

SEARCH THE SITE

Search

SEARCH

- HOME
- ABOUT
- NEWS
- MEET THE US ATTORNEY
- SERVICES & PROGRAMS
- CAREERS
- CONTACT US

Home » News » Press Release



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Former Capitol Police Officer Pleads Guilty To Distributing Child Porn

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 4, 2010

ALEXANDRIA, Va. - Dennis Craig Bell, 55, of Woodbridge, Va., pled guilty today to distributing child pornography.

Neil H. MacBride, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Shawn Henry, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office; and Chief Douglas W. Keen of the Manassas City Police Department, made the announcement after the plea was accepted by United States District Judge James C. Cacheris. Bell faces a minimum of five years and a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison when he is sentenced on Oct. 22, 2010.

According to court documents, Bell was identified by law enforcement in December 2009 using a peer-to-peer network to distribute several files containing child pornography. When approached by law enforcement in April 2010, Bell first claimed that, as a U.S. Capitol Police Officer, he had researched child pornography terms at work and then at home to see how readily available the material was on the internet but would delete them afterward.

Further investigation revealed that Bell had saved child pornography in a file on his computer and a thumb drive, and Bell admitted that he liked viewing children of all age ranges and had downloaded child pornography at residences in Woodbridge and Fairfax, Va., as well as at work. A forensic review of his computers found 165 videos and 103 still images of child pornography. Bell retired from the Capitol Police after his arrest.

This case was investigated by the Manassas City Police Department, FBI's Washington Field Office and the Northern Virginia/D.C. Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Assistant United States Attorney Jerry Smagala is prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

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.usdoj.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 <http://pacer.uspci.uscourts.gov>.

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[Return to Top](#)

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- HOME
- ABOUT
 - The District
 - The Office
- NEWS
 - Press Releases
 - News Archive
- MEET THE US ATTORNEY
- DIVISIONS
 - Civil Division
 - Criminal Division
- PROGRAMS
 - Outreach
 - LECC
 - PSC
 - PSN
 - VWA
 - Weed & Seed
- FAQ
- CONTACT US
 - Telephone
 - Mail
 - Webmaster

Search bar with a question mark icon.

- Site Map
- Accessibility
- FOIA
- Privacy Policy
- Legal Policies & Disclaimers
- Justice.gov
- USA.gov
- DOJ Diversity Statement