

## Former Lynden cop pleads guilty to child porn charge

LYNDEN

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### 2014 Cop pedophile Donald Glunt



*Former Lynden police officer Donald Glunt appeared in Whatcom Superior Court in Bellingham, Friday morning, May 2, 2014, to be arraigned on charges of possessing child pornography. PHILIP A. DWYER — The Bellingham Herald Buy Photo*

— A longtime Lynden police officer pleaded guilty Wednesday morning, March 18, to having pornography of a teen girl on his work phone.

Donald Merle Glunt, 58, accepted a plea deal offering him 45 days of jail time, shorter than the standard range of three to nine months. He hasn't yet been sentenced by a judge.

Glunt resigned from his job as a patrol officer last year when the charges came to light. Lynden Police Department brass noticed Glunt was sending an unusually high number of texts, up to 155 messages back and forth in a work shift, from his police-issued phone in April 2014.

A sergeant found two of the numbers Glunt texted most had Texas area codes. Glunt admitted to the sergeant he'd been sending messages to a "female" in Texas, and that it was a "lapse in judgment," according to charging papers. He told the sergeant he wanted to delete something from the phone. The sergeant refused, took the phone, and handed Glunt a phone that can't text.

The case was turned over to the Washington State Patrol.

Troopers found photos of a naked teenage girl on the phone. Three detectives interviewed Glunt that week. He explained he thought he'd been talking with a 19-year-old woman. Glunt, when he got caught, told her to give the same story. Instead she told detectives that she'd told Glunt she was 17. Her real birth date shows she'd turned 16 years old in late February 2014.

Shortly before his arrest, Glunt was a speaker for Hope4Justice and Not For Sale, groups that teach the public about the dangers of sex predators. He told police he had thousands of images of "sexually exploited children" on his laptop, because he'd been saving them for a PowerPoint presentation on the subject. He'd never put them in a PowerPoint, but a co-presenter did, according to the charges.

A thorough search of seven electronic devices belonging to Glunt turned up many more images, such as teens in questionable poses, but no other outright child pornography, said Chief Criminal Deputy Prosecutor Eric Richey.

On Wednesday morning in court Glunt, standing beside his attorney Mark Kaiman, wore a gray-

and-neon smartphone strapped to his belt. He answered a series of questions from Judge Ira Uhrig, in a slightly hoarse voice, as he pleaded guilty as charged to one count of possessing depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

The fact that Glunt is a former cop, Richey said, had nothing to do with the plea deal suggesting a lighter penalty.

“We would have more reason,” he said, “to make an example out of him because he’s law enforcement, than to treat him kindly.”

Glunt has serious medical ailments that would be a burden on taxpayers if he served time in Whatcom County Jail, according to the prosecutor’s office. The plea deal recommends Glunt serve the time under house arrest, and taxpayers don’t have to cover medical expenses for inmates serving time outside the jail’s walls.

“We’re treating him as we would treat any other person,” Richey added.

Court papers outlining Glunt’s medical condition are sealed under an order by Judge Uhrig, though the nature of his condition is expected to be a large part of the discussion at his sentencing hearing sometime in the next month or two. The judge ordered what’s called a pre-sentencing investigation, a standard in sex crimes, which takes at least a few weeks to finish.

Glunt will have to register as a sex offender.

Because he resigned from his job, he’ll be allowed to collect his regular pension from the city of Lynden. He was a Lynden police officer for 34 years before his resignation and served as a firefighter for the city for more than 20 years.

“It’s saddening,” Lynden Police Chief Jack Foster said last April. “We’re sad for Officer Glunt, and for the shame for our police department and city.”

Reach Caleb Hutton at 360-715-2276 or [caleb.hutton@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:caleb.hutton@bellinghamherald.com). Read the Dispatcher at [bellinghamherald.com/dispatcher-blog](http://bellinghamherald.com/dispatcher-blog) and follow him on Twitter at [@BhamCrime](https://twitter.com/BhamCrime).

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