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News Release

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Duluth man sentenced to 30 years for taking a 13-year-old girl across state lines to commit sexual abuse

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court in Duluth, a 42-year-old Duluth man was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison for taking a 13-year-old girl across state lines with the intent to sexually abuse her. United States District Court Judge Donovan W. Frank sentenced Todd Richard Franik, who was indicted on October 5, 2010, and pleaded guilty on November 5, 2010, to one count of interstate transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity. In imposing the 30-year prison term, Judge Frank said a sentence of anything less would be insufficient to promote respect for the law and protect the public.

Following today's sentencing, Donald E. Oswald, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Minneapolis Field Office, said, "Children are one of our community's most precious assets. Child predators like Mr. Franik can always be assured that the FBI will give them its fullest attention to ensure that they are brought to justice."

According to the documents filed in this case, Franik abducted the girl in Duluth at about 3:00 p.m. on August 2, 2010. The girl was walking her dog. She passed a parked car, its hood up. The man standing near the vehicle, later identified as Franik, asked the girl for directions to the zoo. As she drew closer, the man grabbed both her and the dog and forced them into the trunk. He then drove the car around for 15 to 20 minutes, crossing into Wisconsin and back into Minnesota, before stopping in a wooded area.

While in the woods, Franik removed the child and the dog from the trunk. He then engaged in sexual conduct with the child. Afterwards, he used duct tape to wrap the child's hands and feet and secure her to a fallen tree. He also tore his shirt, stuffed the cloth into her mouth, and covered her mouth with more duct tape. He reportedly taped the dog's mouth shut too. After

Franik drove away from the scene, the child twisted and chewed through the duct tape and made her way to a business in Superior, Wisconsin, from where authorities were called.

While law enforcement officers worked to recover evidence from the woods, which ultimately included scraps of duct tape and fresh shoe prints, they observed a car repeatedly drive past them on a nearby highway. The car matched the description of the vehicle used in the crime, so authorities traced its license plate number. Later, they located the car in a Duluth parking lot and placed it under surveillance.

During the early afternoon of August 3, 2010, authorities observed Franik approach the vehicle and open up the trunk. Officers moved in, spotting duct tape and other evidence of the crime. A subsequent search of Franik's residence yielded shoes with a tread pattern that matched the shoe prints found in the woods. Franik was subsequently arrested without incident.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Duluth Police Department, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office in Wisconsin, and the FBI. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David P. Steinkamp.

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