

# Marion County sheriff's deputy faces child pornography charges

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A Marion County sheriff's deputy who was arrested Friday on preliminary charges of distributing and possessing child pornography is the ninth deputy or civilian worker to lose a job with the department this year after an arrest or legal trouble.

Benjamin Farson, a 29-year-old Greenwood resident, was charged with six counts of child exploitation, according to the Johnson County prosecutor's office.

Farson, a deputy for three years who worked at the Arrestee Processing Center, 752 E. Market St., was fired Friday, Marion County Sheriff's Capt. Michael R. Hubbs said.

Greenwood Assistant Police Chief Matthew Fillenwarth said detectives began linking pornographic downloads to Farson on Sept. 12.



Benjamin Fason / Submitted by Marion Co. Sheriff's Dept.

The first three files were a photo and two video files. Police later found four more video downloads from the same IP address they traced to Farson.

The files showed children as young as toddlers in sexual acts. One of the video files was 23 minutes long, according to a probable cause affidavit.

Farson told investigators he was "careless" but did not intend to view the images. He said he was trying to download adult pornography but would sometimes get child porn by accident, according to the affidavit.

Farson said he would delete the child porn when he realized it was illegal. But police said he also uploaded the files to the Internet, according to the affidavit.

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>> Nathaniel Latimer, 23, was fired Aug. 31 after his arrest on charges of official misconduct and misdemeanor battery. Authorities say he hit an inmate in the head with a metal bench at the Arrestee Processing Center on July 28.

>> David Carrico, 28, was fired and charged June 15 with felony official misconduct and misdemeanors counts of battery and false reporting after what investigators said was an unprovoked attack on a jail inmate.

>> Michael McKittrick, 29, was arrested May 26 after investigators say he fired a rifle in his apartment while drunk.

>> Douglas Tibbs, 33, resigned on May 22 — two days before he was charged with burglary and theft of prescription drugs.

>> Donald Prout, 32, resigned on March 28, about a week after being charged with theft and “ghost employment,” a charge stemming from allegations he worked for a private security firm while he was supposed to be serving warrants or attending training classes.

>> Ryan Radez, 29, was fired in February after being arrested and charged with public intoxication for an incident during pre-Super Bowl festivities.

>> Matthew Prestel, 27, also was fired in February after Child Protective Services removed his two young children from his home because of unsafe living conditions.

>> Natasha Fogleman, a 29-year-old civilian dispatcher, was fired in January after she was arrested and charged with trafficking with an inmate at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility.

“It’s possible to accidentally download porn, but these files had pretty descriptive tags, and our evidence shows they were saved, viewed repeatedly and uploaded on the Internet so the rest of the world could see them,” Fillenwarth said.

Farson could not be reached Friday.

On Sept. 27, Greenwood police executed a search warrant at his apartment in the 1700 block of Honey Lane in Greenwood, Fillenwarth said, and seized several computers and electronic media.

Greenwood police contacted the Marion County Sheriff’s Department when they learned he was a deputy. Sheriff’s investigators assisted Greenwood police in the investigation.

Hubbs said the Marion County sheriff investigated but found no evidence that Farson had viewed pornography on department computers.

“This was all off-duty,” Hubbs said.

Investigators first detained Farson while he was working at the Arrestee Processing Center, police said, and took him to the Marion County Jail for questioning.

Greenwood police arrested Farson on Friday and took him to the Johnson County Jail in Franklin. Hubbs said Farson had a clean employment record with the Sheriff’s Department.

Farson is the ninth sheriff’s deputy or civilian employee to be fired or resign this year after getting into legal trouble.

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department also has had its share of officers getting into trouble.

More than two dozen IMPD officers have been fired or disciplined in the past three years for lawbreaking or misconduct.

Hubbs could offer no reason for the spate of misconduct in the Sheriff’s Department but said the disciplinary actions show that