



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Michigan

Suite 2001

Detroit, Michigan 48226

211 W. Fort Street

December 22, 2009

CONTACT: Gina Balaya - USAO (313) 226-9758

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detroit, Michigan

**UNITED STATES CUSTOMS AND BORDER PATROL OFFICER INDICTED
FOR RECEIPT OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

Eric Higgins, 31, a Customs and Border Patrol Officer stationed at the Blue Water Bridge in Port Huron, Michigan, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Detroit on charges of receipt of child pornography in violation of 18 United States Code section 2252A(a)(2)(A), United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today.

Berg was joined in the announcement by John Tiano, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG).

The one count indictment charges that, between February 2009 to June 2009, Higgins received images of child pornography through the Internet. Receipt of child pornography is punishable by at least 5 and up to 20 years imprisonment.

United States Attorney Terrence Berg said: "Today's charges, involving the receipt of child pornographic images, are quite serious. Our office will continue to pursue those who seek to expand the market for on-line child pornography. This indictment sends a clear message that those who perpetuate the market for this material will be prosecuted regardless of their employment. The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to the principle that no one is above the law and we will work to hold those individuals who are entrusted with maintaining the public good to the high standards of the law."

John Tiano, DHS OIG Special Agent in Charge, said: "The Office of Inspector General is pleased by this indictment. DHS employees, especially those in entrusted law enforcement positions, should be held to the highest standards. The OIG takes all allegations of employee criminal activity very seriously."

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 Special Agents of DHS OIG. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Cares.