

## Former patrol sergeant pleads to porn charge

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### 2009 child molest

FREMONT – A former Ohio State Highway Patrol sergeant was convicted Friday of showing a pornographic video to a 12-year-old boy in 2009.

Ricky Vitte, 33, of Genoa, pleaded no contest and was found guilty of one misdemeanor count of disseminating matter harmful to a juvenile in Sandusky County Common Pleas Court.

"We're not contesting the facts in the indictment," said one of Vitte's attorneys, Lorin Zaner of Toledo.

Vitte was a sergeant at the patrol's Toledo post but was fired this year after he was charged in this case. He showed the movie to a boy, who is now 18, at a Sandusky County home, Sandusky County Prosecutor Tom Stierwalt said.

Vitte also cannot carry a gun for five years, which means he cannot work as a law enforcement officer, because his wife has a protection order against him related to a domestic case, Stierwalt said.

In exchange for his plea, the felony disseminating matter harmful to a juvenile charge pending against him will be dismissed, Stierwalt said.

The investigation into Vitte started when the boy, who lived in Erie County, told a counselor that in February 2009, Vitte showed him the movie and taught him how to masturbate.

"They boy said on one occasion they masturbated in the same room while watching the video but could not see one another," according to the patrol's internal investigation report into the allegations against Vitte.

"The next day, they watched pornography, and Vitte asked the boy to leave the room so he (Vitte) could masturbate."

Vitte's wife, who attended the hearing, declined to comment. The couple is divorcing.

During the hearing, Vitte answered Judge Barbara Ansted's questions but said little else. His attorneys declined to comment after the hearing.

His sentencing is set for 2 p.m. Jan. 26.

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