JUSTICE NEWS

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Virginia Man Pleads Guilty to Traveling to Haiti and Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct

A Stuarts Draft, Virginia man pleaded guilty today in the U.S. District Court in Harrisonburg, Virginia, for traveling from the United States to Haiti and engaging in illicit sexual conduct with a minor, Acting Assistant Attorney General John P. Cronan of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and Acting U.S. Attorney Rick A. Mountcastle of the Western District of Virginia announced.

James Daniel Arbaugh, 40, pleaded guilty to one count of traveling in foreign commerce from the United States to Haiti in or about 2016 to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a person under the age of 18. The defendant will be sentenced on June 13 at 10:30 a.m.

According to facts admitted by the defendant during the guilty plea, Arbaugh has lived in Haiti for approximately 15 years and has traveled regularly back to the United States during that time. The defendant admitted that in 2016, while in Haiti, he engaged in illicit sexual contact with a minor under the age of 12 by touching the minor's genitals under the minor's clothing.

The investigation of the case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations and the Harrisonburg Police Department. This case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Kaylynn Shoop of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeb Terrien of the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Western District of Virginia.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and CEOS, 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. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit http://www.justice.gov/psc.

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