



[Newsroom \(http://www.ice.gov/news/\)](http://www.ice.gov/news/) » [Recent Releases \(http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/\)](http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/)

News Releases



MARCH 25, 2009 SPOKANE, WA

Child rapist and pornographer Kenneth Freeman sentenced to 50 years in prison Investigation marked by international law enforcement cooperation

SPOKANE, Wash. - A federal judge has sentenced a former fugitive on U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) "most wanted" list, who was captured in a worldwide manhunt, to 50 years in prison on child pornography charges.

Kenneth John Freeman, 46, a onetime competitive body builder formerly of Richland, Wash., was sentenced here today on charges stemming from an extensive investigation by ICE and law enforcement agencies around the world.

Freeman pleaded guilty in December 2008 to two federal charges of producing child pornography and one charge of interstate transportation of a minor for sexual purposes. At that time, Freeman also pleaded guilty to three state charges of rape of a child in the first degree. Today, Freeman was also sentenced in state court to a 20-year prison term that will run concurrently with the 50-year federal sentence.

Freeman was extradited to the United States from Hong Kong in October 2007 to face charges that he sexually abused his preteen daughter. He videotaped the abuse, which occurred in Washington and Oregon, and distributed the pictures internationally over the Internet.

Freeman fled the country in March 2006. Nine months later, he was profiled on the television program "America's Most Wanted." The show featured an interview with his daughter and a plea for him to surrender to law enforcement authorities. A detective with the Toronto Police Service saw the show and for the first time linked Freeman to the child pornography images and videos that were reportedly among the most frequently downloaded in the world. Freeman was immediately placed on ICE's and the U.S. Marshals' "most wanted" lists and became the subject of a worldwide manhunt.

A team of investigators from various law enforcement agencies, including the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, tracked Freeman to China. On May 1, 2007, the pursuit ended when officers with the Hong Kong Police Force arrested him as he arrived at the city's bus depot to begin a holiday trip. Five months later, Freeman agreed to be extradited back to the United States to face the charges. Throughout the pursuit, special agents from the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and law enforcement authorities in Beijing, Suzhou and Hong Kong played a key role.

"Today's sentencing is the result of investigative tenacity and tireless dedication on behalf of every law enforcement agency involved in this case," said Leigh Winchell, special agent in charge of ICE's Office of Investigations in the Pacific Northwest. "This case further strengthens ICE's resolve to investigate pedophiles who seek to destroy the innocence of children through sexual exploitation."

ICE's participation in this investigation is part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE initiative targeting those who sexually exploit children. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 11,600 individuals nationwide.

"Today's sentence of 50 years imprisonment is an important vindication for victims who have the courage not only to survive the ordeal of sexual abuse, but to come forward to see that justice is served," said United States Attorney Jim McDewitt. "We are grateful to ICE and the Hong Kong authorities (the Hong Kong Immigration Department, Police Force and Department of Justice) for their commitment and unwavering efforts in the investigation and prosecution of this case, and to the U.S. Marshals Service for its assistance during the fugitive apprehension of defendant Freeman."

"As a result of the collaborative efforts of local, federal and international law enforcement officers, a child sexual predator has been held accountable for the unspeakable crimes he committed," said Karin Immergut, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon. "Although it is tragic that the victim will forever live with the memories of the sexual abuse she suffered at the hands of her father, we are pleased that this chapter of her life is now behind her."

"We are very pleased that the close cooperation between federal and state authorities helped obtain the convictions and lengthy sentences," said Andy Miller, Benton County, Wash., prosecuting attorney. "None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary courage and strength of the victim during this long ordeal."

This case was investigated by the Richland Police Department, the Benton County Sheriff's Office; the Kennewick Police Department; the U.S. Marshals Service; and ICE, including its attaché offices in Canada and China. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children also aided in the investigation. The federal charges were prosecuted by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices for the District of Oregon and the Eastern District of Washington. The state charges were handled by the Benton County Prosecutor's Office.

You may also visit us on [Facebook \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwwicegov), [Twitter \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwwicegov) and [YouTube \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwwicegov).

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the