

Massachusetts Man Arrested For Sexually Exploiting Children

A Whitman man was arrested and charged Tuesday in federal court in Boston with sexual exploitation of children.

Matthew Murphy, 22, was charged with two counts of sexual exploitation of children. Murphy appeared in federal court yesterday afternoon and was detained pending a detention hearing scheduled for today at 3:30 p.m.

According to charging documents, the investigation began when Murphy, posing as a teenage girl, used a Snapchat account to extort nude photographs from a Massachusetts middle school boy. Federal agents obtained portions of the Snapchat account Murphy had created in the fake identity and uncovered evidence of similar extortion of other minors in the area.

During the execution of the search warrant at Murphy's home, Murphy admitted that the fake account was his, and investigators found forensic evidence of the account on some of his electronic devices. Murphy was subsequently arrested.

Law enforcement is actively working to identify additional victims. Members of the public with questions or information about this matter should call 617-748-3274.

The charges of sexual exploitation of children each provide for a minimum mandatory sentence of 15 years and no greater than 30 years in prison, a minimum of five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston, made the announcement today. The Whitman Police Department provided valuable assistance with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Anne Paruti, Lelling's Project Safe Childhood Coordinator and a member of his Major Crimes Unit, is prosecuting the case.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In 2006, the Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.