



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 12, 2009
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BALTIMORE MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ENTICING A MINOR TO HAVE SEX

Baltimore, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Richard D. Bennett sentenced James Francis Gobble, age 55, of Baltimore, today to 10 years in prison, followed by supervised release for life, for using a computer to entice a minor to engage in sexual activity, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

According to Gobble's plea agreement, on November 21, 2008 an undercover Baltimore County detective posted an ad in an online publicly-available service indicating he was a school girl out of school for the day. Gobble emailed the detective, and the detective responded that he was a 13 year old girl. In subsequent exchanges of emails and text messages, Gobble asked the girl to perform oral sex on him. In exchange, he would buy her a prepaid phone card and/or a digital camera.

A few days later and while online, Gobble asked the 13 year old girl if "she" was a cop, and said he knew that it was illegal to have sex with a 13 year old. Gobble arranged to meet the girl at a fast-food establishment in Baltimore on November 25, 2008. Prior to the prearranged meeting time, the detective received an email from Gobble advising that his wife had taken the car and that they would have to meet the next day. On November 26 law enforcement officers saw Gobble's vehicle enter the fast-food place in Baltimore and arrested him. In a subsequent interview, Gobble admitted to attempting to meet a 13 year old girl through the internet and using his home computer to arrange the meeting in order to have sex.

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 United States 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.projectsafchildhood.gov. Details about Maryland's program are available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/md/Safe-Childhood/index.html>.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the Baltimore County Police Department, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Baltimore County State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger and his office for their investigation and assistance in the prosecution. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Bonnie S. Greenberg, who is prosecuting the case.