



**For Immediate Release
August 31, 2007**

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MY SPACE SEX OFFENDER ARRESTED ON CHILD PORN / CHILD SEX CHARGES

Groundbreaking Investigation Stemmed From MySpace Information

Granite City – Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Madison County State’s Attorney Bill Mudge announced today that they have filed charges against a Granite City sex offender resulting from the Attorney General’s investigation into registered sex offenders with MySpace profiles. The charges were filed today in Madison County Circuit Court and stemmed from the subpoenas issued earlier this year by 31 attorneys general to MySpace, a popular social networking site.

Carl Courtright of Granite City was arrested today by the Granite City Police Department and charged with one count of solicitation of Child Pornography (Class 1 Felony), eleven counts of production of Child Pornography (Class 1 Felony), two counts of Aggravated Sexual Abuse (Class 2 Felony) and 12 counts of possession of Child Pornography (Class 3 Felony). The charges allege that Courtright not only possessed child pornography, but also was actively involved in the production of pornographic images.

Investigators with the Attorney General’s High Tech Crimes Bureau used IP address information received from MySpace to determine that Courtright had been actively trading child pornography over the Internet. The Attorney General’s investigators worked with officials from the Granite City Police Department, the Madison County Sheriff’s Office and the Madison County State’s Attorney’s office to obtain a search warrant to seize Courtright’s computer equipment and recovered the evidence needed to file charges today. A computer’s Internet protocol (IP) address is a unique set of numbers that are assigned to a computer as it transmits information on the Internet.

“Child predators who think they are safe hiding behind a computer screen are no longer anonymous,” said Attorney General Madigan. “We have the technology and we are committed to using all of our resources to seek them out and hold them accountable for their crimes.”

“I commend Attorney General Lisa Madigan for pursuing Internet predators that target our children online,” States Attorney Mudge stated. “Her initiatives are consistent with the policy of my office of bringing these perpetrators to justice in the effort to keep our children safe.”

Based on these charges, Courtright faces the following possible penalties:

Class 1 felony: 4-15 years in prison;

Class 2 felony: 3-7 years in prison; and

Class 3 felony: 1-5 years.

Cartwright is currently being held on \$250,000 bond at the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville. The public is reminded that these charges are merely accusations. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Today's charges against Courtright are the first child pornography charges to result from the investigations stemming from the MySpace subpoenas. To date, information provided by MySpace to the Attorney General's office earlier this year has proved to be a useful tool for enforcing sex offender registration laws and parole restrictions, revealing sex offenders who had failed to comply with mandatory registration requirements, exposing those sex offenders subject to parole restrictions, and resulting in some parolees being sent back to prison for parole violations. Attorney General Madigan's High Tech Crimes investigators – in coordination with the office's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force – have taken the lead nationwide on using IP address information for investigating sex crimes on the Internet.

“According to law enforcement reports over the past two years, more than 56,000 individual IP addresses engaged in some form of trading or distribution of child pornography within the State of Illinois,” said Madigan. “Based on this number, there is ample evidence to suggest that trading and distributing child pornography over the Internet is reaching epidemic proportions. Based on this information, we are increasing our efforts to track child pornographers.”

The Attorney General's office, through a grant from the Department of Justice, operates the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC), one of 46 such task forces across the nation designed to investigate child exploitation crimes and deliver Internet safety education. Illinois' ICAC officers are responsible for the arrest of 104 child predators and have trained 36,500 parents and children on Internet safety. This year to date, the task force has conducted 25 training sessions attended by approximately 800 law enforcement officers and prosecutors and has conducted 96 Internet safety presentations for approximately 14,000 parents, teachers and students.

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