



Department of Justice

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OWNER AND OPERATOR OF MODELING/PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS FOR TAKING SEXUALLY EXPLICIT PICTURES OF CHILDREN

LONDON, Ky. – The owner and operator of a Mt. Vernon modeling and photography studio, Southern Stars, was sentenced today to 30 years in federal prison for producing sexually explicit pictures of young girls between the ages of 11 and 13, U.S. Attorney Amul R. Thapar of the Eastern District of Kentucky announced today.

Donald R. Martin, 48, admitted that in the course of operating his business, he took pornographic pictures of an 11-year-old child attending modeling classes at his studio. During sentencing, Judge Reeves found that Martin also took pornographic pictures of two more children attending modeling classes at Martin's studio, who at the time were 12 and 13-years-old. In addition to the pornographic pictures taken by Martin, the defendant admitted to possessing numerous other pornographic images of children that were downloaded from the Internet.

As part of his sentence, the defendant was also placed on supervision for the remainder of his life.

"Our children deserve to live in a society where they are safe, and can grow up free from harm," U.S. Attorney Thapar said. "Putting another child predator behind bars for the majority of his life takes us steps closer to achieving this."

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys 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/.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Kentucky State Police, Electronic Crime Section. Assistant U.S. Attorney Erin May represented the United States in the case.

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