



U. S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
George E. B. Holding

Eastern District of North Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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CHILD PORNOGRAPHER SENTENCED TO 18 YEARS IN PRISON

GREENVILLE - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that in federal court yesterday United States District Judge Malcolm J. Howard re-sentenced **ROBERT JOHNSON**, 57, of Raleigh, North Carolina, to 216 months' imprisonment for the transmission of child pornography, receipt of child pornography and possession of child pornography. On December 6, 2005, the Court had sentenced **JOHNSON** to 144 months' imprisonment, granting a downward variance due to **JOHNSON's** age, the cost of imprisonment, and the Court's belief that a lesser sentence would adequately take into account the seriousness of the offense. The government appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which remanded the case for re-sentencing.

"Our office's Project Safe Childhood program is focusing resources on cases like this one to remove child predators from our communities," commented Mr. Holding.

A Federal Grand Jury returned a Criminal Indictment on April 20, 2005. On August 2, 2005, **JOHNSON** pled guilty. **JOHNSON** engaged in an online conversation with an agent from the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, who had assumed the identity

of a child pornographer. During the conversation, **JOHNSON** transferred images of prepubescent girls in explicit sexual poses and spoke of sexual interest in his own grandchildren. Acting on this information, agents obtained a search warrant for **JOHNSON'S** apartment. Officers seized his computer and related media along with some printed material. In all, **JOHNSON** possessed more than 1900 pictures and videos of child pornography.

A search of **JOHNSON'S** computer also recovered numerous internet chat logs in which **JOHNSON** had sexual conversations with 13 and 14-year old girls, chat logs where he asked women to bring their children to North Carolina for him to sexually abuse, a chat log where he specifically instructed a woman in graphic detail about how to abuse a small child who was there with her, and other chat logs suggesting illicit behavior by the defendant.

This case was part of a undercover operation known as *Operation Baby Net*.

Investigation of the case was conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation; and the Raleigh Police Department. Assistant United States Attorneys David Bragdon and Jay Exum served as prosecutor for the government.

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