



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert Pitman
Western District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2012

CONTACT: DARYL FIELDS
(210) 384-7440

EL PASO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHILD PORN SOLICITATION CHARGE

United States Attorney Robert Pitman and FBI Special Agent in Charge Mark Morgan announced that 46-year-old Joe Tapia, III, of El Paso, faces a minimum mandatory 15 years and up to 30 years in federal prison after pleading guilty earlier today to solicitation of material relating to the sexual exploitation of children.

Appearing before United States District Judge Frank Montalvo, the former Excel Learning Center (ELC) admissions service representative and local church youth minister, admitted that he had images of child pornography as well as a sexually explicit instant messenger chat with a 16-year-old male on his work computer. Furthermore, Tapia admitted that he recorded video and still images of two individuals while they were changing clothes prior to a church performance and used those recordings to solicit other images of child pornography.

Tapia has remained in custody since his arrest by special agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation back in May. Tapia could receive a prison term of up to 30 years. Judge Montalvo is scheduled to sentence Tapia at 9:00am on January 16, 2013.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation together with the El Paso Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney J. Brandy Gardes is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

#####