



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

March 7, 2008

EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Michael N. Runnestrand

**FORMER TEACHER'S AID INDICTED
ON CHILD EXPLOITATION CHARGES**

Former teacher's aid, Michael N. Runnestrand, 26, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Detroit on charges of Sexual Exploitation of Children, Receipt of Child Pornography, and Transferring Obscene Material to a Minor, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Andrew G. Arena, FBI Special Agent in Charge, and Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard.

The indictment charges that the defendant persuaded, induced, and enticed a 13 year-old girl, over the internet, to engage in sexually explicit conduct and produce videos and still images of that conduct. The victim produced these images and videos in the Eastern District of Michigan, and sent them to Runnestrand in California. Runnestrand then received copies of the images and videos he had instructed the girl to make. Runnestrand also sent the 13 year-old girl images of himself masturbating. This conduct took place between December 2005 and April 2006. Runnestrand met the girl when he was a teacher's assistant in the girl's sixth grade class in Carlsbad, California.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "Today's charges, involving the production of child pornography through sexually abusing a minor, are quite serious. The conduct allegedly included both production and receipt of several images of child pornography and involved a breach of the trust parents and students place in their teachers."

If convicted on the production of child pornography charges, Runnestrand faces fifteen to thirty years in custody. Runnestrand also faces between five and twenty years on the receipt of child pornography charge, and up to ten years in custody on the transferring obscene material to a minor charge. Any sentence will be imposed considering the United States Sentencing Guidelines, based on the nature of the charges and the criminal history, if any, of the defendant.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys John N. O'Brien II and Kevin M. Mulcahy.