



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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FORMER ASH FLAT FIREMAN SENTENCED IN CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CASE

Little Rock – Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today the sentencing of John Paul Richeson, age 50, formerly of Ash Flat, Arkansas. On May 11, 2009, Richeson pled guilty to one count of receipt of child pornography in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2252(a)(2).

Today, the Honorable J. Leon Holmes, Chief Judge, United States District Court, Eastern District of Arkansas sentenced Richeson to 108 months imprisonment, 15 years supervised release, and the \$100 special penalty assessment. Special conditions placed on the defendant include mental health counseling and treatment, sex offender registration, no internet access without the permission of the probation office, and no contact with minor children without the express consent of the probation office. The defendant has been in custody since the time of his arrest in September 2008.

On September 25, 2007, an FBI agent, in an undercover capacity, downloaded 15 files from the defendant's computer utilizing the file sharing program Lime Wire. Thirteen of the fifteen files downloaded were child pornography or child erotica. One file contained 8 child pornographic images. At the time of the offense, the defendant was a fireman with the Ash Flat Fire Department.

On March 3, 2008, a federal search warrant was executed at the defendant's residence. At the time of the search, the defendant consented to an interview. He told the agents that he had been downloading child pornography from the internet for about a year and had downloaded between 70 to 80 still child pornographic images and 20 to 30 child pornographic videos. He further stated that he used Lime Wire to download the images. He stated that the images were of children who ranged in age from 3 to 16 and were involved in sexually explicit conduct. He also stated that in an effort to conceal this from his wife, he would delete the files from his computer.

A laptop computer was seized during the execution of the warrant, and a forensic examination was conducted. While the child porn images which the undercover agent downloaded were no longer on the computer, their residual filenames were located on the hard drive under C:\Documents and Settings\John\Shared. In addition, thumbnail images of other child pornography were located which had been downloaded on February 26, 2008.

Since the time of the search warrant, four people reported to law enforcement molestation at the hands of the defendant over 20 years ago. That information was taken into consideration by the Court in determining the defendant's sentence.

"Victimization of children is a serious offense, whether that victimization is through the distribution and receipt of child pornography or the actual molestation of children," stated United States Attorney Jane W. Duke. "Our office will continue to vigorously prosecute those who wish to bring harm to children."

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Karen Whatley.

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