

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **CHEMUNG COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

ROCHESTER, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Thomas Mehegan, 61, of Elmira, N.Y., pleaded guilty to two counts of possession of child pornography before U.S. District Court Judge David G. Larimer. Each possession of child pornography count is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, and supervised release for life.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig R. Gestring, who is handling the case, stated that Mehegan was identified during a New York State Police investigation. Troopers executed a search warrant at the defendant's Elmira address and seized several digital computers and hard drives which contained child pornography. Police then contacted the Elmira Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation which continued the investigation. During the investigation, law enforcement learned that the defendant had secreted a hidden camera in his home with the intent to surreptitiously record his adult step-daughter breast feeding her infant child. Mehegan was convicted of unlawful surveillance in Chemung County for this conduct in 2010 and was recently released from state prison.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. 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](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov).

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota, and Troopers from the New York State Police under the command of Superintendent, Joseph A. D'Amico.

Sentencing is scheduled for 2:30pm on December 10, 2012 before Judge Larimer.

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