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INDIANA MAN SENTENCED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

WASHINGTON - James M. Tanksley, 52, pleaded guilty today to two counts of receipt of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography and was sentenced to 80 months in prison, announced Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Lanny A. Breuer and U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana Timothy M. Morrison.

Tanksley, a resident of Indianapolis, was also sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Sarah Evans Barker to lifetime supervised release following completion of his prison term.

During today's plea and sentencing hearing before Judge Barker, Tanksley admitted to being a member of two Internet-based bulletin board groups dedicated to the trading of child pornography. The groups, comprised of members from around the world, could only be accessed using a unique username and password. The groups had very detailed rules for behavior, including requiring all members to post only pornographic images or videos depicting minors under the age of 18. Members were also required to post their images or videos in pre-established categories based on the type of material, such as hardcore videos or individual images of girls aged 0-6.

Tanksley admitted he was an active participant on both bulletin boards and that his involvement dated from June 2006 to May 2007. Tanksley also admitted that on some occasions he commented on the quality of the child pornography he received from other members; expressed his gratification upon seeing the images or videos; and described the sexual acts the children, some younger than approximately 6 years old, engaged in. Through his plea, Tanksley also admitted to possessing child pornography.

Tanksley was identified through "Operation Joint Hammer," the U.S. component of an ongoing global enforcement operation targeting transnational rings of child pornographers. The operation has led to the arrest of more than 60 people in the United States involved in the trade of child pornography. Operation Joint Hammer was initiated through evidence developed by European law enforcement and shared with U.S. counterparts by Europol and Interpol. The European portion of this global enforcement effort, "Operation Koala," was launched after the discovery of the activities of several people in Europe who were abusing children and producing photographs of the abuse for commercial gain. Further investigation unveiled a number of online child pornography rings.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven D. DeBrotta of the Southern District of Indiana and Trial Attorney Alecia Riewerts Wolak of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. The investigation was handled by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which was assisted by the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the FBI and the Indiana State Police.

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