



Department of Justice

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**VIRGINIA MAN SENTENCED FOR TRYING TO ENTICE A CHILD IN
ATLANTA; COOPERATION LEADS TO OTHER ARRESTS IN MISSOURI AND
VIRGINIA**

Atlanta, GA - STEVEN J. GONKA, 37, of Hampton, Virginia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell to over 11 years in federal prison on the charge of using the internet to attempt to entice a child to engage in sexual activity.

“This case is another shocking reminder of the presence of dangerous people on the Internet who want to sexually exploit our children,” said U.S. Attorney David E. Nahmias. “We will continue to aggressively pursue and prosecute those who use the Internet to seek out children to victimize, including by obtaining cooperation from defendants who can direct law enforcement to additional offenders and to child victims who can be rescued.”

GONKA was sentenced to 11 years, 3 months in prison to be followed by 10 years of supervised release.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: In May 2007, GONKA began communicating with an undercover FBI agent on the Internet. During many conversations online and over the phone, GONKA expressed his desire to engage in sexual activity with an 11 year-old girl. During one conversation, GONKA said he wanted to impregnate the child. On June 11, 2007, GONKA was arrested after he travelled from Virginia to Atlanta to engage in unlawful sexual activity with the young girl. There was no actual child involved.

After GONKA’s arrest, he agreed to assist investigators in finding others on the Internet who were victimizing children. The information GONKA provided led to the arrest of one man in Missouri and one in Virginia who were sexually abusing children. GONKA’s information helped lead to the rescue of the victimized children.

At today’s sentencing hearing, the government told the court that GONKA’s information relating to activity in Kansas City, Missouri, led to the indictment in

September 2007 of TOBY L. RICE for producing child pornography using a five year-old girl. RICE allegedly distributed child pornography and offered to allow others, including GONKA, to engage in sexual activity with the child. RICE was an EMT for the North Kansas City Fire Department, and had been offering his services as a babysitter on the Internet site "Craigslist."

In Virginia, GONKA's information led to the arrest of a male suspect in Alexandria. GONKA reported that on two occasions he saw that defendant molest what GORKA was informed was the man's son, live on a webcam. The son was approximately 12 years old and has since been removed from the home along with several other siblings. The boy admitted his father had molested him on the internet webcam.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by officers with the Clayton County Police Department, in conjunction with the FBI's Safe Child Task Force.

Assistant United States Attorney Francey Hakes prosecuted the case.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Attorney General's launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices, 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 identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.