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## **NORTH CAROLINA MAN SENTENCED TO 72 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

WASHINGTON – Timothy Christenbury, 47, was sentenced today in Charlotte, N.C., to 72 months in prison and 10 years of supervised release following his prison term for possessing child pornography, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina Edward R. Ryan.

Christenbury, of Charlotte, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Frank D. Whitney after pleading guilty on Feb. 18, 2009, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Carl Horn III to one count of possession of child pornography.

Christenbury was identified through “Operation Joint Hammer,” the U.S. component of an ongoing global enforcement operation targeting transnational rings of child pornographers. The operation has led to the arrest of more than 60 people in the United States involved in the trade of child pornography. Operation Joint Hammer was initiated through evidence developed by European law enforcement and shared with U.S. counterparts by Europol and Interpol. The European portion of this global enforcement effort, “Operation Koala,” was launched after the discovery of the activities of several people in Europe who were abusing children and producing photographs of the abuse for commercial gain. Further investigation unveiled a number of online child pornography rings.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Cortney Escaravage and Kimlani Ford of the Western District of North Carolina and Trial Attorney Alecia Riewerts Wolak of the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. The investigation was handled by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

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