

Former New Bedford Police Officer Pleads Guilty to Child Pornography Offenses

A former New Bedford police officer pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston to charges of possessing and distributing child pornography.

Paul Hodson, 43, of Acushnet, pleaded guilty to one count of distribution of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. U.S. District Court Chief Judge Patti B. Saris scheduled sentencing for May 20, 2020. Hodson was indicted on June 20, 2019.

Following an investigation into the use of peer-to-peer file sharing networks for the trade of child pornography, a search was executed at Hodson's home. Hodson was interviewed on scene and admitted to using peer-to-peer file sharing software to trade child pornography. During the course of forensic analysis of Hodson's computer, hundreds of child pornography files were recovered, including at least one file that was distributed to undercover law enforcement in the course of the investigation that led to the search warrant.

The charge of distribution of child pornography provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and up to 20 years in prison, a minimum of five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of possession of child pornography provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, a minimum of five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Jason Molina,

Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston, made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Massachusetts State Police and the Acushnet Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Anne Paruti, Lelling's Project Safe Childhood Coordinator and a member of the Major Crimes Unit, is prosecuting the case.

The case is brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In 2006, the Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.