



Department of Justice

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CONVICTED CHILD RAPIST SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS IN PRISON FOR POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

COLUMBUS – Larry E. Messer, 33, of Columbus, was sentenced in United States District Court here today to ten years in prison for possessing child pornography. Messer, who was convicted in Franklin County Common Pleas Court in 2002 of raping an 11-year old girl, will also be placed under court supervision for five years after his release from prison and will be required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and the agencies participating in the Franklin County Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, announced the sentence handed down today by United States District Judge Gregory L. Frost.

Messer pleaded guilty on November 12, 2009 to one count of possession of child pornography for possessing seven digital images and 69 digital movies of prepubescent minors engaged in sexually explicit activity.

Task force members were patrolling the Internet looking for people swapping child pornography using Internet file-sharing programs in July 2009. They observed a user of one such program sharing files that appeared to be child pornography and traced the IP address to a computer at Messer's Columbus residence. Task force officers obtained a search warrant for Messer's residence and interviewed Messer. According to a statement of facts read into court, Messer said he had accidentally downloaded child pornography, but admitted that at the time of the search warrant he knew the child pornography files were on his computer. Forensic analysis revealed the existence of seven images and 69 videos, many of which depicted adult males performing sex acts on prepubescent children.

Task force officers arrested Messer on July 29, 2009. He has been in custody since his arrest.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. 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.

Agencies participating in the Franklin County Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, led by Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes' office, include the police departments from Westerville,

Upper Arlington and Columbus, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Stewart commended the investigation by Task Force agents and Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hunter, who prosecuted the case.

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