



PRESS RELEASE

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RETIRED TEACHER FROM RATON, N.M., PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGE

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court, Joseph F. Zinkiewicz, 75, a retired teacher who resides in Raton, N.M., pled guilty to possession of child pornography under a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Zinkiewicz will be sentenced to ten years of imprisonment to be followed by a supervised release term to be determined by the court. He also will be required to register as a sex offender after he completes his prison sentence. Zinkiewicz has been in federal custody since his arrest on April 4, 2012, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

Zinkiewicz was arrested on a criminal complaint that alleges that he distributed, received and possessed child pornography in Colfax County between Oct. 14, 2011 and April 4, 2012. On June 12, 2012, Zinkiewicz was indicted and charged with three counts of distribution of child pornography, one count of receipt of child pornography, and two counts of possession of child pornography.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Zinkiewicz was arrested as the result of an investigation that initially targeted a suspect in the District of Colorado. During the investigation, an agent who was acting in an undercover capacity engaged in communications with the Colorado suspect and learned that the suspect was a member of a group that used E-mail accounts to distribute and receive child pornography. In Nov. 2011, after the undercover agent obtained a hard drive containing thousands of child pornography images and videos from the Colorado suspect, agents executed a search warrant on the E-mail account used by the Colorado suspect and were able to identify the E-mail accounts of individuals, including Zinkiewicz, who shared child pornography with the Colorado suspect.

Beginning in Jan. 2012 and continuing until March 5, 2012, the undercover agent used the E-mail account belonging to the Colorado suspect to communicate with Zinkiewicz through his E-mail account. During these communications, Zinkiewicz sent a series of E-mails that included child pornography images and videos to the undercover agent. On April 4, 2012, law enforcement officers executed a federal search warrant at Zinkiewicz's residence in Raton, and

seized computers and computer-media in addition to photographs and DVDs that contain child pornography.

Today, Zinkiewicz pleaded guilty to Count 6 of the indictment, charging him with possession of child pornography. In his plea agreement, Zinkiewicz admitted that he voluntarily participated in a recorded interview while the search warrant was executed at this residence and told agents that he had been looking at child pornography for ten to fifteen years. He also admitted to using his E-mail account to exchange child pornography with others on the Internet. Zinkiewicz also acknowledged that a forensic examination of his computer and computer-related media revealed that they contained nine videos and more than 1000 images of child pornography, including 28 images of children who have been identified as child pornography victims and have been rescued.

Court records reflect that Zinkiewicz was subject to enhanced penalties because he previously has been convicted of a child pornography offense. Records reveal that Zinkiewicz was convicted of distribution of child pornography in the Superior Court of the State of New Jersey in Jan. 2002.

The case was investigated by the Homeland Security Investigations offices in Albuquerque and Greeley, Colorado with assistance from the New Mexico State Police and the Eighth Judicial District Attorney's Office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Charlyn E. Rees.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and DOJ's 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.justice.gov/psc/.

The case also was brought as part of the New Mexico Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force's (ICAC Task Force) mission to locate, track, and capture Internet child sexual predators and Internet child pornographers in New Mexico. There are 61 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies associated with the ICAC Task Force, which is funded by a grant administered by the New Mexico Attorney General's Office. Anyone with information relating to suspected child predators and suspected child abuse is encouraged to contact federal or local law enforcement.

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