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ORANGE PARK MAN SENTENCED TO 17½ YEARS IN PRISON FOR INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Jacksonville, FL - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill, James Casey, Special Agent in Charge of the Jacksonville Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Bill McCollum, Florida Attorney General, today announced that U.S. District Judge Virginia M. Hernandez Covington sentenced James R. Ritchie, age 32, of Orange Park, Florida, to a term of imprisonment of 17½ years and a life term of supervised release for transportation of child pornography. Ritchie pled guilty to the charge of transportation of child pornography by computer in interstate commerce on October 19, 2007.

According to court documents, Ritchie met an individual in an online "chat room" while on the Internet using a computer in his Orange Park residence. This individual was actually an undercover FBI agent outside of the state of Florida. After some brief discussion, Ritchie agreed to trade several images of child pornography to the FBI agent in exchange for a video. Shortly thereafter, Ritchie sent several images of child pornography to the undercover agent using his computer over the Internet. Ritchie was subsequently identified by the FBI. Agents with the Child Predator CyberCrime Unit of the State of Florida Attorney General's Office went to Ritchie's residence in Orange Park. A search of two computers belonging to Ritchie revealed that they contained over 600 photographs and 60 videos of child pornography.

This case is part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a national initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys 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 on Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The Florida Attorney General's Child Predator CyberCrime Unit is a member of the North Florida Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, a federally funded task force working to educate and support law enforcement officers investigating these crimes, and the FBI Cyber Taskforce in Jacksonville.

This case was investigated by the Child Predator CyberCrime Unit of the State of Florida Attorney General's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Clay County Sheriff's Office. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney D. Rodney Brown