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California Man Pleads Guilty To Production Of Child Pornography

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2012

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA -- A California man pleaded guilty late Wednesday in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia to producing and transporting child pornography, announced U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia Timothy J. Heaphy.

John Stuart Dowell, 45, of Santa Cruz, Calif., pleaded guilty to 12 counts of production and one of transportation of child pornography.

According to a statement of facts entered into the record by the government and agreed to by the defendant, Dowell has admitted that in late 2010 and early 2011 he was staying at a residence in Frederick County, Virginia. In early 2011, while staying at the home, Dowell repeatedly sexually abused a three-year-old female and filmed this abuse. A computer forensic examination further revealed that Dowell, in separate incidents, produced two videos of a five-year-old female engaging in sexually explicit conduct. The investigation of this matter began after some of the videos depicting Dowell's abuse of the three-year-old victim were discovered online by investigators in Denmark.

"Protecting our children from predators like Mr. Dowell is a cornerstone priority for the Department of Justice," United States Attorney Timothy J. Heaphy said today. "When individuals like Mr. Dowell abuse and victimize children, this office will hold those individuals accountable for their crimes and ensure justice is served for their victims."

At sentencing, the defendant faces a possible penalty of between 15-30 years on each of the production charges and a possible penalty of between 5-20 years on the transportation charge. He will also face the possibility of lifetime supervised release following any prison term, a fine, and restitution to the victims. Dowell will be required to register as a convicted sex offender.

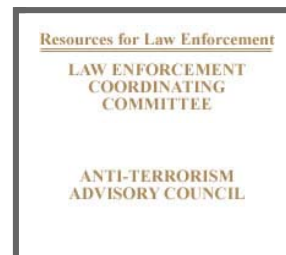
The investigation of the case was conducted by the Frederick County Sheriff's Office, Northern Virginia - District of Columbia Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Virginia State Police, San Jose Police Department, Santa Cruz Police Department, Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office, Silicon Valley Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce, San Jose Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce as well as Danish law enforcement officers and Interpol. The Frederick County Commonwealth Attorney's Office also provided assistance. The High Tech Investigative Unit from the Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) conducted the forensic examination. Assistant United States Attorney Nancy S. Healey and Trial Attorney Darcy Katzin, also from CEOS, are prosecuting the case for the United States.

[Return to Top](#)

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