

## Press Release

### LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SENTENCED FOR RECEIPT OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

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July 14, 2009

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jeffrey H. Sloman, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Anthony V. Mangione, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Office of Investigations, and Deryl Loar, Sheriff, Indian River County Sheriff's Office (IRCSO), announced that defendant **Stephen Guy Thomas, Jr.**, 26, formerly a law enforcement officer for the IRCSO, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Court Judge Jose E. Martinez to 210 months imprisonment, followed by a lifetime term of supervised release, which includes the requirement to register as a sex offender. Thomas had previously pled guilty to receipt of child pornography, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2252(a)(2).

According to pleadings and in-court statements, IRCSO initiated an online Internet investigation and executed a search warrant at Thomas' residence in Vero Beach, Florida. At the time, Thomas was employed as a law enforcement officer by the IRCSO. The residence was located on the grounds of the Rosewood Magnet Elementary School. An external hard drive was recovered from a lockbox found inside a safe in Thomas' bedroom.

Additionally, an HP laptop computer was located inside of Thomas' assigned Sheriff's Office patrol vehicle. A forensic analysis of the external hard drive and Thomas' HP computer revealed the presence of over 100 video clips and over 50 pictures, depicting children under the age of 18 engaged in sexually explicit conduct, along with thousands of images of child erotica. As a result of further investigation conducted by IRCSO and ICE, federal criminal charges were brought against Thomas.

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 United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (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](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov).

Mr. Sloman commended the investigative efforts of ICE's Office of Investigations in Ft. Pierce and the Indian River County Sheriff's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Rinku Talwar.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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