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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CANADIAN MAN INDICTED FOR TRAVELING TO COLORADO IN ILLEGAL ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY WITH A MINOR

DENVER – Troy A. Eid, United States Attorney for the District of Colorado, and Jeffrey Copp, Special Agent in Charge of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Colorado, today announced the indictment of **LAWRENCE EUGENE COUTURIER**, age 49, of Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, on charges of traveling with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor, and attempting to entice a minor to engage in illegal sexual activity. The indictment was returned by a federal grand jury on March 11, 2008. **COUTURIER** is presently in state custody. An arrest warrant has been issued, which will soon be executed by the U.S. Marshals Service.

The indictment charges that on February 29, 2008, the defendant traveled from Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, to Fremont County, Colorado, to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a person under eighteen (18) years of age. The indictment further alleges that from January 3, 2008, through February 29, 2008, the defendant used a facility of interstate commerce (in this case, a computer), to knowingly entice a minor to engage in sexual activity.

“Child predators who target mothers and their children for ‘sexual tourism’ may well find themselves in federal prison,” said U.S. Attorney Troy Eid.

“We see more and more child predators being indicted from all walks of life,” said Jeffrey Copp, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Denver. “Predators compromise the most precious natural resource this country has – our children. ICE will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to identify, locate and prosecute anyone who sexually exploits children.” Copp oversees a four-state area for ICE, which includes: Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming.

If convicted of traveling with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct, the defendant faces a penalty of not more than 30 years in federal prison, and up to a \$250,000 fine. If convicted of attempting to entice a minor to engage in illegal sexual activity, the defendant faces a penalty of not less than 10 years, and up to life imprisonment, and up to a \$250,000 fine.

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This case was investigated by the Internet Crimes Against Children task force, the Canon City Police Department, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The case is being prosecuted by Project Safe Childhood coordinator Assistant United States Attorney Roxane Perruso.

The charges are only allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorney's Offices, 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 identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/>.

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