

U.S. Department of Justice



Troy A. Eid

*United States Attorney
District of Colorado*

*1225 Seventeenth Street, Suite 700
Seventeenth Street Plaza
Denver, Colorado 80202*

*(303) 454-0100
(FAX) (303) 454-0400*

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 5, 2008

For more information contact: Jeff Dorschner
303-454-0243

FORMER PUEBLO PASTOR SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

DENVER – Elie Quinonez, age 35, of Pueblo, Colorado, was sentenced earlier this week by U.S. District Court Judge Walker D. Miller to serve 72 months (6 years) in federal prison for possessing child pornography. Quinonez was a church pastor as well as a correctional officer in Weld County. The defendant, who is free on bond, was ordered to report to a facility chosen by the Bureau of Prisons within 15 days of designation. Following his six year prison sentence, Judge Miller ordered Quinonez to serve an additional 5 years of supervised release. Quinonez was also ordered to register as a sex offender and cooperate in the collection of a DNA sample.

Elie Quinonez was charged by Criminal Complaint on October 16, 2007. He was indicted by a federal grand jury on November 6, 2007. He was then charged by Information on February 20, 2008. He pled guilty before Judge Miller on February 20, 2008. Quinonez was sentenced on September 2, 2008.

According to the stipulated facts contained in the plea agreement, an officer with the New Waterford, Ohio police department went online using an undercover persona designed to identify individuals who were interested in engaging in illicit sexual conduct with minors. Part of that undercover persona included that the adult had a 14 year old daughter. While on line, the officer received an instant message from an individual asking for pornographic pictures of the 14 year old.

–continued–

QUINONEZ SENTENCING

The New Waterford police department identified the screen name of the person requesting the illegal photos. The investigation then progressed to the point that the Greeley, Colorado and Pueblo, Colorado police departments were contacted to try and identify and locate the individual sending the instant messages. Investigators found that Quinonez was the person using the identified instant messenger screen name, and that he resided in Pueblo. Quinonez's computer was seized, along with numerous electronic storage media, and later given to the FBI, which conducted a forensic examination and analysis. The FBI found that the electronic storage media contained in excess of 1000 images and videos depicting child pornography. Additionally, the FBI found more than 500 email messages in which the defendant either sent or received child pornography.

"People looked up to Mr. Quinonez, but he let our community down," said U.S. Attorney Troy Eid. "Behind those Internet images are real children. They're victimized again and again, and they deserve better."

"The FBI has dedicated numerous resources, including forensic computer analysis, to catch those who exploit children," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Jim Davis.

This case was investigated by the New Waterford Police Department in New Waterford, Ohio, the Greeley Police Department, the Pueblo Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Judith Smith prosecuted the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorney's Offices, 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 identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

####

*United States Attorney's Office Press Releases are also on the Internet
Visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/co>*