



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

May 21, 2008

EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Bruce Edwards

**MINNESOTA MAN SENTENCED TO 150 MONTHS FOR
TRAVELING FOR SEX WITH A MINOR AND DISTRIBUTING
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

Stephen J. Murphy, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, announced that Bruce Edwards 51, of Prior Lake, Minnesota was sentenced in United States District Court, Detroit, for his conviction of Travel with Intent to Engage in Illicit Sexual Conduct with a Minor and Distribution of Child Pornography.

Edwards was sentenced by the Honorable John Corbett O'Meara to 150 months in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release.

The following facts were disclosed to the court at the time of the guilty plea and during sentencing:

Between May 31 and June 14, 2007, Defendant Edwards engaged in a series of online conversations with an undercover Secret Service agent assigned to the Michigan Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC). Edwards was arranging travel to Michigan to assist the undercover agent in the photographing of an adult having sex with the fictitious 10-

year-old girl. Edwards indicated a desire to engage in sex with the child as well. During their on-line discussions Edwards sent numerous images of child pornography to the agent, some of which he claimed to have taken himself. This claim was later proven to be untrue.

Edwards traveled to the Detroit area to meet with the man on June 16, 2007. Upon his arrival, Edwards was arrested by authorities from the Michigan ICAC. At the time of his arrest, Edwards was in possession of two cameras, Viagra, handcuffs and lubricant.

United States Attorney Murphy said, "Today's sentence of 12 ½ years in prison provides a strong deterrent to any who would seek to assist child molesters in recording their acts of child sexual abuse on film or digital recordings. The child porn maker and the abuser need to be on notice their crimes will not be tolerated and will in fact result in lengthy prison sentences – which is one of the key goals of our district's Project Safe Childhood program."

United States Attorney Murphy praised the work of special agents of the United States Secret Service who have dedicated the time and skill necessary to work undercover to reveal these predators. The Michigan ICAC, Murphy said, consistently demonstrates professionalism and dedication in their aggressive and thorough investigation of these cases.

This case was brought as part of US Attorney Murphy's Child Protection Initiative and the Project Safe Childhood program. In February 2006, the Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by responsible United States Attorneys like Murphy, 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.

Assistant United States Attorney John O'Brien, prosecuted the case for the United States.



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May 21, 2008

EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Narayan Thadani et al

**TWO MEN FROM TEXAS INDICTED FOR ARRANGING
MURDER-FOR-HIRE OF TROY COUPLE**

Stephen J. Murphy, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, announced that Narayan Thadani and Douglas Tobar, of Houston, Texas, were indicted today by a federal grand jury on one count of the use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of a murder-for-hire, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1958.

Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The indictment alleges that from on or about August, 2007 through March 11, 2008, THADANI and TABOR caused another person to use a facility of interstate commerce with the intent that a murder be committed for consideration. The grand jury indictment arises from charges previously outlined in a federal criminal complaint alleging that THADANI and TABOR arranged for Miguel Servando and Nelson Mendoza to travel from Texas to Michigan with the intent to murder Aasha and Brij Chhadbra of Troy, Michigan.

According to the affidavit in support of the previously filed complaint, Miguel Servando

and Nelson Mendoza were arrested by the Taylor Police Department after a traffic stop while traveling southbound on I-75. The traffic stop led to a search of the vehicle which revealed, among other things, a diagram and address of a home in Troy, Michigan, and a copy of a passport picture of a woman. The Taylor officer requested that the Troy Police Department conduct a welfare check on the home. The Troy Police Department's welfare check resulted in the discovery of the two victims, Brij and Asha Chhabra, who had been killed.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "The grand jury indictment filed today is the result of a thorough and coordinated local and federal investigation. We will pursue this prosecution assiduously to ensure that justice is done."

The penalty for the charged offense is death or life imprisonment. Thadani and Tobar are currently in the custody of the United States Marshals Service. Servando and Mendoza have been charged with first degree murder by the Oakland County Prosecutor's office and are set for trial in early September. Both Servando and Mendoza are awaiting trial in the Oakland County Jail.

United States Attorney Stephen Murphy praised the and hard work of the Taylor Police Department, the Troy Police Department, the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and Immigration Customs Enforcement for conducting an aggressive, thorough, and effective joint investigation. This multi-jurisdictional investigation serves as another example of how the public can greatly benefit from the cooperation of federal and local law enforcement agencies.

Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Roth handled the prosecution for the government.



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May 22, 2008

EVENT: Settlement

Defendant: National City Mortgage, Inc. (National City)

**\$4.6 Million Settlement with National City Mortgage, Inc.
Involving Federally Insured Mortgages**

The Department of Justice announced today that National City Mortgage, Inc. (National City), has agreed to pay \$4.6 million to settle allegations arising under the False Claims Act concerning fifty-eight federally insured loans for mortgages submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

National City, a mortgage lender headquartered in Miamisburg, Ohio, has "direct endorsement" authority to underwrite HUD-insured mortgage loans and submit them to HUD for insurance endorsement. Direct endorsement is a mechanism which allows a pre-approved lender to loan a low or moderate income borrower money for a mortgage, and protects those lenders against loss in case of default. This program helps low and moderate income families become homeowners by lowering some of the costs associated with mortgage loans and providing protection to lenders. Lenders are encouraged to make loans to borrowers that might not be able to meet conventional underwriting requirements but are otherwise creditworthy.

HUD regulations require that the lender make certain certifications to the Federal

Housing Authority (FHA) when it is submitting loans for insurance coverage more than sixty days from the loan closing, referred to as "late endorsement loans". One such certification and requirement is that the loan payment is not more than thirty days past due, or "in default" when submitted for FHA insurance coverage. The United States alleges that National City improperly submitted fifty-eight late endorsement loans for FHA insurance coverage which were already "in default" prior to their submission, in violation of the FHA regulations.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "The FHA's mortgage insurance program obviously cannot function when a lender misrepresents the status of 58 loans in order to put the government on the hook. Such false pretenses harm not only the public fisc, but also the legitimate middle and low income borrowers who truly are qualified for the program. I commend HUD and the FHA for their vigilance and tenacity in pursuing this fraudulent behavior and successfully obtaining \$4.6 million under the False Claims Act."

The case was handled jointly by the Justice Department's Civil Division and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, with investigative assistance provided by the Office of the Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development.



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June 10, 2008

EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Christopher Tufnell

**GRAND BLANC MAN SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS FOR ATTEMPTED
COERCION AND ENTICEMENT OF "13-YEAR-OLD" ON THE INTERNET**

Stephen J. Murphy, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, announced that Christopher Tufnell, 32, of Grand Blanc, Michigan was sentenced today to 120 months' in prison as a result of his guilty plea to attempted coercion and enticement. Defendant Tufnell was sentenced before United States District Judge Sean Cox who also ordered that, once released, Tufnell be placed under supervised release for a period of 5 years, undergo sex offender treatment and register as a sex offender.

According to information presented to the court, between June 5, 2007 and July 29, 2007, Defendant Tufnell engaged in a series of online conversations with an undercover Ohio police detective whom he believed to be a 13-year-old girl. Tufnell indicated a desire to engage in sex with the teen. Tufnell proposed specific acts of sexual activity, gave the "girl" his telephone number, and later scheduled a date and time for them to meet.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "Accosting children for sexual purposes is just as serious to the victim when it happens online as when it happens on a street corner. And, fortunately, we have the means to detect and apprehend those who are trying to use the Internet to find children for sexual abuse. This case is an example of the continuing commitment of my office to go after child sexually abusive conduct on the Internet."

This case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the Toledo Police Department.

This prosecution was facilitated through Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide Department of Justice 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 about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.



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Dawn Clenney - FBI (313) 237-4206

June 6, 2008

EVENT: Guilty Verdict

Defendant: Ghassan Slewa et al

THREE PERSONS FOUND GUILTY OF MARIJUANA DISTRIBUTION

Three persons were found guilty today of conspiring to possess almost a half ton of marijuana by a federal jury in Detroit, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by FBI Special Agent in Charge Andrew Arena of the Detroit Division.

Found guilty were Ghassan Slewa, 39, of Sterling Heights, Amar Sliwo of Sterling Heights and Bassil Yousif, 41, of Madison Heights.

The jury deliberated for about three hours before returning the verdict, concluding a two-day trial before United States District Judge Avern Cohn..

The evidence presented during the trial showed that on February 26, 2006 the three defendants and several others had agreed to a scheme to pick up and sell over 900 pounds of marijuana. The defendants had been under surveillance most of that day by a task force of FBI agents, Michigan State Police officers and officers from the Sterling Heights Police Department. As a result of the surveillance, a uniformed Michigan State Trooper was able to

stop a van occupied by defendant Yousif. The van contained 908 pounds of marijuana. The evidence showed that defendants Slewa and Sliwo were involved in obtaining the van and assuring that the marijuana was properly obtained and delivered.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "Bringing in half a ton of marijuana to Detroit by any means is a major drug violation that will result in a vigorous prosecution, such as the one that resulted in today's guilty verdict."

Both charges are felonies and carry a minimum sentence of five years up to 40 years imprisonment and a \$2,000,000 fine.

The case was investigated by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Michigan State Police and Sterling Heights Police Departments and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Leibson.



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George Krappmann - ATF (313) 202-3504

June 10, 2008

EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Lamont Sapp

**DETROIT MAN SENTENCED TO 4 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT
FOR 2003 FIREARMS THEFT FROM BROWN BEAR SPORTING GOODS**

Lamont Sapp, 42, of Detroit was sentenced today to 45 months imprisonment as a result of his guilty plea to aiding and abetting the theft of 27 firearms during a 2003 robbery, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced. Joining in the announcement was Special Agent-In-Charge Thomas E. Brandon, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

On December 17, 2007, Sapp admitted to aiding and abetting two others during an October 16, 2003 robbery of a Brown Bear Sporting Goods store in Chesterfield Township, a licensed federal firearms dealer, before United States District Judge Patrick Duggan.

After the robbery was discovered, a Chesterfield Township Police K-9 named Chaos followed the robbers' scent to a pedestrian bridge at Nursery and 21 Mile Rd. There, police found a tied-up sweatshirt concealing 23 stolen handguns. Another four handguns were located nearby.

That night, Sapp was stopped by Chesterfield Township police officers driving a dark blue Mercury Marauder. Inside the vehicle, police found a pry bar, a twenty-four inch screwdriver, a two pound brass hammer, and a pair of brown cotton work gloves that connected Sapp to the robbery.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, “Fortunately, the 27 stolen weapons that the defendant heisted in 2003 never made it to the streets of our communities, due to the outstanding work of the Chesterfield Township Police Department. Now, thanks to the combined work of local law enforcement and the ATF, one of the people responsible for the theft of the guns has been brought to justice.”

In January 1986, Sapp, then a member of the Eight-Mile Smurfs street gang, was convicted in Detroit Recorder’s Court of murdering a 17-year-old rival gang member in a drive-by shooting. He served 17 years in prison and was released in January 2003, just ten months before the robbery.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Operation TIDE is the unprecedented, long-term law enforcement and community collaboration where federal, state, county and local law enforcement officials meet regularly and work in cooperation to reduce violent crimes and prevent recidivism by focusing on the “worst of the worst” in Northwest Detroit, Detroit’s largest police district.

Other PSN Operation TIDE Task Force partners include the U.S. Marshals Service, the FBI, the Wayne County Sheriff’s Department, the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, and the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Citizens with information concerning illegal guns, gangs with guns, armed drug trafficking or the trafficking of illegal guns are encouraged to call 800-ATF-GUNS. Callers can remain anonymous. This number is managed and answered by law enforcement, ATF agents who work directly with local police departments. For information about Project Safe Neighborhoods call 1-800-891-8881 or visit www.psnworks.org.

Stealing firearms from a gun dealer is punishable by up to five years imprisonment. No sentencing date has yet been set.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Leonid Feller.



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Stephen Moore, IRS CI (313) 234-2410

June 12, 2008

EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Bobbie Jean Sinko et al

**Two Mt. Pleasant Area Residents Indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Bay City on
Charges of Conspiracy to Defraud the United States Postal Service**

Two Mt. Pleasant area residents, Bobbie Jean Sinko, 51, and Matthew E. English, 48, have been indicted by a federal grand jury in Bay City on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States Postal Service, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Joseph A. Pirone, Jr., Inspector In Charge of the Detroit Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

The 38-count indictment alleges that Sinko, who was a bulk mail technician at the Mt. Pleasant post office for many years, and English, the owner of English Direct Mail Services LLC in Mt. Pleasant, a company which prepared bulk mail for submission to the post office and would then submit the mail to the Mt. Pleasant postal facility for delivery, conspired to defraud the postal service of over \$1000.00. Sinko and English are also jointly named in 25 separate counts of defrauding the postal service in a series of mailings beginning in 2005 and extending through the fall of 2007. Sinko, who was dismissed from her employment when the fraud was discovered, is also named individually in 12 additional counts of defrauding the postal service by manipulating internal post office records in such a way that bulk mailings presented to the postal service by Central Michigan University were mailed for free.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "Any collusion between a U.S. Postal

Service employee and a private mail service to defraud the United States Postal system presents a serious criminal undertaking that my office will not allow to continue. We are committed to investigating and prosecuting these types of cases and commend the U.S. Postal Inspection Service for their thorough investigation of this matter."

Inspector Pirone emphasized, "These indictments follow an eight-month investigation by Postal Inspectors and the U.S. Attorney's Office. As federal law enforcement agents we continually strive to protect the assets of the U.S. Postal Service, secure the nation's mail system and ensure public trust in the mail."

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 United States Postal Inspection Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James A. Brunson.