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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 14, 2014

Former University of Virginia Dean Sentenced on Child Pornography Charges

Michael G. Morris Will Spend 106 Months in Prison

A Crozet, Virginia man who previously pleaded guilty to child pornography charges was sentenced today in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia in Charlottesville for distribution and possession of child pornography.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Timothy J. Heaphy for the Western District of Virginia and Special Agent in Charge Adam S. Lee of the FBI's Richmond Field Office made the announcement.

Michael G. Morris, who used the screen name "funshooter2006," age 50, of Crozet, Virginia was indicted in 2013 and pleaded guilty on April 21, 2014 to two counts of distributing or receiving images of child pornography and one count of possessing child pornography. During the offenses charged, Morris was employed as an associate dean at the University of Virginia's McIntyre School of Commerce. Morris was sentenced today before U.S. District Judge Norman K. Moon to 106 months in prison followed by 20 years of supervised release.

"Michael Morris was an associate dean at one of our country's top universities, but instead of inspiring young minds academically, he was sharing and viewing pornographic images of young children," said Assistant Attorney General Caldwell. "Today's sentence demonstrates that those who trade and possess child pornography, no matter what positions of authority they may hold, will face the consequences for fueling an industry that causes immense damage to children."

"Each and every time defendants like Mr. Morris download and share images depicting child pornography the children in those images suffer re-victimization," U.S. Attorney Timothy J. Heaphy said today. "The Department will continue to use all available resources to seek out those who trade in this lurid material and bring them to justice."

"The Richmond-based Child Exploitation Task Force will pursue and bring to justice anyone who produces, distributes, or possesses child pornography," said Special Agent Lee. "The Morris case is an example of the FBI's commitment to Virginia's communities to keep our kids safe. I would like to thank the United States Attorney's Office for achieving a positive conclusion to this case, the Charlottesville Police Department for their commitment to the Task Force, and the Task Force officer and FBI agent who led the case for their outstanding investigative work."

According to evidence presented during the plea hearing and in court documents, a law enforcement officer, acting in an undercover capacity, successfully downloaded videos depicting minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct that Morris had made available to him on a publicly available file-sharing site on Jan. 6, 2012 and March 19, 2013. Morris also admitted that on Nov. 6, 2013, he possessed images or videos depicting prepubescent minors who the defendant knew had not attained 12 years of age. Investigators recovered computers and other items that contained child pornography during a search of Morris's home.

The case was investigated by the FBI, with the assistance of the Charlottesville Police Department and the Department of Justice's High Technology Investigative Unit. The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Herbrina Sanders of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Nancy Healey of the Western District of Virginia.

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Criminal Division



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