



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Northern District of Texas

1100 Commerce St., 3rd Fl.
Dallas, Texas 75242-1699

Telephone (214) 659-8600
Fax (214) 767-0978

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: 214/659-8707
www.usdoj.gov/usao/txn

DALLAS, TEXAS
OCTOBER 22, 2003

**FORMER DALLAS POLICE OFFICER AND WIFE
CONVICTED ON OBSCENITY CHARGES**

United States Attorney Jane J. Boyle announced today that a federal jury in Dallas convicted former Dallas Police Officer Garry Layne Ragsdale, age 34, and his wife, Tamara Michelle Ragsdale, age 32, on obscenity charges outlined in an indictment unsealed in June 2003. Specifically, following a four-day trial, the jury found each guilty of one count of Conspiracy to Mail Obscene Material, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371, and two counts of Mailing Obscene Material and Aiding and Abetting, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1461 and 2.

Garry Layne Ragsdale and Tamara Michelle Ragsdale each face a maximum statutory sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a \$750,000 fine. They are scheduled to be sentenced on January 23, 2004 by the Honorable Sidney A. Fitzwater, United States District Judge.

The case was initially investigated by the Dallas Police Department after they received a tip from a German citizen who told them that the geschlecht.com website was registered to Garry Ragsdale. At that time, Garry Ragsdale was a Dallas Police Department officer. The Dallas Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service were conducting a parallel investigation concerning Ragsdales' former business associate, and joined with the Dallas Police Department in the investigation which resulted in the federal charges.

The government provided evidence at trial that from April 1998 to July 1998, Garry Layne Ragsdale and Tamara Michelle Ragsdale conspired together, and with others, to sell and distribute obscene video tapes depicting rape scenes through the Internet and the United States mail. The Ragsdales, doing business as G Rags, Inc., owned, managed and maintained a World Wide Web site on the Internet called "geschlecht.com." The web page was named "The Rape Video Store," where the Ragsdales offered obscene video tapes depicting rape scenes, which they categorized on the website as the "Real Rape Video Series" and the "Brutally Raped Video Series."

Through this website, the defendants advertised, took orders, sold and facilitated the distribution of these rape videos which they duplicated in their home. The Ragsdales posted written graphically obscene descriptions of the videotapes on their website. Customers paid for the videos with a credit card and the videos were mailed to them by the Ragsdales.

In order to prove a matter is "obscene," the jury was required to satisfy a three-part test: (1) that the work appeals predominantly to prurient interest; (2) that it depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and (3) that the material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. An appeal to "prurient" interest is an appeal to a morbid, degrading, and unhealthy interest in sex, as distinguished from a mere candid interest in sex. This three-part test is a result of rulings by the United States Supreme Court in 1973 and 1976.

"This case clearly demonstrates that a jury drawn from our community can make a determination that materials containing offensive adult material violate our community standards. The citizens on the jury clearly rejected the Ragsdales' contention that the materials they sold did not violate community standards," said U.S. Attorney Boyle.

U. S. Attorney Boyle praised the investigative efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Dallas Police Department Vice Squad. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Linda C. Groves and DOJ Child Exploitation Obscenity Section Trial Attorney Richard D. Green.

###