

Fairview Heights Man Charged With Child Pornography Possession

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FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS - Michael M. Rapa, 67, of Fairview Heights, Illinois, was arraigned yesterday in federal court on a three-count indictment charging him with possessing prepubescent child pornography (two counts) and possessing child pornography. According to the indictment, on Nov. 2 and Nov. 30, 2017, Rapa knowingly possessed computers that contained prepubescent child pornography.

The indictment further alleges that, on Dec. 12, 2017, Rapa knowingly possessed a hard drive that contained child pornography. Rapa has pleaded not guilty to the charges. An indictment is merely a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

If convicted of possessing prepubescent child pornography, Rapa faces a penalty of not more than 20 years imprisonment. For possession of child pornography, Rapa could receive as much as 10 years in prison. All three counts carry a maximum fine of \$250,000 and supervised release from five years to life. Trial is presently scheduled for Dec. 17, 2020, in Benton, Illinois.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc. For more information about internet safety education, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc and click on the tab "resources." The case was investigated by the Fairview Heights Police Department and the Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Angela Scott.