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News Release

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Red Wing man sentenced for 39 years in prison for producing and possessing child pornography

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court, a 28-year-old Red Wing man was sentenced for producing a video of sexually explicit conduct involving a four-month-old baby. United States District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen sentenced Nicolas Ryan Heath to 468 months in prison, followed by a life time of supervised release, on one count of production of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. Heath was indicted on November 9, 2010, and pleaded guilty on April 14, 2011. After serving time in state prison on related charges, Heath was transferred to federal custody, where he has remained since January 7, 2011.

At today's sentencing, mothers of three children victimized by Heath addressed the court. Following their remarks, Judge Ericksen imposed sentence, calling Heath "a certain danger to children." Later, outside the courtroom, Donald E. Oswald, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Minneapolis Field Office, added, "Criminals such as Mr. Heath, who commit these heinous acts and prey on the children in our communities, can expect the FBI to bring its resources to bear to ensure that they are identified and charged to the full extent of the law."

In his plea agreement, Heath admitted that on December 31, 2006, he involved a four-month-old baby in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing child pornography. He used a camcorder to videotape the activity. 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 in those images were under the age of 12, including three children Heath admitted coercing into engaging in the conduct. Furthermore, some of the images depicted sadistic or masochistic conduct or other depictions of violence.

This case was the result of an investigation by the FBI, the Minnesota Internet Crimes

Against Children Task Force, and the Red Wing Police Department. It was 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. In Fiscal Year 2010, 2,235 defendants pleaded guilty to child pornography charges, 2,222 of whom were sentenced to prison. In Fiscal Year 2009, 2,083 defendants were sentenced to prison on child pornography charges. For more information about these efforts, please visit the Department's Project Safe Childhood website, at www.projectsafchildhood.gov.

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