



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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JULY 14, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER STATE SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that the former supervisor of the Division of Child Support Enforcement in the Joplin, Mo., office of the Missouri Department of Social Services pleaded guilty in federal court today to possession of child pornography.

Wesley George Thorn, 45, of Carl Junction, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple this afternoon to an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 1, 2002. Thorn entered a “stand-up guilty plea,” Graves said, meaning that there was no written plea agreement. Graves added that the plea is conditional upon the defendant’s appeal of the court’s suppression ruling.

By pleading guilty, **Thorn** admitted that he was in possession of child pornography on Feb. 8, 2002, in Jasper County, Mo.

As a result of today’s guilty plea, **Thorn** could be subject to a sentence of up to five years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. Sentencing will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Katharine Fincham. It was investigated by the Missouri Department of Social Services, the Joplin, Mo., Police Department, the Missouri State Technical Assistance Team, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow