



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney
Director of Community Relations
(612) 664-5611
email: jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov**

News Release

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Zimmerman man indicted for producing child pornography

A 48-year-old Zimmerman man was indicted today in federal court in Minneapolis for allegedly producing images of a 15-year-old boy engaged in sexually explicit conduct. Specifically, Scott James Whitcomb was charged with one count of producing child pornography. He remains in custody following a detention hearing at which the government argued that because of his law enforcement background, Whitcomb should be detained. He is a former administrative agent with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration but was never involved in criminal investigations. Whitcomb also served as a U.S. Air Marshal and prison guard.

The indictment filed against Whitcomb alleges that in February of 2009, he coerced a boy into engaging in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of those acts. According to a law enforcement affidavit filed in the case, Whitcomb's activity was discovered on August 4, 2010, while a Minneapolis police officer was conducting an online undercover operation in search of those who share child pornography through peer-to-peer Internet networks. The Sherburne County Sheriff's Office subsequently executed a search warrant at Whitcomb's residence, where they seized two computers containing images of the boy. Whitcomb was arrested on December 20, 2010, and charged in state court. Prior to posting bail, he was taken into federal custody.

If convicted, Whitcomb faces a potential maximum penalty of 30 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years. All sentences will be determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Minneapolis Police Department, an affiliate agency of the Minnesota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, as well as the Sherburne County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota Cyber Crimes Task Force, which is sponsored by the

FBI and the United States Secret Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David P. Steinkamp.

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.projectsafefchildhood.gov.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.