



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Arkansas*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Jane W. Duke**  
**United States Attorney**  
**501-340-2600**

**FORMER AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT SENTENCED**  
**IN CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CASE**

**Little Rock** - Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today that former Air Force First Lieutenant Michael James Blum, age 30, of Jacksonville, Arkansas, was sentenced to 188 months incarceration on charges related to enticing minors to send sexually explicit images of themselves over the Internet. After completion of this lengthy term of imprisonment, Blum will serve 15 years on supervised release.

The investigation originated in December, 2006, when law enforcement officers received information that Blum possessed sexually explicit images of minors on his home computers. Blum was convicted after a jury heard evidence that from 2004 to 2006, he used the Internet and multiple screen names to develop relationships with underage girls. He would then persuade the minors to send sexually explicit images of themselves to him. After receiving the information that Blum possessed child pornography, his computers were seized and forensically examined by an agent of the United States Air Force, Office of Special Investigations (USAF-OSI). Based on the computer evidence, prosecutors established that Blum utilized online chat rooms, social networking sites, and e-mail to make contact with the minors. Blum would then request that the minors send him pictures of themselves in the nude or exhibiting various body parts. In addition to requesting pictures from the minors, Blum also transmitted nude photographs of himself to the children. In total, eight female minors between the ages of 14 and 16 were identified as having been in routine contact with Blum over the Internet. These minors were identified by examination of computer chats, photographs, and/or movie files on Blum's computers. After a three day trial, Blum was found guilty of one count of sexual exploitation of a child, one count of receipt of sexually explicit images of a minor, and one count of possession of sexually explicit images of a minor.

The matter was prosecuted federally pursuant to Project Safe Childhood, a 2006 Department of Justice initiative aimed at combating the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. Through the Project Safe Childhood initiative,

United States Attorneys Offices across the country are directed to work with all levels of law enforcement--federal, state, and local—to aggressively investigate and prosecute Internet child predators. As a result of that collaboration in this case, several minors were rescued from sexual exploitation and the defendant was sentenced to a lengthy prison term with no parole.

Duke stated, “We are so very fortunate to have valuable law enforcement partners like the USAF-OSI involved in Project Safe Childhood. When we work with one another as Project Safe Childhood contemplates, we become a force multiplier to make the Internet safer for children.”

This case was investigated by Special Agent Jared Bonvell of the United States Air Force, Office of Special Investigations. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Marsha W. Clevenger and Patricia S. Harris.

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