



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 12, 2010**

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER, JANICE OH
EDELI RIVERA, JESSIE ERWIN
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**ICE
KHAALID WALLS
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(646) 313-2716**

**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES NEW YORK CITY
TEACHER WITH CHILD PORNOGRAPHY POSSESSION**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JAMES T. HAYES, JR., the Special Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") Office of Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI") in New York, announced today the arrest of JOHN E. THOMAS on a charge of possessing child pornography. THOMAS, 28, was arrested this morning at his Manhattan residence by ICE agents. He is expected to be presented later today in Manhattan federal court before U.S. Magistrate Judge GABRIEL W. GORENSTEIN.

According to the criminal Complaint unsealed earlier today:

THOMAS, who teaches fourth and fifth grade students during the year and was working as a summer day camp counselor prior to his arrest, possessed child pornography that had been downloaded from the Internet and saved onto CDs. During a search of THOMAS's residence conducted yesterday, approximately 43 CDs, containing at least six videos of minor children engaging in sexually explicit conduct, as well as THOMAS's computer and other digital media, were seized.

THOMAS is charged with one count of possessing child pornography, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "As technology advances and facilitates the spread of child pornography, we will continue to focus on stopping individuals

who prey on the most vulnerable in our society. As this case demonstrates, prosecuting individuals who partake in the exploitation of children is an important priority shared by our Office and ICE, and we will continue to work tirelessly to protect the innocent from harm."

ICE Special Agent-in-Charge JAMES T. HAYES, JR., stated: "People who download and possess child pornography put our youth at risk. This case is particularly troubling because of the suspect's position as someone young people look up to and respect. ICE will continue to work tirelessly to identify predators who seek to exploit the children of our communities and ensure that they are brought to justice."

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of ICE. He added that the investigation is continuing.

ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-347-2423. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's General Crimes Unit. Assistant United States Attorney ANDREW BAUER is in charge of the prosecution.

The charge contained in the Complaint is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

10-257

###