

NEWS

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Canadian Citizen Who Fought Extradition from Britain
is Returned to the U.S. to Answer Child Sex Tourism Charges

(More)

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NEWARK – A Canadian citizen arrested in London last December on sex tourism charges for arranging sexual encounters with young boys in Thailand was extradited and arrived in New Jersey this afternoon, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

John Wrenshall, 62, is scheduled to appear tomorrow at 2:30 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Falk for an initial appearance. The 18-count Indictment charges him with conspiring to travel in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with children; aiding and abetting sex tourism; conspiracy to produce child pornography, and the production and distribution of child pornography.

Wrenshall had fought extradition from Britain following his arrest at Heathrow Airport on Dec. 15. He arrived at Newark Liberty Airport at about 3:30 p.m. in the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service. Tomorrow, the U.S. Attorney's Office will ask Judge Falk to continue Wrenshall's detention pending trial.

“Given his history and ghastly exploitation of children, Wrenshall is clearly a danger to the community and to children specifically and should be detained,” said Marra.

Wrenshall was previously convicted in Canada of indecently assaulting several choir boys at a church. After spending some time in a Canadian jail in the late 1990s, Wrenshall emigrated to Thailand, and thereafter allegedly began his sex tourism operation. Special agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement coordinated with their counterparts through ICE attaché offices at the U.S. Embassies in Thailand, Canada and England and learned of Wrenshall's operation following the May 2008 arrest of one of his clients, Wayne Nelson Corliss, a Union City resident.

The Indictment against Wrenshall alleges that between at least 2000 and 2002, he was paid by a number of United States citizens, including Corliss, for “access” to prepubescent Thai boys, some of whom were as young as 6 years old. The Indictment further alleges that Corliss and others engaged in sex acts with those boys, including oral sex and anal sex. Pictures were taken by Wrenshall and others to memorialize the abuse.

Following return of the Indictment, United States law enforcement coordinated with their counterparts in Thailand, Canada, and England to arrest Wrenshall at London's Heathrow Airport. After several months of extradition proceedings in England, Wrenshall was extradited to New Jersey.

Corliss pleaded guilty to a five-count criminal Information charging him with, among other things, three counts of sex tourism and production of child pornography. He is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr. on Sept. 21.

Corliss was identified in May after a global appeal from INTERPOL for information to identify a then-unknown male and released a photo of Corliss' likeness to media around the world. The image was cropped from photos circulating on the Internet depicting him sexually abusing young children in Southeast Asia. Within 48 hours of the global appeal, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, coordinating with INTERPOL, the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Jersey, and the Department of Justice Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) identified, located and arrested Corliss.

Two other United States citizens who traveled to Thailand and paid Wrenshall so they could engage in sex with young boys, Burgess Lee Burgess and Mitchell Kent Jackson of Alabama, also pleaded guilty to one count of sex tourism and conspiracy to engage in sex tourism. They are pending sentencing in the Southern District of Alabama.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Lee Vartan and CEOS trial attorney Michael Yoon.

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