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PRESS RELEASE

**STATE, FEDERAL AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS
TARGET 20 IN OPERATION SAFE CHILD**

For Immediate Release

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Ten teams totaling more than 100 state, federal and local law enforcement agents fanned out across Rhode Island today armed with search warrants targeting individuals identified in a lengthy multi-agency investigation into online child pornography and child exploitation.

Over the past several months, members of the Rhode Island State Police Computer Crimes Unit/Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (RI ICAC), in conjunction with the United States Attorney's Office and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, initiated an undercover online investigation dubbed "Operation Safe Child," which identified 20 Rhode Island residences actively involved in obtaining and sharing images of child pornography on the Internet. Investigators successfully obtained direct downloads of child pornography from the suspects' residences.

As a result of these downloads, search warrants were obtained for the residences. This morning, more than 100 federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel consisting of Rhode Island State Police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), United States Marshals Service (USMS), RI ICAC Task Force affiliates, Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS), and Probation and Parole executed 20 search warrants throughout the state. Upon execution of the search warrants, detectives discovered thousands of images of child pornography and videos. Child protective services personnel from the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) and the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), Day One +assisted.

The Rhode Island State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force is a Department of Justice grant-funded program administered by the Rhode Island State Police Computer Crimes Unit, comprised of five State Police Detectives, a Detective from the Providence Police Department, West Warwick Police Department, Coventry Police Department and an agent from Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE). The objective of the RI ICAC is to form strong working relationships between local, state and federal law enforcement in order to effectively and efficiently prevent, detect, investigate, and prosecute online child exploitation and child pornography crimes.

Under the direction of Colonel Brendan P. Doherty, the Rhode Island State Police Computer Crimes Unit/ICAC Task Force has taken a proactive investigative approach to capture the worst of the worst Cyber criminals and stop sexual predators from exploiting children online. Colonel Doherty, noting the success of the Task Force said, "This concerted effort between state, federal and local law enforcement demonstrates a powerful tool to combat this nefarious activity."

"Confronting the global problem of the trafficking of child pornography on the Internet can only begin with aggressive steps taken locally and cooperatively," said Rhode Island Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch. "The software program used by the State Police in the investigation that led to today's arrests, Operation Fairplay, searched peer-to-peer networks and identified users on the networks who had the highest volume of exchanging pornographic images. I am proud to have played a role in bringing this technology to Rhode Island and even prouder to stand today with our many federal, state and local partners to announce the dismantling of a small corner of the international child pornography marketplace. Our office will prosecute the resulting state cases to the fullest extent of the law."

U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha added, "There is no more important objective in law enforcement than the protection of this nation's children. Unfortunately, there are those who continue to exploit and abuse our children, and make no mistake, the manufacture, distribution and possession of child pornography does exactly this. The Department of Justice and this Office are committed to combating these crimes, and today's round-up is witness to the commitment of all law enforcement across Rhode Island, federal, state and local, to work together to that end."

Bruce Foucart, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Boston said, "Predators stalk and attack the most vulnerable in our society, our children. Left on the streets, predators could, and do, victimize their communities time and time again. Since 2007, ICE Homeland Security Investigations has been proud to partner with the Rhode Island ICAC Task Force and will continue to track down and prosecute these predators with all of its available resources."

Child pornography has exploded as Internet use has become commonplace. Experts say the images increasingly seem to feature younger children – infants and toddlers – being molested for the cameras in more violent and egregious ways. Most are abused and photographed by a parent, relative or someone else in a position of trust (according to National Studies NCMEC).

The increased attention to fighting child pornography already has led to record numbers of arrests since 2009. Over the past year and a half, Rhode Island State Police/ICAC Task Force arrests have increased over 500%. More than 8,600 people have been prosecuted at the federal level since October 2006. Documented complaints of online enticement of children more than tripled from 2004 to 2008 and complaints of child prostitution continue to rise at alarming rates.

Defendants charged by the state will be prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Bethany Macktaz; defendants charged by the federal government will be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Rogers.

Arrested in today's "Operation Safe Child";

At this time total of eighteen (18) individuals were arrested and will be charged with Possession of Child Pornography. Nine (9) individuals will be arraigned in 6th District Court Providence, four (4) in Washington County, two (2) in Kent County and one (1) in Newport County. Two (2) 17 year old juveniles will be petitioned to Family Court.

Michael Wallace, age 24, of 24 Marion Ave., Pascoag, RI

Alan Alarcon, age 18, of 75 Commodore St. Providence, RI.

Shawn Fay, age 39, of 1023 Danielson Pike, N. Scituate, RI.

Robert MacGregor, age 48, of 522 York Av. Unit #3 Pawtucket, RI.

Girard Proux, age 43, of 522 York Av. Unit #3, Pawtucket, RI.

George Dubuque III, age 21, of 3521 Post Rd., Wakefield, RI.

Jeffrey Earl, age 22, of 364 Curtis Corner Rd., Unit B25, Wakefield, RI.

Miguel Escobedo, age 38, of 208 Early St., Providence, RI.

Kyle Martin, age 22, of 31 Willis Dr., Cumberland, RI. (Possession of Steroids - not child pornography)

Paul Hutchinson, age 27, of 21 Allen Ave., Barrington, RI.

Joshua Page, age 18 of 8 Swinburne St., Jamestown, RI.

Kyle Bannister, age 19, of 142 Kenyon Hill Trl., Richmond, RI.

Michael Woodard, age 19, of 127 Murray Ave., North Kingstown, RI.

Jason Bidondi, age 35, of 84 Fales St., Apt., 206, Central Falls, RI.

Jason Demelo, 33, of 24 Delaware Ave, Warwick, RI

Cory Bergeron, age 19, of 10 Clark Mill Rd., Coventry.

17 year old juvenile, Pascoag, RI.

17 year old juvenile, W. Warwick, RI.

Warrants were executed in the following cities and towns with the assistance of their respective Police Departments;

Providence

Jamestown

Narragansett

South Kingstown

Cumberland

Central Falls

Barrington

Pawtucket

Burrillville

West Warwick

Richmond

Pascoag

North Kingstown

Portsmouth

Bristol

Cranston

Coventry

North Scituate

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