



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

### **FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS ST. THOMAS MAN** **OF AGGRAVATED RAPE, PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND** **POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

**St. Thomas, USVI** - After a two-day trial in District Court on St. Thomas, a federal jury found **AKEEM GUMBS**, 22, guilty on a 31 count indictment charging various federal and local child pornography and child sexual offenses, announced United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe, ICE HSI Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands Special Agent in Charge Roberto Escobar Vargas, and Virgin Islands Police Commissioner Henry W. White, Jr.

Gumbs was found guilty of five counts of production of child pornography, one count of possession of child pornography and 22 counts of aggravated rape in the first degree.

According to the evidence presented at trial, the then eight year old victim, along with her brother and sister, resided with Gumbs and his mother because the victim's mother worked at night. The victim testified that Gumbs would take her into his bedroom or into Gumbs' mother bedroom and repeatedly rape her. According to testimony at trial, the rapes began in October 2009 and ended with Gumbs' arrest in March 2011. The victim further testified that Gumbs would use his camera to take pictures of her while he raped her. The victim's brother testified that he viewed pictures of Gumbs raping the victim on Gumbs' digital camera.

A federal agent testified at trial that on March 19, 2011, he executed a search warrant at Gumbs' residence. In searching Gumbs' bedroom he discovered a thumb drive, which when examined, revealed six video clips of Gumbs raping the victim.

The statutory penalty for production of child pornography under federal law is a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years imprisonment and a maximum imprisonment of 30 years. The statutory penalty for possessing child pornography under federal law is a maximum of 10 years imprisonment. Additionally, each federal offense carries a \$250,000 fine. The statutory punishment for the local offense of aggravated rape in the first degree is a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years imprisonment and a maximum of life imprisonment. District Court Chief Judge Curtis V. Gomez has scheduled Gumbs to be sentenced on May 17, 2012.

The case was investigated by ICE HSI and the Virgin Islands Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Everard Potter and Denise A. Hinds.