



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Montana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 22, 2015

## **Two Men Sentenced to Prison in International Child Exploitation Enterprise Case**

MISSOULA – After being convicted at trial, two additional defendants have been sentenced to federal prison for their roles in an international child pornography network operated online, which was targeted by state and federal investigators and prosecutors participating in Operation Kingdom Conqueror. Defendant Steven Grovo, 35, of Shirley, Massachusetts was sentenced to 360 months in prison followed by lifetime supervised release. Defendant Joshua Petersen, 45, of Prescott, Arizona, was sentenced to 240 months in prison followed by 15 years supervised release. Eleven additional co-conspirators were previously sentenced in October 2014 for their respective roles. U.S. District Judge Donald W. Molloy of the District of Montana imposed the sentences.

According to court documents, in November 2009, an early participant in the conspiracy designed and created an online bulletin board that allowed members to exchange images, including child pornography. As the conspiracy progressed, additional members contributed to the design and operations of the board. Between Nov. 6, 2009, and March 19, 2012, members of the conspiracy used the online bulletin board to share pictures and videos of children engaged in sexually explicit conduct. During that same time period, the participants agreed to use the online bulletin board to solicit additional images of child pornography, which they would then share and broadcast on the Internet. Thirteen defendants have been charged and convicted for their participation in this child pornography network. Defendant Steven Grovo has two prior convictions for failure to register as a sex offender.

All of the defendants were ordered to forfeit their computers and storage devices. All defendants are required to pay \$29,859 restitution.

The investigation, referred to as Operation Kingdom Conqueror, is an ongoing cooperative effort between the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, FBI, Montana Department of Criminal Investigations, Helena and Polson Police Departments, Immigration and

Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, Montana Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and the States of Jersey Police Department, Isle of Jersey.

Trial Attorney Maureen C. Cain of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Cyndee L. Peterson of the District of Montana prosecuted the case.

This case was initiated under the Department of Justice's Project Safe Childhood initiative which was launched in 2006 to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated crimes involving the sexual exploitation of children. Through a network of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and advocacy organizations, Project Safe Childhood attempts to protect children by investigating and prosecuting offenders involved in child sexual exploitation. It is implemented through partnerships including the Montana Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. The ICAC Task Force Program was created to assist state and local law enforcement agencies by enhancing their investigative response to technology facilitated crimes against children.

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Project Safe Childhood

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