



Department of Justice

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Eighth Circuit Affirms Sonnenberg Sentence

BISMARCK - United States Attorney Drew H. Wrigley announced that on February 11, 2009, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment and sentence entered against **Gordon L. Sonnenberg**, 66, of Mandan, North Dakota, on one count of receipt of material involving the sexual exploitation of minors.

On January 11, 2008, **Sonnenberg** was sentenced in United States District Court before Chief Judge Daniel L. Hovland to 21 years and 10 months in federal prison, followed by lifetime supervised release. **Sonnenberg** appealed his sentence, arguing that a 1968 Iowa conviction for committing lascivious acts with children should not have triggered a sentencing enhancement. The Eighth Circuit disagreed with **Sonnenberg's** analysis and affirmed that the prior conviction qualified as a sentencing enhancement.

On May 25, 2006, detectives from the Mandan Police Department interviewed **Sonnenberg**, in the wake of allegations that **Sonnenberg** had sexual contact with children and had shown child pornography to children. **Sonnenberg** consented to a search of his computers, which were seized and examined by the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal

Investigation. The forensic analysts discovered hundreds of child pornographic images

Sonnenberg had downloaded from the Internet onto his computer.

The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and the Mandan Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Clare Hochhalter prosecuted the case.

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