

Man posing as modeling agent pleads guilty to child porn charges

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 11/25/2018

GREENBELT, Md. - Stephen McGrath, age 44, of Rockville, pleaded guilty on November 20, 2018, to federal charges of coercion and enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity in order to produce child pornography, and possession of child pornography.

The guilty plea was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Acting Special Agent in Charge Cardell T. Morant of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI); and Colonel William M. Pallozzi, Superintendent of the Maryland State Police.

According to McGrath's plea agreement, between June 16 and October 9, 2017, McGrath used Internet-based chat applications "MeetMe" and "KIK" to communicate with six minor female victims, ranging in age from 12 to 16 years old. In his communications with the victims, McGrath, posing as a female modeling agent, confirmed the ages of the victims and requested photographs, including nude and sexually explicit images, which the victims then sent to McGrath as part of their "modeling evaluation." McGrath also admitted that he distributed sexually explicit images of Victim 6, a 14-year-old girl, to two of her male friends, whose account information he had requested from Victim 6.

Subscriber information for the accounts used to communicate with Victim 1 showed that the user connected to each account through the same IP address, which was assigned to McGrath in Rockville. Law enforcement agents executed a federal search warrant at McGrath's residence on October 13, 2017, and seized his cellular phone. The phone had an application for password-protected digital storage. McGrath supplied the password, which revealed folders within the application labeled with female names and containing pictures and videos constituting more than 600 images of child pornography, including images of the victims described above. The KIK application was also found on the phone as well as numerous chat conversations with minor females.

As a result of his guilty plea, McGrath will be required to register as a sex offender in the places where he resides, where he is an employee, and where he is a student, under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA).

McGrath faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life in prison for enticement of a minor in order to produce child pornography; and a maximum of 10 years in prison for possession of child pornography. U.S. District Judge Paul W. Grimm has scheduled sentencing for March 29, 2019, at 1:00 p.m.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorney's Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, visit www.justice.gov/psc. For more information about Internet safety education, visit www.justice.gov/psc and click on the "Resources" tab on the left of the page.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur commended HSI-Baltimore and the Maryland State Police for their work in the investigation and thanked the Montgomery County Police Department for its assistance. Mr. Hur thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph R. Baldwin, who is prosecuting the federal case.

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