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JANUARY 25, 2012

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LEAD ADMINISTRATOR AND WEB HOST OF ONLINE CHILD PORNOGRAPHY BULLETIN
BOARD SENTENCED TO PRISON

Greenbelt, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. sentenced George Sell, age 70, of Cumberland, Maryland, today to 10 years in prison, followed by 10 years of supervised release, for conspiracy to transport child pornography in connection with his role as a lead administrator of an online child pornography bulletin board. Judge Williams also sentenced co-conspirator Terry Lee Nolley, age 47, of Silver Spring, Maryland, to 97 months in prison, followed by lifetime supervised release, for transporting child pornography and destruction of records in a federal investigation, in connection with his participation in the bulletin board as a web host and member. Judge Williams ordered that Sell and Nolley must register as sex offenders in the place where they reside, where they are employed, and where they are students, under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA).

The sentences were announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice; Special Agent in Charge William Winter of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI); and Postal Inspector in Charge Daniel Cortez of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service - Washington Division.

"The dismantling of "Country Lounge" is another stark warning to would-be child predators who think they can trade in child pornography and commit heinous acts against innocent children while hiding behind pseudonyms and other technological tricks," said William Winter, special agent in charge of ICE HSI. "As these criminals try new techniques to digitally erase their trail, ICE's Homeland Security Investigations along with our U.S. and international law enforcement partners continue to upgrade our strategies and technology to track down the depraved individuals who bring suffering to children."

According to their plea agreements, from December 2006 through August 2008, Sell, Nolley and others conspired to operate "Country Lounge," a

secure web-based bulletin board dedicated to trading images of child pornography. Members could join this group only upon invitation and after approval by the group's administrators, including Sell. To obtain access to the bulletin board, members needed a log-in username and password. Members were instructed by a specific set of rules and guidelines on how to post images via "Country Lounge" to avoid detection from law enforcement. As of August 2008, 142 members belonged to the bulletin board, which was hosted on computer servers in Virginia and Texas. In October 2008, the bulletin board was seized by law enforcement authorities.

From December 2006 through July 2008, Sell was the "root administrator" and day-to-day manager of "Country Lounge," while Nolley agreed to host "Country Lounge" on computer servers maintained by him in Silver Spring. Sell conspired with other individuals to take control of "Country Lounge" from its former owner and administrator, directed the creation and operation of a new "Country Lounge," and received technical advice and assistance from co-conspirators to obtain his goal of creating and operating "Country Lounge." Sell directed the daily management of "Country Lounge," including direction over its layout and content, membership, and the "rules" of the board. In addition to hosting the board, Nolley assisted Sell with the creation and maintenance of "Country Lounge." After July 2008, Nolley transferred his web-hosting responsibilities to other co-conspirators, but continued as a "Country Lounge" member.

In November, 2009, ICE HSI special agents executed a search warrant at Sell's residence and removed two computer hard-drives and other items. A forensic review of these items found them to contain multiple images of child pornography, many of which he obtained from "Country Lounge." On November 10, 2009, federal agents interviewed Nolley and instructed him not to remove anything from his residence. Later that day, agents executed a search warrant at Nolley's home and recovered several electronic devices. Nolley admitted that between the interview and the execution of the search warrant, he disposed of four additional hard drives believed to contain child pornography. Specifically, Nolley admitted that he left his home with the four hard drives and after taking steps to evade law enforcement, threw the hard drives into woods at the side of the road, in an effort to impede the federal investigation.

This case resulted from a two year international investigation called Operation Nest Egg, as part of Project Safe Childhood. Project Safe Childhood is 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.projectsafechildhood.gov. Details about Maryland's program are available at www.justice.gov/usao/md/Safe-Childhood/index.html.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended ICE HSI and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service for their work in the investigation and recognized the Allegany County Combined Criminal Investigations Unit (C3I), and the NASA Office of Inspector General for their assistance. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Stacy Dawson Belf and U.S. Department of Justice Trial Attorneys Darcy Katzin and Jennifer Toritto Leonardo from the Criminal Division Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, who are prosecuting the case.

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