



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Carter M. Stewart  
Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY, JULY 9, 2010  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ohs>

CONTACT: Fred Alverson  
614-469-5715

**FORMER HILLIARD MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER SENTENCED TO 136 MONTHS  
IN PRISON FOR DISTRIBUTING MORE THAN 200,000 IMAGES OF CHILD  
PORNOGRAPHY**

COLUMBUS – Michael S. Highman, 43, of Upper Arlington was sentenced in United States District Court here today to 136 months imprisonment for using an Internet site to share more than 200,000 images and movies of prepubescent teenage boys engaged in sexual acts. At the time, Highman was a teacher and boys basketball coach at Weaver Middle School in Hilliard.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced the sentence handed down today by U.S. District Judge Algenon L. Marbley. Judge Marbley also fined Highman \$5,000, ordered him to serve ten years of supervised release after his prison time, and to register as a sex offender anywhere he lives, works or attends school.

Highman pleaded guilty on December 17, 2009 to one count of distribution of child pornography. Members of the FBI Columbus Cybercrimes Task Force investigating known child pornography sites on the Internet identified Highman as a user of a peer to peer file-sharing program in June 2009, and subsequently downloaded images and videos from Highman. Investigators found computer storage devices hidden in Highman's house, including one hard drive hidden in the ceiling of the basement when they executed a search warrant of his house on October 15, 2009.

Highman had collected and traded child pornography over the internet for several years, and possessed thousands of images and videos mostly of boys between the ages of 7 and 14 in sexually explicit poses or engaging in sexual activity with other minors or adult men. He used peer-to-peer software running on computers in his basement 24 hours a day to collect and share the images.

At the sentencing hearing, Judge Marbley noted that investigators also found non-pornographic videos Highman made of boys he had coached shooting basketball without their shirts on.

“Those who buy, sell, collect and trade images of child exploitation create a market for those who prey on children and force them to commit such acts,” Stewart said. “Protecting our children from such victimization is one of society's most important functions.”

Highman has been in custody since his arrest in October 2009. Judge Marbley will recommend that Highman be placed in a federal facility that offers sex offender treatment.

Stewart commended the investigation by members of the FBI Columbus Cybercrimes Task Force, including the Upper Arlington Police Department, who assisted with the search, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hunter who prosecuted the case.

# # #