

Customs officer charged over child porn

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HAMBURG, N.Y. (WIVB) - A Customs and Border Protection officer has been arrested and charged with possessing images and videos of prepubescent children involved in sexual acts.

Steven Metz, 40, of Hamburg was taken into custody on Wednesday and charged with possession of child pornography. The U.S. Attorney's Office says a suspect in Arizona sent Metz child porn between January and March of this year.

"Agents of the DHS (Department of Homeland Security) came upon e-mail accounts which indicated that child pornography was being sent to an address, an IP address, somewhere here in western New York," U.S. Attorney William Hochul explained.

On August 31, agents obtained a warrant for Metz's e-mail account, and prosecutors say they found Metz had both received and sent child pornography. The videos show adult men having intercourse and other sex acts with children, both boys and girls, just 3-, 4-, 5- and 6-years-old.

Hochul said, "Somewhere along the line, there was a real child that was photographed or videotaped engaging in exactly the conduct which is now depicted in the video."

Agents raided Metz's home on October 25 and say the customs officer denied he was connected to the e-mail account. Authorities seized two computers and say both had child pornography.

Metz has worked for Customs and Border Protection for 16 years. As a supervisory officer, he would have overseen inspections at all Buffalo and western New York border crossings.

"One of the responsibilities of Customs and Border Protection is to make sure that people don't bring into the United States all kinds of illegal products, including, in some cases, child pornography," Hochul said.

Metz was put on administrative leave on October 26, and according to the criminal complaint, stated, "When this is over, please don't put me on the CBP Wall of Shame. I'm sorry for the embarrassment. I love coming to work."

The customs officer is being held without bail pending a detention hearing scheduled for Thursday afternoon. If convicted of child porn possession, Metz faces a maximum penalty of 10 years behind bars.

A spokesman for Customs and Border Protection released this statement regarding Metz's arrest:

"CBP stresses honor and integrity in every aspect of our mission, and the overwhelming majority of CBP employees and officers perform their duties with honor and distinction, working tirelessly every day to keep our country safe. We do not tolerate corruption, abuse or criminal activity within our ranks, and we fully cooperate with any criminal or administrative investigations of alleged misconduct by any of our personnel, on or off duty. In fact, we have put in place extensive measures to proactively prevent misconduct by employing a rigorous vetting process and conducting thorough background investigations on those we hire."

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