



Department of Justice

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SMYRNA MAN INDICTED FOR TRICKING CHILDREN INTO SENDING NUDE PICTURES OVER THE INTERNET

At Least Two Teenage Victims Were Allegedly Threatened Into Sending Sexually Explicit Pictures and Videos of Themselves Over the Internet

Atlanta, GA - MICHAEL MACALUSO III, 37, formerly of Smyrna, and now of Marietta, Georgia, has been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of producing, distributing and receiving child pornography, and using a computer to entice a minor to engage in sexual activity. He was arraigned early this afternoon and a bond hearing is now scheduled for April 15, 2009, at 3 p.m. before United States Magistrate Judge Alan Baverman.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "We warn our children that they need to know who is really on the other end of their computer, but this case drives that warning home in an unfortunately terrible way. This adult defendant was allegedly posing on-line as a teenager in an effort to entice other teenagers into sending him pictures and videos of themselves engaged in sexual activity, and then threatening them with widespread exposure when the victims wanted to stop. We urge any other victims to contact the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. We also urge parents to use this case to educate their children about the dangers of internet contact with unknown persons and the loss of control involved in transmitting sexually explicit images of oneself on the internet."

Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Director Vernon Keenan said, "Sex crimes against children have the highest priority at the GBI. We are working closely with the U. S. Attorney's Office as the federal penalties for such crimes are extremely harsh. Identifying and bringing to justice those who use the Internet to prey on children for sexual purposes is the mission of the 98 federal, state, and local agencies that participate in Georgia's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC). The ICAC Task Force program was created by the U. S. Department of Justice to help state and local law enforcement agencies enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the Internet, online communications systems, or other computer technology to sexually exploit children. Our experience has shown that there may be other victims of this

defendant. I would urge any parent who feels their child may have come in contact with MACALUSO to contact the GBI's High Technology Unit.”

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: In or about June 2006, MACALUSO allegedly posed on-line as a 15-year old male and befriended a 15-year old male in Connecticut. MACALUSO allegedly convinced the victim to send him nude pictures and videos of the victim engaging in sexually explicit conduct. When the victim told MACALUSO he did not want to send any more pictures, MACALUSO allegedly threatened to expose the victim's sexual orientation and post the explicit pictures in a widespread manner on the internet.

Relating to the second victim, in or about March 2008, MACALUSO allegedly posed as a 16-year old female on “MySpace” and befriended a 14-year old male in New Jersey. The two communicated on-line for a period of time, and again MACALUSO allegedly convinced the victim to send him nude pictures and videos of the victim engaging in sexually explicit conduct. Eventually, the victim expressed a desire to stop engaging in this activity, and MACALUSO then allegedly threatened to post the victim's sexually explicit pictures in a widespread manner on the internet. Once again, during a search of MACALUSO's computers, agents allegedly found a large number of child pornography images and videos.

Anyone who may have more information about the case or has had similar contact with the defendant, whose birthdate is April 7, 1972, is encouraged to contact the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's High Technology Unit at (404) 270-8870.

The indictment charges MACALUSO with two counts of production of child pornography, two counts of distribution of child pornography, two counts of receipt of child pornography, and two counts of using a computer to entice a child to engage in unlawful sexual activity. The production charges carry a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in prison and a maximum sentence of 30 years. The distribution and receipt charges carry a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years in prison and a maximum sentence of 30 years, and the enticement charges carry a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and a potential maximum sentence of life in prison. Each count also carries a fine of up to \$250,000.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Attorney General launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices around the country, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local

resources to apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafecchildhood.gov.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI).

Assistant United States Attorney Corey Steinberg is prosecuting the case.

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.