

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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FORMER TEACHER PLEADS GUILTY TO PRODUCTION AND POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Timothy Bek, 25, of West Seneca, N.Y., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara, to production and possession of child pornography. The charges carry a mandatory minimum penalty of 15 years in prison, a maximum of life, a \$250,000 or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Maura K. O'Donnell, who is handling the case, stated that the defendant, a former teacher at a number of area schools, posed as a female teenager on a social networking website. Bek used the fictitious identity to make contact with underage victims, some of whom were students in the schools where Bek taught. Once contact was made, the defendant persuaded the victims to take explicit photos and videos of themselves. The defendant further convinced the victims to send these images over the internet and via text messaging. The images of these underage victims were subsequently found on computers owned by the defendant.

The images were discovered by law enforcement during the execution of a search warrant in connection with the arrest of the defendant's brother, Jason Bek. In December 2011, Jason Bek pleaded guilty to coercion and enticement of a minor and receipt of child pornography and is awaiting sentencing in April 2012.

"This case is a good example of why it is so important for parents to discuss online safety with their children," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "All students at both the elementary and high school levels need to know of the potential dangers lurking online. While our Office will continue to work with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners to prosecute these crimes, both parents and students should know that their best defense is simply not to send explicit pictures over the internet."

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.

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cyber Crime Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota, the West Seneca Police Department, under the direction of Chief Edward Gehen, the Cheektowaga Police Department, under the direction of Chief David Zack, and the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Sheriff James Votour. CEOS Attorney Keith Becker assisted in the prosecution of the case.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 23, 2012, at 12:30 p.m. EST, in Buffalo, N.Y., before Judge Arcara.

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