



**** MEDIA RELEASE ****

BIG LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT



790 Minnesota Avenue, Big Lake MN, 55309

Incident Number: 18-421

Date/Time: 1/26/2018

Suspect Arrested on Criminal Sexual Conduct Charges

On January 18th, an Investigator with the Mendota Heights Police Department requested assistance from Big Lake Police in locating a runaway juvenile, which had been missing from their City since January 6th. Officers checked the address she had been tracked to on Traverse Lane, but were unable to locate anyone. On January 19th, Investigators from Mendota Heights Police, along with Big Lake Police, executed a search warrant at this location. The missing runaway juvenile (victim) was located in makeshift living quarters under a staircase.

The victim was subsequently taken into custody, and interviewed about what had taken place. During that interview, the victim, who is under the age of 16, disclosed that sexual contact had occurred on multiple occasions with a suspect identified as; Zachary T. McGriff (Age 25 – Big Lake). The victim also disclosed that she had been living with McGriff for several weeks. In an interview with Investigator Rich Berg and a Mendota Heights Investigator, McGriff admitted to; meeting the victim online, knowing she was a runaway, making no effort to contact her parents or law enforcement, and to engaging in sexual contact with her on several occasions. McGriff also admitted that that victim had been staying under the stairs so his children would not see her when they were in the home.

Following the interview with Investigators, McGriff was arrested and booked into the Sherburne County Jail. McGriff was charged by criminal complaint with; Felony - 3rd Degree Criminal Sexual Contact (Victim Under 16), Felony - 4th Degree Criminal Sexual Contact (Suspect More than 48 Months Older than Victim), and Gross Misdemeanor - Contributing to Need for Child Protective Services. This case is ongoing, and a continuing investigation jointly between the Mendota Heights and Big Lake Police Departments with additional criminal charges possible.