



Department of Justice

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MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER CHARGED WITH POSSESSION AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

COLUMBUS – Michael Highman, 43, of Upper Arlington has been charged in a criminal complaint filed in United States District Court here with one count of possession of child pornography and one count of distribution of child pornography. Members of the FBI Columbus Cybercrimes Task Force searched his home and found thousands of images and movies of prepubescent teenage boys engaged in sexual acts. Highman is a teacher and boys basketball coach at Weaver Middle School in Hilliard.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced the charges today.

FBI agents investigating known child pornography sites on the Internet identified Highman as a user of a site in June 2009 sharing almost 200,000 files. Agents seized computer storage media containing images of child pornography when they executed a search warrant of his house on October 15, 2009.

“Forensic examination of the computer media continues,” Stewart said. “At this time, it is unknown whether any of the images shared depict any local victims.”

Distribution of child pornography is punishable by at least five and up to 20 years imprisonment. Possession of child pornography is punishable by up to ten years imprisonment. Conviction would also require a defendant to register as a sex offender.

Stewart commended the investigation by members of the FBI Columbus Cybercrimes Task Force, including the Upper Arlington Police Department, who assisted with the search.

Highman received an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Norah McCann King on October 19 and was released on electronic monitoring pending indictment.

Charges contained in a criminal complaint are merely accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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