

Wednesday, August 24, 2011 |

[Quantico, Virginia](#) 86° Feels Like: 86° Clear

NEWS

[HOME](#) / [NEWS](#) / [LOCAL](#) /

Former Capitol Police officer gets five years on porn changes

Recommend

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

By: [JOE CONROY](#)

Published: October 21, 2010

WOODBIDGE, Va. -- A former U.S. Capitol police officer and Woodbridge resident was sentenced to five years in prison Thursday for distributing child pornography.

Dennis Craig Bell, 55, pleaded guilty to the charge Aug. 4 after police said he was using a peer-to-peer network in December 2009 to distribute files containing child pornography, according to court documents.

Bell admitted that he downloaded child pornography while he was working as a Capitol police officer, but limited his criminal activity to his home after reading news accounts of people being caught engaging in similar activities at work.

Bell admitted to saving child pornography in folders on his computers designated for sharing on the Internet and on removable storage devices. Bell retired from the Capitol Police force after his arrest, admitting that he liked viewing children of all age ranges and downloaded such material at residences in Woodbridge and Fairfax, as well as at work.

Police executed a search warrant at Bell's home on April 15 and found 165 videos and 103 still images of child pornography on his computers. Many of the saved images depicted prepubescent children, according to court documents.

The Manassas City Police Department, FBI Washington Field Office and Northern Virginia/D.C. Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force participated in the investigation.

Bell initially told police that "he read news reports about child pornography being available on the Internet so he decided to try and see exactly how readily available it would be in case his children were to stumble upon it," according to court documents.

Bell told police, "It was dumb, but I wanted to see how much I could find," because of his children, the documents state.



Dennis Bell

Staff writer Joe Conroy can be reached at 703-530-3912. Staff writer Amanda Stewart contributed to this report.