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March 10

## Cameron sentenced to 16 years in prison

By Betty Adams [badams@centralmaine.com](mailto:badams@centralmaine.com)

Staff Writer

BANGOR — The state's former top drug prosecutor will spend 16 years in federal prison for his conviction on charges of possession and transmission of child pornography.

James M. Cameron, 48, formerly of Hallowell and Rome, was sentenced Thursday in federal court.

He indicated he will file appeals.

Police began investigating former Cameron, an assistant attorney general at the time, after Yahoo! reported finding images of child pornography in the photos section of an account holder later identified as Cameron's wife.

That led to James Cameron's Feb. 11, 2009, federal indictment on 16 counts of transportation, receipt and possession of child pornography. He pleaded not guilty and had been free on bail with certain restrictions.

Since the charges surfaced, Cameron lost his post as a prosecutor with the Office of the Maine Attorney General, ended his 26-year marriage, was forced to wear an electronic monitor, surrendered his passport and had only supervised access to the Internet. His current employment is selling watches online, according to court documents.

His annual income — about \$108,000 in salary and benefits when he worked for the state in 2006 — is now listed as \$25,000 in divorce documents.

Divorce records in Augusta District Court indicate he signed over to his former wife his ownership in their Hallowell home and in a home they owned in Echo Valley Estates, Rome. He also gave her his ownership — a 35 percent share — of Arrow Jewelry Findings LLC, a Michigan corporation.

His two children live primarily with their mother.

The Maine Board of Overseers of the Bar confirmed Thursday that Cameron's license to practice law remains active.

Cameron's defense lawyers, Michael A. Cuniff and Shaun Garry, had objected on constitutional grounds to the admission of evidence collected by Yahoo!, saying that Yahoo! improperly acted as a government agent in reporting the presence of the pornographic images via its search of photo albums on its network. But the court rejected that claim.

Cameron was initially represented in the case by attorney Peter Rodway. Cuniff and Garry took over his defense in February. The prosecutors were assistant U.S. attorneys Donald Clark and Gail Fisk Malone.

The charges stated that, "on or about Aug. 11, 2007," Cameron "knowingly transported child pornography in interstate commerce by means of computer, specifically by transmitting digital images of child pornography using Google Hello, an Internet-based



James N. Cameron

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chat and file-sharing service."

He wasn't indicted until February 2009.

More than a year prior to Cameron's indictment, Cameron moved away from his wife and children to his native Michigan to live with a brother.

After appearing in U.S. District Court in Bangor to respond to the indictment, he was released to the custody of his brother and agreed to forfeit \$75,000 if he failed to show up for court dates.

In February of this year, Cameron won permission from a federal magistrate judge to move back to Hallowell, where his ex-wife was to be responsible for him. His Hallowell home was to be equipped with phone lines required for pretrial electronic monitoring.

In the meantime, the case went through a series of pretrial motions.

Cameron failed to get a judge to suppress evidence collected Dec. 21, 2007, when investigators searched his Hallowell house and seized four computers. Cameron also claimed he was a victim of vindictive and selective prosecution, another claim rejected by the judge.

An order by a federal judge dated Sept. 28, 2009, provides some of the investigation's history:

"It begins with two referrals from the (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) to the Maine State Police on August 3, 2007, and September 6, 2007, which itself had been triggered by a report from the Internet Service Provider Yahoo. Yahoo reported locating numerous images of child pornography in the photos section of a Yahoo! account.

"The Maine State Police Computer Crimes Unit undertook an investigation and ultimately identified the owner of the account to be Barbara Cameron, the defendant's wife. Further investigation confirmed that Mr. Cameron was an assistant attorney general for the state of Maine, and that some of the pornography involved children as young as 4 to 6 years old engaging in sexual conduct.

"On December 21, 2007, the state executed a search warrant and seized four computers. When the computers were examined, there was evidence of Internet chat between two users about sex with children, images of child pornography and related topics.

"In one of those conversations, the person identified himself as a married 45-year-old man with a daughter, a description that fits Mr. Cameron."

Since awaiting trial, Cameron had been involved in the sale of watches on the Internet. Occasionally, he is seen in a taped, televised segment of the CNBC series "American Greed" talking about a childhood friend, Barton Watson, whose CyberNet scam netted him \$100 million.

Watson committed suicide Nov. 24, 2004.

Cameron is writing a book about Watson, according to information posted on a CNBC website.

The 13 charges of transportation and receipt of child pornography carried minimum penalties of five years in prison — with a maximum of 20 years — and a fine of up to \$250,000 or both. The charges of possession of child pornography carry penalties of up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 or both.

David Crook, a former district attorney in Kennebec County who is now a defense lawyer, described Cameron as "a man of integrity, a totally honest man, I knew his wife and his son. He had a good family."

"When Jim worked for me six or seven years, he was a very good assistant DA. When he went to the AG's office, he was a very good drug prosecutor. I never knew James Cameron to ever tell me a lie or tell a falsehoods in any way shape or manner."

Crook said he had no knowledge of what may have occurred on the Internet, and said he had not seen Cameron lately.

"Since he lost his job, he has avoided contact with all of his former professional relationships," Crook said.

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