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Cape Cod Man Sentenced for Possession of Child Pornography

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BOSTON – A West Harwich man, formerly of Charlestown, was sentenced yesterday for possessing child pornography.

Thomas J. Richardson, 67, was sentenced to 24 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release and ordered to pay \$10,000 in restitution to one of the victims. He was also ordered to forfeit the computers he used to store the illicit images and videos. In February 2013, Richardson pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography.

Between July 4th and 8th, 2008, an FBI agent working undercover for the FBI's Innocent Images Unit went online to a peer-to-peer file sharing software program. The FBI agent received a "friend" request and offline messages from Richardson using the screen name "Greatg." In the messages, Richardson asked when the agent would be online, stated that his name was "Gretchne," and falsely indicated that he was a mother of two.

On July 9, 2008, the agent logged into the file sharing program and found files containing child pornography images and videos belonging to Richardson. The agent attempted to download the files, however, Richardson terminated this transaction before it was completed because he was unable to download any content from the agent's online profile. Prior to the termination, the agent was able to download three files. One video was corrupted and could not be viewed. Another video, depicted anal-genital sexual intercourse between an adult man and a toddler boy. And an image depicted a nude, adult man touching the clothed genitals of a minor boy on a bed. The agent determined, through IP address location information, that the user profile belonged to Thomas J. Richardson in Charlestown.

In August, 2008, the agent again logged into the file-sharing program and observed that Richardson's profile was also online. The agent browsed Richardson's shared file directories, and found files containing child pornography images and videos. The agent downloaded 11 files of child pornography, including a number of images depicting a prepubescent boy and prepubescent girl engaging in sexual acts with each other. The agent determined, through IP address location information, that the user profile belonged to Richardson's address in West Harwich.

The West Midlands Police, in Birmingham, England, also had reported to the FBI in Boston that an individual using the screen name "GreatG" was communicating and trading pornography with a target in their jurisdiction through the Google Hello program. British law enforcement obtained IP login information for GreatG's account and determined that Richardson had accessed this account from his residences as well as from his then-employer.

On November 6, 2008, the FBI executed a search warrant at Richardson's homes in Charlestown and West Harwich and seized six laptop computers. The FBI conducted a forensic examination of the computers and found evidence of significant child pornography activity. The Internet browsing history and recent link files showed that Richardson accessed a number of files with explicit names indicative of child pornography. Evidence of installation and use of the file-sharing program and Google Hello were also found on an HP laptop in Charlestown.

Forensic analysis revealed at least 10 images in allocated space, including the following:

- An image which depicts a nude girl lying on a bed with her legs spread - her wrists and one visible ankle are tied to the bed frame;
- An image which depicts a girl, who appears to be approximately 12 to 14 years-old, holding a penis near her mouth. There appears to be semen on her face and shirt; and
- An image which depicts a prepubescent, nude girl who is kneeling on the floor and engaging in oral-genital sexual intercourse with an adult male who is standing. The girl is wearing a mask (with an opening at the mouth) and her hands appear to be tied.

Forensics further revealed numerous deleted and temporary internet images of child pornography on the computers.

From Richardson's computer, forensic agents recovered 159 chats between Richardson and 81 other users on Google Hello trading numerous images of child pornography and child erotica, including images of children as young as six engaged in sexual acts and images depicting sadomasochistic sexual abuse of children. The chats indicate Richardson's substantial knowledge of child pornography series as well as his extensive collection of child pornography, which allowed him to provide child pornography tailored to the requester's preferences.

United States Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz and Richard DesLauriers, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division, made the announcement today.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Yoon and Stacy Dawson Belf of Ortiz's Major Crimes Unit and Trial Attorney Bonnie Kane of the Department of Justice's Child Exploitation & Obscenity Section.

This case was 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 the U.S. Attorneys' 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 www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

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