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U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Tennessee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, February 27, 2017

Former NASA Employee Sentenced to Serve Ten Years in Federal Prison for Coercion of a Minor

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. - Thomas de Matteis, 54, of Hazel Green, Ala., was sentenced on Feb. 27, 2017, by the Honorable Harry S. Mattice, Jr., U.S. District Court Judge, to serve 10 years in federal prison for coercing or enticing a minor to engage in sexual activity. Matteis pleaded guilty to this charge in November 2016.

At the time of his offenses, Matteis was employed by NASA in Alabama. An investigation started by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) and U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) revealed that he communicated online, both from his home and office in Alabama, with a law enforcement agent posing as a 14-year old girl. Matteis drove to Chattanooga, Tenn., expecting to meet the 14-year old and engage in sexual activity with her.

In addition to the TBI and HSI, once it was discovered that some of the criminal activity occurred in Alabama using his office computer, the NASA Office of Inspector General joined the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Terra L. Bay represented the United States.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), 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 U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC 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 PSC, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc. For more information about internet safety education, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc and click on the tab "resources."

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Topic:
Project Safe ChildhoodUSAO - Tennessee, Eastern

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