

Department of Justice

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Urbana Man Arrested, Charged with Receiving and Possessing Child Pornography

Urbana, Ill. – A former Vermilion county man, Donald Cunningham, 47, has been arrested on charges that he received and possessed images of child pornography. Cunningham, currently of the 2300 block of University Avenue, Urbana, Ill., was arrested yesterday. Cunningham appeared for arraignment before U.S. Magistrate Judge David G. Bernthal, and trial has been scheduled on Sept. 17, 2012, before U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey.

The indictment was returned by the grand jury last week, but had remained sealed pending Cunningham's arrest and court appearance. Cunningham is charged with three counts of receiving child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. The crimes allegedly occurred during 2010 and 2011, when Cunningham lived in Oakwood, Ill. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of Cunningham's computer and electronic equipment allegedly used in the offenses.

Pending trial, Cunningham was released on bond with special provisions including home detention and compliance with the U.S. Probation Office's Computer and Internet Monitoring Program.

The charges were investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations, the Urbana Police Department, Mattoon Police Department, and the Office of Illinois Secretary of State, all members of the East Central Illinois Cybercrime Working Group, and the Oakwood Police Department.

If convicted, the statutory penalty for each count of receiving child pornography is a mandatory minimum five years to 20 years in prison. For possession of child pornography, the penalty is up to 10 years in prison. Each of the child pornography offenses carry terms of supervised release of up to life following any term of imprisonment.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, 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 U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), 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.projectsafechildhood.gov.

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