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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY OCTOBER 15, 2012
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EIGHT SELF-IDENTIFIED “BOY LOVERS” SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION CRIMES AFTER FBI INVESTIGATION

CHICAGO — Three years after several self-identified “boylovers,” who met in person and online to discuss their sexual interest in children and trade child pornography, were arrested in an FBI sting during or soon after a purported party at a hotel in suburban Skokie, a total of eight defendants have been convicted and sentenced to federal prison terms as a result of the investigation. The sentences ranged from nine years for a suburban Crest Hill man sentenced last week in Chicago to 120 years for a Missouri man sentenced last year in St. Louis.

Six of the eight defendants pleaded guilty and three of them cooperated against others, while the Crest Hill man and a Missouri defendant were convicted after separate trials. All were prosecuted as part of an investigation by the Chicago FBI’s Innocent Images Task Force, which culminated with the undercover sting in September 2009.

“The sentences in these cases reflect the stark reality that defendants who prey upon children by sexually exploiting or abusing them will be punished severely,” said Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. He announced the sentences together with William C. Monroe, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Chicago area defendants and details of their cases follow:

Mark McGill, 27, of Crest Hill, sentenced to nine years in prison, followed by 20 years' supervised release, by U.S. District Judge Joan Gottschall on Oct. 9. McGill was convicted of possessing and distributing child pornography after a trial in March of this year. Evidence at McGill's trial showed that he had attended at least one party with other "boylovers." In August 2009, McGill gave a cooperating defendant a thumb drive containing approximately 3,500 images and nearly 60 videos containing child pornography;

Jose Garcia, 25, of Schererville, Ind., sentenced to 33 years in prison, followed by lifetime supervised release, by U.S. District Judge Amy St. Eve on July 23. Garcia, who cooperated, pleaded guilty to producing, possessing, and distributing child pornography;

Jacob Elliott, 32, of Matteson, sentenced to 20 years in prison, followed by 10 years' supervised release, by U.S. District Judge John Grady on July 18. Elliott, who cooperated, pleaded guilty to producing and possessing child pornography;

Corey Stinefast, 30, of Kenosha, Wis., sentenced to 18 years in prison, followed by lifetime supervised release, by Judge St. Eve on June 13. Stinefast pleaded guilty to possessing and distributing child pornography, and he was found to have amassed a collection of more than 191,000 images of child pornography;

Neal Maschke, 42, of West Chicago, sentenced to nine years in prison, followed by five years' supervised release, by U.S. District Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan in October 2010. Maschke pleaded guilty to possessing child pornography; and

Donald Peppers, 38, of Hoffman Estates, sentenced to 27 years in prison, followed by lifetime supervised release, by the late U.S. District Judge William Hibbler in December 2010. Peppers, who cooperated, pleaded guilty to producing, transporting, and possessing child pornography, including an admission that he had produced a video of himself sexually molesting a 1-year-old child. Peppers' arrest and subsequent cooperation touched off the investigation that resulted in the other prosecutions.

Garcia and Maschke were arrested when they showed-up for what they believed was going to be a "boylovers" party at the Skokie hotel in September 2009. McGill and Stinefast were arrested a short time later. Two other defendants, Michael Martin and Matthew Klopfenstine, were convicted in Federal Courts in St. Louis and Kansas City, respectively, based on evidence gathered during this

investigation. Martin was sentenced last year to 120 years in prison for producing child pornography, and Klopfenstine was sentenced recently to 15 years and eight months for producing child pornography.

FBI offices in Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Kansas City assisted in the investigation.

The government was represented in the Chicago cases by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Tiffany Tracy, John Kness, and Julie Porter.

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