Kelso Man had one of Largest Collections of Child Pornography Prosecuted in Western Washington

Local News

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BENNY LYLE HILL, 60, of Kelso, Washington, was sentenced Friday in U.S. District Court in Tacoma to 32 months in prison and 15 years of supervised release for Possession of Child Pornography. According to court documents HILL possessed more than 1,300 CDs of child pornography. Investigators found HILL’s email address, “Stoned_coach,” while investigating another child pornography suspect on the east coast. In the course of the investigation agents learned that HILL was a long time Little League baseball coach in the Kelso area. At sentencing U.S. District Judge Ronald B. Leighton said, “I cannot overstate the revulsion in our community, nor the serious and insidious impact on our culture, or how these offenses raise levels of fear in our society. The joy of childhood is constrained by parents who are scared to death by the people who are inspired, motivated, and titillated by those who possess this material. People collect, trade, and organize this material in the same way kids used to collect, trade and organize baseball cards. But it is illegal to collect this kind of material for a reason–because there are real victims in the pictures they trade.”

HILL was arrested March 12, 2008, when agents searched his Kelso home and found massive amounts of child pornography in a search of his home. The investigation of HILL began when authorities arrested a Fairfield, Connecticut man on child pornography charges. The man had been trading child pornography over the internet with HILL. The Connecticut man knew HILL was a youth sports coach in Washington State. HILL pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography on August 19, 2008.

In asking for a 97 month sentence, Assistant United States Attorney David Reese Jennings wrote to the court “BENNY LYLE HILL is sexually fixated with children. He has downloaded, stored, traded and viewed countless still and video images of child pornography. He amassed a gargantuan collection of child pornography, one so large that the agents abandoned efforts to continue counting all the images and videos HILL had collected.... Defendant’s behavior is disturbing in focus as well as magnitude. For HILL, the fixation with children steered him into contact with children. Defendant placed himself in positions where he would see, interact, and socialize with children and young girls.”

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David Reese Jennings.