



PRESS RELEASE

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**ALBUQUERQUE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES**

ALBUQUERQUE – On Aug. 13, 2012, James Carney Ritterhoff, 39, of Albuquerque, N.M., entered a guilty plea to child pornography charges under a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Ritterhoff will be sentenced to a seven and a half year term of imprisonment to be followed ten years of supervised release. He also will be required to register as a sex offender.

Ritterhoff is a former Aurora, Mo., police officer who was employed as an armed money courier in Albuquerque when he was arrested on June 17, 2011, on a criminal complaint alleging child exploitation and pornography charges. He has been in federal custody since his arrest, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing which has yet to be scheduled.

On July 20, 2011, a seven-count indictment was filed that charged Ritterhoff with using the Internet to entice a minor to engage in sexual activity (Count 1); soliciting child pornography (Counts 2 and 3); sending apparent child pornography (Count 4); receiving child pornography (Counts 5 and 6); and possession of child pornography (Count 7).

Ritterhoff entered guilty pleas to Counts 5 and 6 of the indictment, the receipt of child pornography offenses. In his plea agreement, Ritterhoff admitted receiving two E-mails on June 6, 2011, which contained electronic images of child pornography. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Counts 1 through 4 and Count 7 will be dismissed after Ritterhoff has been sentenced.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that the case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, the Bronx District Attorney’s NYPD Squad, and the NMAGO with assistance from the Las Cruces Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ravi Sinha.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, 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 to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The case also was brought as part of the New Mexico Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force whose mission it is to locate, track, and capture Internet child sexual predators and Internet child pornographers in New Mexico. There are 61 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies associated with the Task Force, which is funded by a grant administered by the New Mexico Attorney General's Office. Anyone with information relating to suspected child predators and suspected child abuse is encouraged to contact federal or local law enforcement.

Charges in criminal complaints and indictments are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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