

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Canadian Man Arrested in United Kingdom
On U.S. Charges of International Sex Tourism

(More)

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NEWARK – A Canadian man was arrested in London today on charges of conspiring to travel in foreign commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with children; aiding and abetting sex tourism; and conspiracy to produce, production, and distribution of child pornography, Acting U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey Ralph J. Marra, Jr. and Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Matthew Friedrich announced.

John Wrenshall, 62, a Canadian citizen living in Thailand, was arrested at London's Heathrow Airport early this morning by London's Metropolitan Police Service (MET) along with agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). A provisional arrest warrant had been issued for Wrenshall through coordination with British officials, MET, ICE, and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, and the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs.

Wrenshall is detained pending extradition from the United Kingdom.

A grand jury in the District of New Jersey returned a 18-count Indictment against Wrenshall, which was unsealed upon his arrest, on Aug. 25, 2008. Wrenshall is charged with one count of conspiracy to engage in sex tourism; two counts of aiding and abetting sex tourism; one count of conspiracy to produce child pornography; seven counts of production of child pornography; and seven counts of distribution of child pornography.

According to the Indictment, Wrenshall had ready access to young Thai boys, some as young as four-years-old, at his Thailand home. The Indictment alleges that from as early as May 2000, Wrenshall helped arrange trips to his home during which U.S. citizens and others paid Wrenshall money to engage in oral sex and other sexual acts with the young boys, sometimes for weeks at a time. Wrenshall's customers were allowed to videotape and photograph their abuse, according to the Indictment.

Three of Wrenshall's U.S. clients – Wayne Nelson Corliss, Burgess Lee Burgess and Mitchell Kent Jackson – have already pleaded guilty to sex tourism and other charges.

Corliss was the first of Wrenshall's clients identified by law enforcement officers. In May 2008, Interpol released a sanitized photograph of a man sexually abusing young, Thai boys to media outlets in the United States and abroad, and made a global appeal for information that could identify the offender depicted in the photo. Within 48 hours, and acting on information obtained from individuals who recognized the offender as Corliss, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, coordinating with ICE and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), located and arrested Corliss in Union City, N.J.

The May release of Corliss's photo represented only the second time that Interpol has made such a public appeal to identify a suspected child predator. Interpol and ICE are partners in the Virtual Global Task Force, an international alliance of law enforcement agencies

committed to joint, international enforcement efforts designed to keep children safe from sexual predators around the world.

On Oct. 28, 2008, Corliss, 59, pleaded guilty to a five-count Information before the U.S. District Judge Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr., in Newark. Specifically, Corliss admitted that he traveled to Thailand each year from 2000 to 2002. He further admitted that during each of those trips; he traveled with the intent to sexually abuse children; paid for access to children; brought items to facilitate their sexual abuse; and sexually abused children. Corliss also admitted to sexually abusing children in 2002 in Thailand for the purpose of photographing and videotaping that activity. In addition, Corliss admitted to storing and possessing images of child pornography on his home computers at the time of his arrest in 2008.

The United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey provided federal law enforcement officers in Alabama with the names of two more of Wrenshall's clients, Burgess, 44, and Jackson, 31, both of Mobile, Ala. On Nov. 13, 2008, in the Southern District of Alabama, Burgess and Jackson admitted that they traveled to Thailand between 2000 and 2002. According to their pleas, Burgess and Jackson traveled with the intent to sexually abuse children, paid for access to children, and in fact sexually abused children.

According to plea documents, Burgess and Jackson, in preparation for their travel to Thailand, corresponded with Corliss, who, in turn, was in contact with Wrenshall. Burgess, Jackson, Corliss, and Wrenshall first met one another through an Internet chat group dedicated to men with a sexual interest in minor boys.

Despite indictment, the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Wrenshall faces a statutory maximum penalty of 15 years in prison on each count of sex tourism. Each count of production of child pornography carries a statutory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison and a maximum of 20 years. Each count of distribution of child pornography carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison. Wrenshall also faces a fine of \$250,000 per count.

Marra and Friedrich credited the Special Agents with ICE, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Matthew J. Etre, and Interpol, under the direction of Ronald K. Noble, Secretary General, with developing the case against Wrenshall.

Marra and Friedrich also thanked London's Metropolitan Police Service for their assistance.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee Vartan of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey and CEOS Trial Attorney Michael Yoon.

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