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NEWS



Former Poplar Tree Elementary School Teacher Convicted On Child Pornography Charges

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2013

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Robert Fenn, 27, of Herndon, Va., was convicted by a federal jury today of receiving and possessing child pornography. Fenn was a special education teacher at Poplar Tree Elementary School in Chantilly, Va., prior to his arrest on related state charges in June 2012.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; John P. Torres, Special Agent in Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Washington, D.C.; and Lt. Colonel Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Acting Fairfax County Chief of Police, made the announcement after the verdict was accepted by United States District Judge James C. Cacheris.

Fenn was convicted of one count of receipt of child pornography, which carries a mandatory minimum penalty of five years and a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison; and one count of possession of child pornography, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. Fenn was taken into custody following his conviction and will remain in custody pending his sentencing, which is scheduled for June 21, 2013.

According to court records and evidence at trial, Fenn was identified through an international initiative originated with Italian law enforcement that investigated a website offering access to child pornographic images and/or video files identified by the domain name "liberalmorality.com." The website was hosted in the United States and HSI obtained Internet records showing each Internet account that accessed the website and the specific images each account accessed.

Fenn taught special education at Poplar Tree Elementary School in Chantilly, Va. and gave private music lessons to children in their homes. Fenn admitted an interest in girls between the ages of nine and 14, which corresponded to the ages of the victims of child pornography depicted in images and videos found on Fenn's computers and external hard drives.

This case was investigated by HSI's Child Exploitation Section in the Washington Field Office and the Fairfax County Police Department. Special Assistant United States Attorney Alicia J. Yass, a Trial Attorney with the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, and Assistant United States Attorneys Lindsay Kelly and Jay Prabhu are prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc. For more information about internet safety education, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc and click on the tab "resources."

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/vae>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov> or on <https://pcl.uscourts.gov>.

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