



Department of Justice

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COLUMBIA COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHARGE OF POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Jacksonville, FL - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announced today that Steven Arnold Hillard (26, Fort White) pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court, in Jacksonville, to possessing images and videos of child pornography. Hillard faces a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a potential life term of supervised release. He is also required to forfeit his computer media. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

According to court documents, an undercover agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Oklahoma connected to the internet in an effort to identify individuals trafficking in child pornography. The agent identified a particular host computer that contained several images of child pornography and was using an internet file sharing program. Documents obtained from the internet service provider for this host computer revealed that it resolved to a residence in Fort White, Florida.

On January 13, 2009, agents with the FBI and the Florida Attorney General's Office executed a federal search warrant at the residence of Steven Arnold Hillard in Fort White, Florida. As the search was conducted, investigators interviewed Hillard. When shown a list of 40 files from Hillard's shared folder on his computer that had names indicative of child pornography, Hillard admitted that he had been collecting child pornography for about one year. He advised that he had made some CDs and DVDs containing images of child pornography which he kept in his desk. Hillard stated that he saved images and videos of

child pornography into a file folder on his desktop and also admitted that he had printed images of child pornography and put them into folders. In Hillard's closet, agents found a cardboard box containing a VHS tape labeled "Disney Sex" and several compact disks and DVDs with various handwritten titles indicative of child pornography, including one labeled "child porn vids." During the execution of the search warrant, the agents seized, among other things, one generic PC computer tower, three computer hard disk drives, pictures of children cut from magazines, notes containing website addresses and search terms indicative of child pornography, several dolls modified to be anatomically correct, and a folder containing printed images of child pornography. Subsequent forensic analysis revealed, among other things, approximately 273 images and 25 videos of child pornography on one of Hillard's computer hard disk drives.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the former Child Predator Cybercrime Unit of the Florida Attorney General's Office, and the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney D. Rodney Brown.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), 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 to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.