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Former deputy pleads guilty to child porn charges

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Posted: Sep 05, 2012 2:10 PM PDT
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CHARLOTTE COUNTY - A former Charlotte County sheriff's sergeant pleaded guilty to a charge of child pornography. Now, it'll be up to a federal judge whether his law enforcement career gets him a break.

Kenneth Barton admitted Wednesday that he lived a double life.

The former sergeant had resigned in 2007 from the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office amid a series of allegations he'd molested a young girl and had an inappropriate relationship with a teenager.

But until June, no one knew what he had stashed in his bedroom closet. Wednesday, he admitted it was two computers with child pornography on them.

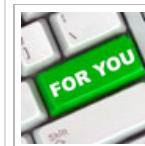
"He's sorry to everybody involved in it. He's sorry to the folks who have supported him for so long in law enforcement and his many friends," said

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 Former Charlotte Co. sergeant found with child porn

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Barton's attorney, Tom Marryott.

He says his client pleaded guilty in order to move on.

"He feels like he's been a disappointment to them," said Marryott.

Government investigators say they found more than 100 sexually explicit videos - some involving children as young as three.

But the plea deal is based on only a handful of videos.

"There may be truth to it, we don't know. And in the discovery, it's not apparent. The issue will be twelve videos," Marryott said.

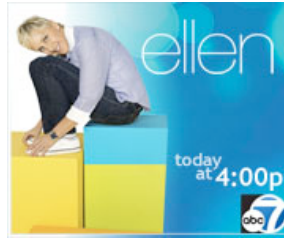
Barton admitted to the judge he knowingly downloaded computer files that contained minors in sexual activities.

He'll get credit for cooperating with the government - but a federal judge will decide what to make of his former career at sentencing

"It's a two-edged sword because of his background. There may be an argument that he knew better and should not have been involved, or he may be given credit for 25 years in loyal service to law enforcement," Marryott said.

Barton faces a maximum 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 in fines.

The 62-year-old will be registered as a sex offender.



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