



Department of Justice

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SAN ANGELO - AREA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGE

LUBBOCK, Texas — Steven Michael Loving, 62, of Carlsbad, Texas, pled guilty today before U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings to one count of transportation of child pornography, announced James T. Jacks, acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas. Loving had been charged by indictment in March 2009 with several felony counts involving child pornography, obscenity, and enticement. Loving was arrested on March 4, 2009, on charges in a sealed criminal complaint, which will remain sealed indefinitely. He was released on conditions the following week.

Loving faces a statutory sentence of not less than five years nor more than 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a lifetime of supervised release. He will be required to register as a sex offender. Judge Cummings ordered a pre-sentence investigation with the sentencing date to be scheduled after that investigation is completed.

According to documents filed when Loving entered his plea, in July 2008, an out-of-state police detective began working online undercover operations, posing as a 14-year-old female, to identify anyone using the Internet to sexually exploit children. The undercover officer was immediately contacted in a chat room by a person using the screen name "texas_cowboy2000," with an online public profile describing himself as a 61-year-old male from the San Angelo, Texas, area.

Over the course of several months, "texas_cowboy2000" continued to communicate with the undercover officer and eventually his chat conversations turned sexual in nature. "texas_cowboy2000" encouraged the undercover officer to send photos of herself to him. In the course of discussing photos, the undercover officer inquired whether "texas_cowboy2000" had any sample photos that he could show her. "texas_cowboy2000" responded by sending the undercover officer, over a period time, various images of nude female children — some images consisting of child erotica and others child pornography.

On March 4, 2009, a search warrant was executed at Loving's residence in Carlsbad, Texas. He was cooperative with law enforcement and assisted them in recovering his USB flash drive that contained his collection of child pornography and child erotica. An image that Loving, as "texas_cowboy2000," sent to the undercover officer was located on the flash drive. Loving admitted that he had obtained this image by downloading it from the Internet. Other images that were in his collection of child pornography had been downloaded from the Internet prior to the time he began communicating with the undercover officer.

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.projectsafefchildhood.gov

The case is being investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven M. Sucsy of the Lubbock, Texas, U.S. Attorney's office.

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