

# Redding CHP officer charged with having child porn

## Photo of girl seized in CHP investigation

By Sean Longoria

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A California Highway Patrol officer accused of possessing child pornography took a photo of a young girl's fully clothed crotch in the classroom of the Anderson school where his wife teaches, CHP investigators said in documents filed in Shasta County Superior Court.

Gerald "Gary" Roland Harris, 45, pleaded not guilty Monday to two felony counts of possessing child pornography, a felony count of using a computer without authorization, a misdemeanor count of annoying a child younger than 18 and two special allegations.

Those allegations state Harris will serve time in state prison if convicted of the child pornography charges.

He also faces 13 felonies and one misdemeanor charge related to a cache of guns, drugs, explosives and driver's licenses found Feb. 21 during a search of his Deschutes Road home.

Harris will be back in court Sept. 4 for a plea disposition and his preliminary hearing was set for the following day.

Retired Shasta County Superior Court Judge Anthony Anderson ordered Harris to have no contact with anyone younger than 18, except family members.

Prosecutors originally requested a blanket order, although Joe Gazzigli, Harris' defense attorney, argued that was overly broad.

"If he is such a hazard, I don't understand why it's taken such a long time" to file additional charges, Gazzigli said in court.

The case has been delayed several times at the request of prosecutors, who have said they needed more time to investigate the child porn charges, which were filed Thursday.

Harris turned himself in Friday at Shasta County jail and was released the same day on \$75,000 bail, a watch commander at the jail said Monday.

The image of the his wife's second-grade student dated 2010 was found on a flash drive seized during the CHP's internal investigation into Harris. That same flash drive also contained thousands of adult porn pictures, investigators said.

"Most of the pornographic images were of a past girlfriend of Gerald Harris, and/or Gerald Harris himself, engaged in acts that were intimate and sexual in nature," investigators wrote in the report.

A fellow officer who found adult porn on Harris' department-issued laptop while trying to fix the computer sparked that investigation.

The girl was sitting on a desk in a classroom, which officers later determined was at the Meadow Lane Elementary School, where Harris' wife, Katherine, teaches second grade.

"Based on their inspection, investigators were able to identify and match several items from the background of the photograph of the child victim to items in Mrs. Harris' classroom," investigators wrote in the report.

Officers later interviewed the girl in the photo, who said Harris was at the school almost every day between lunch and dismissal and would frequently take photos in his wife's classroom.

"Although Gerald Harris would yell at the students for talking, the victim did not indicate Gerald Harris did anything inappropriate to her," investigators said.

Anderson police conducted their own investigation into Harris for possible child molestation after several parents called the CHP concerned for their children. A detective didn't find any evidence Harris had molested children but a computer technician at the school told police years earlier he'd found pornographic photographs on Katherine Harris' school computer.

"(Mrs. Harris) related she had no idea how the images came to be on the computer and speculated that her husband, Gerald Harris, may have been one to place them on the school computer," CHP investigators said.

Officers also seized nine more flash drives, six CDs and a second laptop during their initial investigation, although Harris claimed he stole disks containing child pornography from another officer's locker to use for "insurance purposes" in the event the officer was promoted.

The CHP's Computer Crimes Investigation Unit found adult pornography on both of the laptops.

"Additionally, (investigators) discovered a single image of child pornography, which depicted a prepubescent boy and a young female engaged in what appeared to be sexual intercourse, on the departmental Gateway (brand) laptop," investigators wrote in the report.

Also on one of the laptops, investigators found one image of child pornography, four images of child erotica and about 100 images of naked children, which had all been viewed and deleted in the early morning hours by Harris while on duty, according to the report. Officers found many of the same images on one of the flash drives, one of which was Harris' property, found in a laptop bag in his patrol car.

The internal investigation led to a criminal investigation and Harris turned himself in March 2 at Shasta County jail after an arrest warrant was issued the same day.

Further investigation revealed none of the 11 illegal assault weapons found at Harris' house were registered to him. Two of the guns were bought from a retired CHP officer at a sporting goods store in Medford, Ore.

Harris told the retired officer he'd "take care of getting them into California," and the officer "wouldn't have to worry about anything," investigators wrote in the report.

The guns all had "evil" features that made them illegal in California, investigators said. A Redding-area gun dealer sold handguns to Harris, although officers didn't find any records he'd bought the assault weapons locally, according to the report.



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