

Pennsylvania police chief arrested for child porn

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Robert E. Geist, a former police chief in Berks County, was arrested Tuesday on child pornography charges. Geist, 44, of Bedminster Township, Bucks County, allegedly sent child pornography to an undercover police officer with the New Britain Township Police Department.

• A former Berks County police chief was charged Tuesday with child sexual abuse for allegedly possessing and sharing child pornography with an undercover police officer from his home computer in the Pennridge area of Bucks County.

Robert E. Geist, 44, of the 2600 block of Bedminster Road (Route 113) in Bedminster Township, was arraigned on one count each of child pornography, disseminating images or video depicting child sexual acts, criminal use of a communication facility and obstructing the administration of law.

He was released by District Judge Robert A. Schnell Jr. under a \$25,000 recognizance bond.

Geist was hired in 2004 as a police officer in Brecknock Township, a small township with about 4,500 residents just south of Reading.

He was fired in October 2012 after serving as police chief for about 18 months after taking two lengthy leaves of absence for illness, according to reports from the Reading Eagle newspaper.

His firing was apparently unrelated to the criminal investigation.

According to the arrest affidavit:

New Britain Township police detective Cpl. Jeffrey A. Cummins began investigating Geist June 23 after he received 13 images from Geist through a peer-to-peer file sharing program. Seven of the images allegedly depicted child pornography, including a photograph of a nude girl estimated to be 15 years old standing in a hot tub in a sexually suggestive pose.

Another download took place between June 30 and July 1. Cummins alleges Geist sent him a video with the file name "6Yo babyj – Bedtime rape."

When Cummins and other police officers went to Geist's home to search for evidence, Geist's father was outside in the garage and announced in a loud voice that police were on the property. Police allege Geist immediately began running two file eraser programs on his computer.

A forensic examination of the computer, though, revealed the names of some files, including one that had been previously sent to Cummins, according to the arrest papers.

— Tracy Jordan