NEWS

Stafford County Man Charged With Enticing A Minor, Producing, And Receiving Child Pornography

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE June 28, 2012

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Johnny Soza, 35, of Stafford, Va., has been indicted by a federal grand jury and accused of enticing a 15-year-old girl in Canada to engage in sexually explicit conduct for him online.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and John P. Torres, Special Agent in Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Washington, D.C., made the announcement.

On June 26, 2012, Soza was charged with one count of enticement of a minor, which carries a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life; two counts of producing child pornography, which carry a mandatory minimum of 15 years and a maximum of 30 years in prison; and one count of receipt of child pornography, which carries a mandatory minimum of five years in prison and a maximum of 20 years, if convicted. He was taken into custody this morning and is expected to make an initial appearance at federal court in Alexandria this afternoon.

According to the indictment and court records, the investigation into Soza began after a father in Canada allegedly found sexually explicit photos of his daughter and conversations between his daughter and Soza on her iPod. Court records allege that the girl met Soza online and informed him that she was 15 years old. From April 2011 through February 2012, Soza allegedly enticed the girl to send dozens of naked photos of herself and engage in sexually explicit conduct for him using a webcam. Soza also allegedly made plans on multiple occasions to travel to Canada to have sexual relations with her and bring her to the United States.

The investigation was conducted by HSI Washington, D.C., and the Niagara Regional Police, with assistance from the Northern Virginia/District of Columbia Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. Special Assistant United States Attorney Maureen C. Cain is prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

Criminal indictments are only charges and not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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.projectsafechildhood.gov.

This investigation was also part of Operation Predator, a nationwide HSI initiative to protect children from sexual predators, including those who travel overseas for sex with minors, Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders and child sex traffickers. HSI encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE or by completing its online tip form. Both are staffed around the clock by investigators.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia at http://www.justice.gov/usao/vae. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia at http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov or on https://pcl.uscourts.gov.

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