred to as private "re-homing." This practice is often associated with "disrupted" or failed adoptions, when an adoptive family places their child in another home because the adoptive family can no longer care for the child.

According to the complaint, the Easons communicated with a minor's parents and allegedly misrepresented material facts about their background to gain the parents' trust. The Easons also allegedly lied about having a home study "waiver," which the parents believed was needed to transfer custody of their child. Based on the Easons' false misrepresentations, the parents transported their child across state lines in 2007. Both Nicole and Calvin Eason allegedly sexually abused the child while he/she was in their custody.

The indictment further alleges that Nicole and Calvin Eason kidnapped a second minor in the same manner in 2008. The Easons allegedly transported the second minor across state lines.

The allegations and charges contained in the complaint and indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This case is being investigated by FBI's Springfield Division. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Jennifer Toritto Leonardo of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Elly Peirson of the Central District of Illinois.

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 the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, 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.

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Criminal Division

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