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Former Warrensburg cop pleads guilty to child porn charges

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By HUEY FREEMAN - H&R Staff Writer Herald-Review.com | Posted: Thursday, June 16, 2011 12:44 pm

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[Buy this photo](#) Douglas H. Spensley, 44, a former Warrensburg police officer, pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography in U.S. District Court on Wednesday, as part of a deal which will incarcerate him in federal prisons for 10 years and state prisons for an additional 10 years.

DECATUR - Douglas H. Spensley, 44, a former Warrensburg police officer, pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography in U.S. District Court on Wednesday, as part of a deal which will incarcerate him in federal prisons for 10 years and state prisons for an additional 10 years.

In exchange for his guilty plea on the possession count, federal prosecutors dropped four counts of child pornography production against Spensley who is being held in federal custody.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Elly M. Peirson said she worked closely with Assistant Macon County State's Attorney Elizabeth Dobson on Spensley's two related cases, to ensure that the young victim would not have to testify.

"We didn't want him to plead guilty in one case and put her through a trial in another case," Peirson said.

Spensley, who appeared in court in Urbana on Wednesday, was arrested Oct. 14, 2009, for sexually assaulting a girl under 12 years old.

He was then arraigned in Macon County Circuit Court on one count of predatory criminal sexual assault of a child, punishable by up to 60 years in prison, and two counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

While he was in jail on those charges, Decatur police detectives searched his home, where they found images of the child in various lewd poses. The photographs were taken in Spensley's home, on East William Street Road.

Spensley was then indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of production and possession of child pornography. The indictment alleged that Spensley coerced the minor into posing for the pictures.

Spensley, who worked as a part-time officer from 2006 to 2009, resigned about one week after his arrest, said Warrensburg Police Chief Greg Wheeler. All of the crimes were committed while Spensley was off-duty.

However, Peirson said the fact that Spensley was an officer, therefore violating a position of trust, provided one of the many sentencing enhancements that determined his 10-year federal prison term. The parents of the victim stated that they trusted Spensley because of his position as an officer.

In addition, Spensley received points to enhance his sentence for: involving a minor younger than 12, involving a computer, a pattern of abuse/exploitation of a minor, obstructing justice and using a minor to commit a crime.

"He is at the top end of the statutory range," Peirson said.

The enhancements for obstructing justice and using a minor to commit a crime stem from the fact that Spensley had a young relative lie for him about who took the photographs, so he would take the rap for the crime rather than Spensley.

"Spensley allowed that to happen for almost two years," Peirson said, adding that the relative recently admitted he lied to protect Spensley.

A plea hearing date will be scheduled in Macon County Circuit court in the state's sexual assault case.

According to federal court documents, Spensley must plead guilty to predatory criminal sexual assault in that case, and receive a 10-year sentence consecutive to the federal sentence, in order to complete the deal made in federal court.

hfreeman@herald-review.com|421-6985

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