

Wilmington Man Convicted On Federal Child Porn Charges

By Administrator

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The United States Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Robert J. Higdon, Jr., announced that last evening, in federal court, Ricardo Jerome Bennett, Sr., 47, of Wilmington, North Carolina was found guilty of two counts of receipt of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography containing minors under the age of 12. In August 2014, the Federal Bureau of Investigation utilized undercover software to identify an IP address downloading child pornography and offering such files for download by others. A search warrant was issued for the home address associated with the IP address. During that search, law enforcement confiscated multiple electronic devices belonging to BENNETT. In addition, BENNETT made a full confession to law enforcement to downloading and possessing child pornography. A forensic examination of those devices revealed more than 1000 files of child pornography, downloaded in the same manner that BENNETT described in his interview. These files included both still images and videos depicting minors, including minors under the age of 12, engaged in sexually explicit activity.

Higdon commented: "We are very pleased with the decision of the jury holding the defendant accountable for his abuse of children through the collection of child pornography. Every time he downloaded one of the more than 1,000 images he victimized the vulnerable child depicted in those images. His is a crime impacting the most precious and vulnerable among us: our children."

This case was part of the Project Safe Childhood initiative, a national program aimed at ensuring that criminals exploiting children are effectively prosecuted by making full use of all available law enforcement resources at every level. For more information about this important national project, Project Safe Childhood, go to www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations conducted the criminal investigation of this case. Assistant United States Attorney Melissa Belle Kessler handled the prosecution of this case for the United States.