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FRESNO MAN SENTENCED TO 17.5 YEARS IN PRISON FOR TRAFFICKING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

FRESNO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that United States District Judge Lawrence J. O’Neill sentenced RYAN CHRISTOPHER LYNN, 22, of Fresno, today to 17 and one half years in prison to be followed by a lifetime term of supervised release for trafficking in child pornography. He was ordered to forfeit property used to commit the offense. One victim has filed a claim for restitution, and the court has scheduled a hearing on that matter for July 10, 2009 at 11:00 AM.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Fresno Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, which includes the Fresno County Sheriff’s Department and the Fresno Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

“People who download and possess child pornography are truly putting the world’s youth at risk,” said Brian Poulsen, resident agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Fresno. “The images possessed by the defendant in this case included scenes involving real children who were being sexually abused and exploited in horrific ways. ICE will continue to work closely with its law enforcement partners to target those who commit these types of crimes and see that they are brought to justice.”

According to Assistant United States Attorney David Gappa, who is prosecuting the case, LYNN was targeted by law enforcement in the spring of 2008, because he appeared to be making a large number of images of known child pornography available through a peer-to-peer file-sharing program. When a search warrant was executed at his residence on May 23, 2008, agents discovered a laptop computer that belonged to LYNN. Forensic analysis of that computer revealed the presence of approximately 175 video and 100 still images of child pornography. Some of the videos depicted sex acts between minors and animals, bondage, and other violent images.

Because of the nature of the material, the court imposed an enhancement for depictions of “vulnerable victims.” The defendant testified at trial that he did not knowingly receive, possess, or distribute any images of child pornography. He also denied that he had engaged in sexually charged chat discussions with a girl he believed to be 15 years old. When confronted with that evidence, he claimed that his Internet account had been hacked, a claim that was refuted with forensic evidence from his computer. The court enhanced the defendant’s sentence for obstruction of justice, because he gave false testimony at his trial.

LYNN was found guilty by a jury on March 5, 2009 to one count of receipt or

distribution of child pornography and he was remanded into custody on that date.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), 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 United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information, visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov or call the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

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