



PRESS RELEASE

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**CORRALES MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGE**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning, Ernest Brian Tucker, 58, of Corrales, N.M., pled guilty to a receipt of a visual depiction of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct charge under a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Tucker was arrested on a criminal complaint and subsequently charged by indictment with three counts of receipt of child pornography and two counts of possession of child pornography. This morning, Tucker pled guilty to Count 2 of the indictment, one of the three receipt of child pornography charges.

According to the plea agreement, on March 7, 2012, the New Mexico Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force executed a search warrant at Tucker's residence and seized computers and computer-related media. The search warrant was based on an undercover investigation initiated in Jan. 2012 by the New Mexico State Police (NMSP) aimed at identifying those who possess, receive and distribute child pornography. The search warrant was obtained after the investigation revealed that an IP Address subscribed to Tucker's residence was participating in the distribution of child pornography.

In his plea agreement, Tucker admitted that, while the search warrant was executed, he voluntarily participated in a recorded interview with ICAC Task Force officers during which he admitted that he used a file-sharing program to down-load child pornography. Tucker also acknowledged that an examination of his computer and computer-related media revealed approximately 38,000 images and videos consistent with child pornography, including more than 2,700 images and videos of numerous children who have been identified as child pornography victims and have been rescued.

At sentencing, Tucker faces a prison sentence of not less than five years or more than 20 years to be followed by a term of supervised release to be determined by the sentencing judge. Tucker also will have to register as a sex offender after he completes his prison sentence. Tucker has been in federal custody since his arrest on March 7, 2012, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Charlyn E. Rees is prosecuting the case, which was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, the NMSP, the New Mexico ICAC Task Force and the New Mexico Regional Computer Forensic Lab.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Tucker was charged as part of Operation Artemis, an investigative effort by federal, state and local law enforcement affiliates of the New Mexico ICAC Task Force aimed at identifying individuals throughout New Mexico involved in the distribution, receipt, and possession of child pornography through peer-to-peer file sharing programs. In March 2012, federal, state and local law enforcement officers executed thirteen unrelated federal and state search warrants at residences throughout New Mexico, and seized computers and computer-related evidence related to child pornography offenses. To date, five individuals have been arrested for violating federal and state child pornography laws based on the search warrants executed as part of Operation Artemis. The law enforcement agencies that participated in Operation Artemis include: Homeland Security Investigations, NMSP, New Mexico Attorney General's Office, FBI, Albuquerque Police Department, Los Lunas Police Department, Santa Fe Police Department, Rio Rancho Police Department, and the New Mexico Regional Computer Forensic Lab.

Operation Artemis 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 <http://www.justice.gov/psc/>.

The Operation also was brought as a part of the New Mexico ICAC Task Force's mission, which is to locate, track, and capture Internet child sexual predators and Internet child pornographers in New Mexico. There are 64 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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