Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 12 January 2018 07:39



ALBUQUERQUE – Jothonnie Yazzie, 29, of Rocksprings, N.M., pleaded guilty on Jan. 8 in federal court in Albuquerque, N.M., to an indictment charging him possessing child pornography. Yazzie entered the guilty plea under a plea agreement recommending a sentence within the range of 37 to 63 months in prison followed by ten years of supervised release. He also will be required to register as a sex offender after he completes his prison sentence.

The FBI and McKinley County Sheriff's Office arrested Yazzie on Dec. 20, 2016, on the indictment, which was filed on Dec. 7, 2016, and charged him with possessing visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. According to the indictment, Yazzie committed the crime between Jan. 2016 and May 2016, in McKinley County, N.M.

During today's change of plea hearing, Yazzie pled guilty to the indictment. In his plea agreement, Yazzie admitted that from January 2016 through May 2016, he downloaded videos and images of child pornography from the internet and saved them onto his cellular phone. Yazzie further admitted that the phone contained approximately 366 images and 61 videos of child pornography. Yazzie remains in custody pending a sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

This case was investigated by the Gallup office of the FBI and the McKinley County Sheriff's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah Mease as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and DOJ's Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, 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.

The case also was brought as a part of the New Mexico ICAC Task Force's mission, which is to locate, track, and capture Internet child sexual predators and Internet child pornographers in New Mexico. There are 86 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies associated with the New Mexico ICAC Task Force, which is funded by a grant administered by the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General. Anyone with information relating to suspected child predators and suspected child abuse is encouraged to contact federal or local law enforcement.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit http://www.justice.gov/psc .