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NEWS RELEASE

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NAMPA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Robert William Hull, 35, of Nampa, Idaho, waived indictment and entered his guilty plea yesterday to charges of sexual exploitation of children, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced. Sentencing is set for May 16, 2011, in Boise before Chief U.S. District Judge Winnill. According to the plea agreement, during November 2010, detectives with the Saskatoon Police Service, Saskatchewan, Canada, conducted an Internet child exploitation investigation involving a suspect located in Saskatchewan. A search warrant was executed at the suspect's residence in Saskatoon where several items were seized. Investigators determined that several online and email accounts were used to distribute sexually explicit images of minors and communicate with other persons involved with child sexual exploitation.

In November 2010, detectives found that several messages had been exchanged between the Saskatchewan suspect and a user with an AOL e-mail address and mobile phone account associated with an Idaho 208-area code. Analysis of the messages showed that pornographic images were attached of a child who appeared to be approximately four years old. A Canadian detective called the Idaho number to determine the identity of the owner of the phone, who identified himself as "Robert." In late November 2010, an investigation was opened by the Idaho Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force into possible production and trafficking in sexually explicit images of minors between the suspect in Saskatchewan and an unknown individual in Nampa, Idaho, who investigators later found to be Robert William Hull. On December 2, 2010, a search warrant was executed at Hull's home.

Hull faces up to 30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a minimum of five years to lifetime supervised release on the charge of sexual exploitation of children and production of sexually explicit images of a minor.

“This case provides yet another cautionary reminder for child predators who mistakenly believe they can preserve their anonymity by sharing child pornography over the Internet,” said Leigh Winchell, special agent in charge for ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in the Pacific Northwest. “Consider that the original case lead that ultimately resulted in the identification of the defendant in Idaho was actually developed by local Canadian law enforcement. HSI will continue to work closely with our colleagues here and around the world to ensure that cyberspace affords no protection for those who seek to prey upon and sexually exploit our nation’s children.”

The case was investigated by the Idaho Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program (ICAC) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations.

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