

Department of Justice

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Washington, Ill., Man Charged with Child Pornography Offenses

Peoria, Ill. – A federal grand jury today charged a Washington, Ill., man, Scott J. Bell, 49, with receiving images of child pornography via the Internet. Bell, of the 100 block of N. Pine Street, was previously arrested and charged in a criminal complaint filed on Aug. 1, 2012. U.S. Magistrate Judge John A. Gorman ordered that Bell remain detained in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

The indictment charges Bell with one count of receiving child pornography in July 2012, and seeks forfeiture of a computer and hard drive allegedly used to commit or promote the offenses.

The charges were investigated by the U.S. Secret Service; the Washington Police Department; the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office; the Bloomington Police Department; and the Peoria County Sheriff's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk D. Schoenbein.

If convicted, the statutory penalty for receipt of child pornography is a mandatory minimum five years to 20 years in prison and a term of supervised release of up to life following any term of imprisonment. If a defendant has a prior child sex abuse or child pornography conviction, the statutory penalty is not less than 15 years and up to 40 years in prison.

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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