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News Release

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Zimmerman man sentenced to 25 years for producing child pornography

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court in St. Paul, a 49-year-old Zimmerman man was sentenced for producing images of three teenage boys engaging in sexually explicit conduct. United States District Court Judge Susan Richard Nelson sentenced Scott James Whitcomb to 300 months in prison on one count of production of child pornography. Whitcomb was indicted on January 19, 2011, and pleaded guilty on April 19, 2011.

In his plea agreement, Whitcomb admitted that between 2007 and 2010, he produced pornographic videos containing images of the three boys, two of whom were between the ages of 12 and 16, while the third was younger than 12. In addition, Whitcomb admitted storing the images on digital cameras, memory sticks, and computers.

Following today's sentencing, Donald E. Oswald, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Minneapolis Field Office, said, "The FBI will continue to work alongside its law enforcement partners to pursue cyber predators who prey on innocent children through sexual exploitation. The investigation into Mr. Whitcomb was the result of cooperation among a number of agencies, and as a result, a cyber predator from our own back yard was successfully identified and prosecuted."

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 boys. Whitcomb was arrested on December 20, 2010, and charged in state court. Prior to posting bail, he was taken into federal custody.

Whitcomb is a former employee of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Whitcomb also served as a U.S. Air Marshal and prison guard.

This case was 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 U.S. Secret Service. The case was 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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