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ILLINOIS MAN CONVICTED FOR PRODUCTION, RECEIPT AND POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, AS WELL AS BANK FRAUD

WASHINGTON - Carl Courtright III, of Granite City, Ill., was convicted today on child pornography and bank fraud charges in the Southern District of Illinois following a five-day jury trial, Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Rita M. Glavin and U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois Courtney Cox announced.

The federal jury convicted Courtright of one count of production of child pornography, two counts of possession of child pornography, one count of receipt of child pornography, as well as one count of bank fraud.

Evidence presented at trial revealed that the investigation of Courtright began when Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan required social networking site MySpace.com to provide information regarding all registered sex offenders in her state who were maintaining profiles on the site. Courtright was identified as someone who had a MySpace profile, and further investigation prompted investigators to seek a search warrant for his residence.

Evidence at trial showed that when the warrant was executed, law enforcement agents discovered evidence that Courtright had produced child pornography using a local victim, downloaded and possessed child pornography on two computers, and engaged in bank fraud. The bank fraud scheme involved Courtright's production of counterfeit checks, which were "donations" to an online ministry he maintains. Courtright deposited the counterfeit checks into an account at Regions Bank.

Courtright faces a possible mandatory life sentence. Sentencing is set for June 12, 2009.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicole E. Gorovsky of the Southern District of Illinois and Trial Attorney James Silver of CEOS. The case was investigated by the Granite City, Ill., Police Department, the State of Illinois Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Madison County, Ill., Sheriff's Department, the Alton, Ill., Police Department, the Bethalto, Ill., Police Department, the FBI Metro East Cyber Crime Task Force, and CEOS's High Tech Investigative Unit.

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