

Massachusetts man pleads guilty to possession of child pornography

An Upton man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court in Worcester to possessing child pornography.

Matthew Stefanelli, 32, pleaded guilty to one count of possession of child pornography before U.S. District Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman who scheduled sentencing for March 18, 2022. Stefanelli was arrested and charged on July 14, 2021.

In December 2020, a CyberTip report identified Stefanelli as the owner of an account used to store child pornography. On Jan. 6, 2021, a search of Stefanelli's residence resulted in the seizure of several electronic devices including Stefanelli's cell phone. A forensic review of the phone revealed approximately 33 image files depicting child pornography, including the child identified in the CyberTip report. Stefanelli stored these images in an encrypted application designed to appear as a calculator.

The charge of possession of child pornography provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least 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 on the United States Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; and Upton Police Chief Michael J. Bradley Jr. made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristen Noto of Mendell's Worcester Branch Office is prosecuting the case.

Members of the public who have questions, concerns or information regarding this case should call 617-748-3274.

The case is 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 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/.