



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBANY MAN ADMITS TO POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

ALBANY, NY – Richard S. Hartunian, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of New York, Andrew M. Cuomo, Attorney General of the State of New York, and John Francis Pikus, Special Agent in Charge of the Albany Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced that MARK WEBER, age 37, of Albany, New York, pled guilty in United States District Court in Albany today before the Honorable Gary L. Sharpe to a single count Information charging him with the possession of child pornography.

In connection with his plea, WEBER admitted the following in court today, and in a written plea agreement:

On or about December 4, 2007, WEBER, using his computer and the screen name "BikeBoy9000," solicited child pornography images of children aged 7 to 13, and transmitted approximately 14 still images of child pornography to a person in Australia. The images depict an actual female under the age of 12 engaged in the lascivious exhibition of the genitals and pubic area.

On or about April 7, 2008, a federal search warrant was executed at WEBER's residence in the Northern District of New York, and a computer with two hard drives was recovered from said residence. A forensic examination of the hard drives was subsequently conducted.

Approximately 50 still images and 1 video depicting minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct were recovered from said hard drives. Said images depict individuals under the age of 18, and some under the age of 12, engaged in, among other things, vaginal intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, digital and object penetration of the vagina, and the lascivious exhibition of the genitals and pubic area. All of the images described herein depict actual, as opposed to computer-generated, images of minors engaged in such conduct.

WEBER knowingly possessed the aforesaid images located on said hard drives. In addition, he possessed the images knowing that they depict minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. WEBER obtained such images from, among other places, individuals and sites located outside the State of New York. Moreover, such images were shipped or transported in interstate and foreign commerce.

When interviewed by law enforcement officials, WEBER admitted that: (1) he used Internet social networking sites...to trade images and movies depicting minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct; (2) he traded child pornography once or twice per month on these sites, commencing in approximately June or July of 2007; (3) he saved some of the images to a folder for trading purposes; (4) he is primarily interested in images of teenaged girls posing nude. When he trades, he asks for and receives images of girls from 7 to 15 years old; and (5) he estimated he has downloaded a "couple hundred" images and movies of child pornography.

Sentencing was scheduled by Judge Sharpe for May 6, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. in U.S. District Court in Albany. WEBER faces a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.00. He was released pending his sentencing.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The investigation and prosecution of this individual are part of the United States' Project Safe Childhood (PSC) national initiative. PSC, which was officially launched in May of 2006, is a national initiative emphasizing the coordination of federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts to prosecute those who sexually exploit children online. The goal of PSC is to enhance the national response to the growing threats to

America's youth posed by online sexual solicitation, abuse, and child pornography. As technology improves and the Internet becomes more vast and accessible, the number of computer-facilitated sexual crimes against children continues to grow. According to one recent study, one in seven children, ages 10-17, who are regular Internet users are sexually solicited online. That translates to millions of kids, and it suggests that there are thousands of offenders whom we have not yet identified and brought to justice. In order to address this problem, the Department of Justice initiated PSC which generally consists of the following five components:

1. The creation of integrated partnerships of federal, state, and local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute offenders and identify, rescue, and assist victims;
2. Participation of these partnerships in coordinated national initiatives to pursue evidentiary leads sent out as a result of national operations;
3. Increased federal involvement in child exploitation cases so that all the resources of the federal government are brought to bear to ensure that investigations of online child exploitation crimes are effectively conducted and that offenders receive optimal punishment for their crimes;
4. Training of federal, state, and local law enforcement to ensure that law enforcement keeps up with technological advances; and
5. Increased efforts to raise community awareness and educate the public about the dangers facing children from sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by technology.

One of the Department of Justice's partners in its effort to prevent the sexual exploitation of children is the New York State Attorney General's Office. As part of this effort, Attorney General Cuomo agreed to assign Assistant Attorney General Nancy Snyder to act as a Special Assistant United States Attorney in order to handle such investigations and prosecutions in federal court. Ms. Snyder is responsible for the prosecution of Mark Weber.

The Department of Justice and the New York State Attorney General's Office are deeply committed to targeting and prosecuting sexual predators, abusers, and pornographers who target the most innocent and vulnerable of our society -- our children. For more information on PSC, visit the Department of Justice's website "projectsafechildhood.gov".

"My office is aggressively working to protect children from predators and all forms of exploitation, and our partnership with the United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York is another tool in the arsenal," said Attorney General Cuomo.

Suspected sexual exploitation of children can be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) by telephone or e-mail as follows:

	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
NCMEC	1-800-843-5678	www.cybertipline.com

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