



Department of Justice

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CALIFORNIA MAN SENTENCED TO 17 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ENGAGING IN A CHILD EXPLOITATION ENTERPRISE

WASHINGTON – Stephen Sims, of Palm Springs, Calif., was sentenced today by Senior U.S. District Court Judge Gustave Diamond in the Western District of Pennsylvania to 17 years in prison for engaging in a child exploitation enterprise, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania David J. Hickton and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent in Charge John Kelleghan.

Sims, 57, pleaded guilty to one count of engaging in a child exploitation enterprise before U.S. District Court Judge Arthur A. Schwab on July 13, 2010. According to court documents and proceedings, Sims and others distributed images and videos of children being sexually abused to other members of an international group that had restricted membership and was formed on a social networking website. Members of the group distributed to one another thousands of sexually explicit images and videos of children, many of which graphically depicted prepubescent, male children, including some infants, being sexually abused and sometimes sodomized or subjected to bondage.

This case was investigated by HSI in Pittsburgh and the High Technology Investigative Unit of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS). Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig W. Haller and CEOS Trial Attorney Andrew McCormack prosecuted the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and CEOS, 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.

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