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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 14, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN

Red Wing man pleads guilty to producing child pornography

Earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis, a 28-year-old Red Wing man pleaded guilty to producing a videos of sexually explicit conduct involving a 4-month-old child. Nicolas Ryan Heath pleaded guilty to one count of production of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. Heath, who was indicted on November 9, 2010, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen.

In his plea agreement, Heath admitted that on December 31, 2006, he induced and coerced a 4-month-old child to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of produce child pornography. He used a camcorder to videotape the conduct. In addition, Heath admitted that on May 10, 2010, he possessed more than 600 images of child pornography on various digital media, including a computer. Many of the children depicted were under the age of 12, including three children who Heath admitted coercing to engage in such conduct. Some of the images depicted sadistic or masochistic conduct or other depictions of violence.

For his crimes, Heath faces a potential maximum penalty of 30 years in prison on the production count, with a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years, and a potential maximum penalty of ten years on the possession count. Judge Ericksen will determine his sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Minnesota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and the Red Wing Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen B. Schommer.

The U.S. Department of Justice is committed to combating the sexual exploitation of children, particularly via the Internet. For more information about these efforts, please visit the Department's Project Safe Childhood website, at www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

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