

NEWS

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New Jersey Man Sentenced to 235 Months in Prison for
Traveling to Thailand to Sexually Abuse Young Boys

(More)

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NEWARK, N.J. – A New Jersey man who admitted traveling to Thailand to have sex with children as young as six years old and producing and possessing child pornography was sentenced today to 235 months in federal prison, announced U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey Paul J. Fishman and Assistant Attorney General of the Department of Justice Criminal Division Lanny A. Breuer.

U.S. District Judge Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr., also fined Wayne Nelson Corliss, 61, of Union City, \$5,000. Upon completion of his prison sentence, Corliss will have to serve a lifetime of supervised release.

“Wayne Corliss is a determined sexual predator who traveled the world to engage in horrible conduct with helpless young victims,” said Fishman. “The length of the sentence will ensure – as it should – that Corliss will never have the opportunity to prey on anyone else.”

There is no parole in the federal system.

Corliss was identified in May 2008 after INTERPOL, the international police agency, made a global appeal for any information that could identify a then-unknown male. In that appeal, INTERPOL released a photo to media outlets around the world depicting an individual later identified as Corliss. The likeness in the image distributed by INTERPOL had been cropped from photos depicting Corliss sexually abusing young boys in Southeast Asia. As reported by INTERPOL at that time, the images, which were distributed on the Internet, captured the abuse of children as young as six-years-old, and were originally discovered by police in Norway.

Within 48 hours of INTERPOL’s global appeal, Special Agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field offices in Newark and Washington, D.C., coordinating with INTERPOL, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation & Obscenity Section (CEOS), identified, located and arrested Corliss, a local theater actor whose yearly roles included appearances as an area Santa Clause. Corliss has been in custody since his arrest at his Union City home on May 8, 2008.

Corliss pleaded guilty on Oct. 28, 2008, to three counts of traveling in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct, one count of producing child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography.

Corliss admitted that he traveled to Thailand each year from 2000 to 2002. In each instance, Corliss admitted that he traveled with the intent to sexually abuse children and paid for access to children for sex. Corliss also admitted sexually abusing children in 2002 in Thailand for the purpose of photographing and videotaping the activity. In addition, Corliss admitted storing and possessing images of child pornography on his home computers.

Corliss and two other U.S. sex tourists, Burgess Lee Burgess and Mitchell Kent Jackson, allegedly communicated with and were afforded sexual access to children in Thailand by John Wrenshall. Wrenshall was extradited from the United Kingdom in July and awaits trial in New

Jersey on sex tourism and child pornography charges. According to the Indictment, Wrenshall had ready access to young Thai boys, some as young as four-years-old, at his Thailand home and provided Corliss, Burgess, Jackson and others with sexual access to those children in exchange for money. Burgess, 45, and Jackson, 32, pleaded guilty on Nov. 13, 2008, in the Southern District of Alabama and were each sentenced last week to 78 months in prison.

The case was investigated by ICE. The prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee Vartan of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey and Trial Attorney Michael Yoon of CEOS.

INTERPOL and ICE are partners in the Virtual Global Task Force, an international alliance of law enforcement committed to keeping children safe from child predators.

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Defense Counsel for Corliss: Chester Keller, Esq., federal Public Defender's Office, Newark.