



Department of Justice

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BREVARD COUNTY CONVICTED CHILD PREDATOR ARRESTED
ON FEDERAL CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

Orlando, Florida - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announced today that Rafael Gonzalez (51, Palm Bay, Florida) has been arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) on a criminal complaint for distribution and possession of child pornography. Following his initial appearance, Gonzalez was temporarily detained pending indictment charges. Gonzalez is a registered sex offender in Florida following his conviction in Brevard County for sexual battery on a child in 2004.

If indicted on distribution and possession of child pornography, Gonzalez will face a mandatory minimum of 15 years and up to 40 years in federal prison for each count of distribution of child pornography and a \$250,000 fine; additionally, he will face a minimum of 10 years up to a maximum of 20 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine for possession of child pornography.

This case was investigated by ICE-HSI and the Brevard County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Carlos A. Perez-Irizarry.

A criminal complaint is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless,

and until, proven guilty.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. 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 case was part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to identify, investigate, and arrest those who prey on children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign-national predators whose crimes make them deportable. ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-347-2423. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.