



Department of Justice

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RALLS COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

St. Louis, MO: Billy W. Hays pled guilty to charges of transportation and receipt of child pornography, United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway and Ralls County Sheriff Paul Forney announced today.

“This case is particularly egregious involving more than 20,000 images of child pornography,” said Hanaway. “Soon Mr. Hayes will be locked up so he can no longer be a danger to children.”

According to court documents, on September 18, 2007, law enforcement officers executed a federal search warrant at Hayes’ residence on Oglesby Place, New London, Missouri. During the execution of the warrant, officers seized fifteen firearms including a loaded AK-47 semi-automatic rifle next to the front door. Officers also found photographs of juveniles that appeared to have been printed out by a computer were found at the residence along with several bags of candy and stuffed toys. Forensic examination of two computers seized revealed multiple chat files showing the exchange of images of minors engaged in sexually explicit activity. Investigation revealed that between December 15, 2006 and January 27, 2007, throughout the course of five Google chat room exchanges, Hayes received approximately 1,379 images and distributed approximately 1,601 images.

Additionally, subsequent analysis of Hayes’ computer revealed 650 child pornography movie files, and 22,355 images of suspected child pornography. In addition to child pornographic image files and child pornographic video files, the above included images and videos of bestiality and bondage involving minors. Hayes admitted with his plea that he regularly participated in the exchange of images of child pornography via the Internet since 2003.

The images from this case were forwarded to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Child Victim Identification Program for comparison to known images; 155 images and 115 movie files were identified as depicting known child victims.

Hays, 48, New London, MO, pled guilty to one felony count of transportation of child pornography and one felony count of receipt of child pornography. He appeared before United States District Judge Henry Autrey this morning in St. Louis.

Each count of transportation and receipt of child pornography carries a penalty range of five to twenty years in prison, followed by supervised release for life. Sentencing has been set for December 11, 2008.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices, 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 identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

Hanaway commended the work on the case by the Ralls County Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Missouri Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Regional Computer Crimes Education and Enforcement Group, and Assistant United States Attorney Tiffany Becker, who is handling the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office.

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