



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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DUVAL COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHARGE OF RECEIPT OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Jacksonville, FL - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton, together with Ralph DeFelice, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Jacksonville Division of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and John H. Rutherford, Sheriff of Jacksonville, today announced that James Ryan Higgins (age 34, of Jacksonville), has pleaded guilty to receiving images of child pornography over the internet. Higgins faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison. A sentencing date has not been set.

According to court documents, in September 2008, after receiving a citizen's complaint, detectives with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office ("JSO") Vice Unit began investigating Higgins for receiving child pornography videos over the Internet.

On September 25, 2008, members of the Jacksonville Division of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the JSO Vice Unit executed a search warrant at Higgins's residence with him present.

During the search of Higgins's residence, agents seized an eMachine computer. Subsequent forensic analysis of the computer revealed approximately 15 different child pornography videos on two hard disk drives.

This case was investigated by the Jacksonville Division of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Vice Unit. This case is also part of Project Safe Childhood, a national initiative designed to protect children from online

exploitation and abuse. Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information on Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kevin C. Frein.