



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David Capp Northern District of Indiana

5400 Federal Plaza, Suite 1500
Hammond, Indiana 46320

Hammond

South Bend

Fort Wayne

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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www.usdoj.gov/usao/inn/

CONTACT: Mary Hatton

PHONE: (219) 937-5603

FAX (219) 852-2770

MAN INDICTED IN HAMMOND FEDERAL COURT FOR PRODUCING AND POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Hammond, Indiana – The United States Attorney's Office announces that the following Indictment was returned on February 15, 2012:

Dante Christopher Vasquez, 43, of East Chicago, Indiana, was charged in an Indictment with four counts of producing child pornography on four separate dates in 2007, 2008 and 2009 and one count of possessing child pornography during the same time-frame.

The investigation into Vasquez's conduct began in February 2010, when the Hammond Police were dispatched to a home in Hammond, Indiana following a complaint that nude photos had been taken of a 7 year-old juvenile female. The child identified Vasquez as the individual who had caused her perform various sexual acts and then took pictures of her engaging in those acts. Vasquez's computer was seized and searched and numerous images featuring the juvenile female being exploited and sexually abused were discovered.

This case resulted from an investigation by members of the Indiana Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, including Homeland Security Investigations, the Hammond Police Department, the Highland Police Department and the U.S. Marshal's Service. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jill Koster.

This 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 United States 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.projectsafchildhood.gov.

The specific sentence in each case to be imposed upon conviction will be determined by the judge after a consideration of federal sentencing statutes and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines.

The United States Attorney's Office emphasized that an Indictment is merely an allegation and that all persons charged are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.