



Department of Justice

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LIVERPOOL MAN ARRESTED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

Syracuse, New York: United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced that STEPHEN BENNETT, 58, of Liverpool, New York was arrested today on federal charges of distributing, receiving, and possessing child pornography.

A criminal complaint filed today in United States District Court alleges that an undercover New York State Police Investigator obtained three video files from BENNETT through a peer to peer file sharing network, and that upon execution of a search warrant at BENNETT's residence this morning evidence of his receipt and possession of child pornography was located, including a copy of one of the videos downloaded from him by the State Police investigator.

United States Magistrate Judge Hon. Andrew T. Baxter has ordered BENNETT detained pending a hearing scheduled for Tuesday, June 19, 2012. BENNETT is a previously-convicted sex offender for a prior child pornography offense, and as such faces enhanced federal statutory penalties. On the distribution and receipt charges BENNETT faces mandatory minimum sentences of 15 years, and a maximum penalty of 40 years per count. For his possession of child pornography BENNETT faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years with a maximum penalty of 20 years. He also faces fines on each count of up to \$250,000, and supervised release of no less than 5 years, and up to life.

BENNETT's arrest was the result of investigation by New York State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, and Troop D Bureau of Criminal Investigations, working together with the United States Secret Service. He is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Lisa Fletcher as a 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, and 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.

The charges are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.