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Leader of ICE in South Florida pleads not guilty to child porn charges

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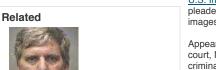
Mangione defense attorney talks to reporters

David Howard is the defense attorney for South Florida Immigration and Customs Enforce...



By Peter Franceschina, Linda Trischitta and Jon Burstein South Florida Sun-Sentinel

11:13 a.m. EDT, September 28, 2011



ICE Agent Anthony Mangione

Anthony V. Mangione, who has served as the high-profile leader of <u>U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement</u> for South Florida, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to three child pornography counts for images reportedly found on his home computer in <u>Parkland</u>.

Appearing handcuffed and shackled inWest <u>Palm Beach</u> federal court, Mangione betrayed no hint of emotion as he sat among other criminal defendants waiting to appear before U.S. Magistrate Judge James Hopkins.

Mangione is charged with transportation of child pornography, receiving child pornography and possession of child pornography. If convicted of all the charges, he faces up to 50 years in prison.

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He will remain behind bars without bond at least until he undergoes a psychological evaluation.

Andrew McCormack, a trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, said the government is concerned that Mangione could harm himself. Mangione's attorney, David Howard, did not object to the psychological evaluation.

"In fact, we want one," Howard said.

In April, Mangione was put on paid administrative leave during an FBI investigation into four images of child pornography that he allegedly received via an AOL email account, the Miami Herald reported at the time.

Mangione, 50, has led ICE's regional office since July 2007, and served in South Florida for a decade over the course of his 27-year law enforcement career.

As the area's chief law enforcement officer for ICE, he was often the agent before the news cameras when the agency announced the arrests of people trafficking in child pornography.

The Broward Sheriff's Office website showed he was being held Tuesday afternoon at the main jail in Fort Lauderdale on unspecified charges \

An ICE spokesman in Washington, D.C., could not be reached for

Laura Sweeney, a spokeswoman with the U.S. Justice Department, said she could not comment

Mangione's job status remains unclear, but another ICE official has been serving as the acting agent in charge of South Florida since Mangione was put on leave.

Mangione's area of command has stretched from Fort Pierce to The Keys, covering nine South Florida counties. He has been responsible for overseeing investigations into drug smuggling, money laundering and financial crimes, commercial fraud, national security and cyber crimes.

His name has been frequently included in news releases on the results of ICE's investigations.

"This case reveals the disturbing truth that child predators will go to great lengths to sexually exploit minors," Mangione said in a 2008 news release, after a Martin County man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for using the Internet to entice a minor to engage in sexual activity. "ICE is committed to identifying and arresting these individuals who seek to victimize children and help ensure that justice is served."

A native of Pawtucket, R.I., Mangione is a 1982 graduate of the University of Maine.

Staff Researcher Barbara Hijek contributed to this report.

LTrischitta@Tribune.com or 954-356-4233 or on Twitter@LindaTrischitta.

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