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**NEW JERSEY SEX OFFENDER CONVICTED IN RHODE ISLAND ON FEDERAL CHARGES OF
INTERSTATE TRAVEL TO ENGAGE IN SEX WITH A MINOR, ENTICEMENT OF A MINOR,
AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ASSAULT & CHILD PRONOGRAPHY**

Donald J. Jones III faces mandatory sentence of life in federal prison

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – A New Jersey man with three previous State of New Jersey convictions for crimes against children, including child pornography and aggravated sexual assault of a child under the age of thirteen, was convicted by a federal jury in Providence, R.I., today on charges of interstate travel to engage in illicit sexual acts with an eight-year-old girl, aggravated sexual assault, enticement of a minor, and distribution of child pornography.

Donald J. Jones, III, 48, of Pemberton, New Jersey, who faces a mandatory sentence of life in federal prison when he is sentenced on September 14, 2012, by U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith, was arrested by state and federal agents on April 8, 2011, after traveling by bus from Philadelphia to Providence, expecting to meet with the eight-year-old girl and her father. Jones communicated for nearly three weeks via the Internet and by phone with a person he believed was the girl's father, when in fact he was communicating with federal agents assigned to the Rhode Island State Police Computer Crimes Unit/Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

The guilty verdict, returned by the jury after less than one hour of deliberations, was announced by United States Attorney Peter F. Neronha; Colonel Steven G. O'Donnell, Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police; Robert Bethel, U.S. Postal Inspector in Charge; and Bruce M. Foucart, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha commented, "I am, of course, pleased with today's verdict. A remorseless, recidivist pedophile has been brought to justice. This case demonstrates that all of us, especially parents, can't be too careful with the steps we take to protect our children."

Mr. Neronha added "I commend the prosecution team and the investigative team who worked tirelessly to stop this defendant in his tracks and ensure that he will never harm another child."

Colonel Steven G. O'Donnell, Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police said, "I commend all of the agencies involved in identifying, investigating and taking one of the most dangerous criminals off the street."

United States Postal Service Inspector in Charge Robert Bethel added, "Because the demand that creates the market for child pornography can only be satisfied by sexually abusing more children, the Postal Inspection Service will remain vigilant focusing on these insidious individuals who dare prey on our children."

"Today's guilty verdict demonstrates the serious consequences that await those who would sexually prey upon and exploit children," said Bruce Foucart, special agent in charge of HSI Boston. "Through our partnerships with state, local and other federal law enforcement agencies in Rhode Island, Homeland Security Investigations will continue to police cyber space to investigate child predators and ensure that they feel the full weight of the law."

According to evidence presented by the government, on March 21, 2011, Jones posted a message on an adult Internet web site forum seeking a parent willing to allow him to have sex with their pre-pubescent child. The message was discovered by a postal inspector assigned to the RI ICAC who responded, posing as the father of an eight-year-old Rhode Island girl.

According to the government's evidence, Jones and the agent exchanged numerous emails which evolved from the parent purporting to have an interest in allowing Jones to have sex with his daughter, to Jones at first describing and then emailing videos of child pornography in an effort to depict his intentions. They also had numerous telephone conversations, including conversations during which a female Providence Police officer posed as the young girl.

Evidence was also presented to the jury that Jones purchased clothing for the young girl and mailed them to the person he believed to be her father. Jones also purchased and brought with him a nightgown and underwear for the young girl to wear during the sexual encounters.

On April 8, 2011, federal agents watched as Jones boarded a bus in Philadelphia and traveled to New York. Jones, under the watchful eye of federal agents, then boarded another bus and travelled to Rhode Island. Jones was arrested by federal and state law enforcement agents as he stepped off the bus in downtown Providence.

According to the State of New Jersey sex offender registry, Donald J. Jones, III is a level two child sex offender, convicted in 1993 on charges of aggravated sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child. Both offenses were against a female under the age of 13.

Jones has been detained since his arrest.

The case was tried by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Stephen G. Dambruch and Leslie J. Kane, with the assistance of paralegal Kellyann Anderson.

Providence Police, ICE-Homeland Security Investigation agents in New Jersey and the U.S. Marshals Service assisted in the investigation.

The Rhode Island State Police ICAC Task Force is a Department of Justice grant-funded program administered by the state police, and is comprised of six State Police detectives, detectives from the Providence, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick, Johnston, and Pawtucket Police Departments, and federal agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the United States Postal Inspectors' Office. The objective of the ICAC is to form strong working relationships among federal, state and local law enforcement in order to effectively and efficiently prevent, detect, investigate, and prosecute online child exploitation and child pornography crimes.

This case was investigated and prosecuted as part of Project Safe Childhood, a Department of Justice initiative against Internet-based exploitation of children.

