

To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Click here to return to previous page](#)

Article published May 7, 2013

---

## Worcester man with dungeon in basement pleads guilty to child porn

City man faces 27-year sentence

By Scott J. Croteau TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

[scroteau@telegram.com](mailto:scroteau@telegram.com)

**WORCESTER** — Tucked in the basement of a Beechmont Street home, federal authorities found a dungeon. It contained a child-sized homemade coffin, a steel cage, torture devices and butchering tools.

The devices were there so 40-year-old Geoffrey R. Portway could sexually abuse, torture, murder and cannibalize children, a federal prosecutor contends.

The horrific details of Mr. Portway's online chats and attempts to persuade another man to kidnap a child were detailed as Mr. Portway pleaded guilty yesterday to charges of solicitation to commit a crime and possession and distribution of child pornography.

Mr. Portway, of 31 Beechmont St., who handed out Ziploc bags containing full-sized candy bars to children on Halloween, faces up to 27 years in federal prison. His sentencing is scheduled for Aug. 2 in U.S. District Court in Worcester.

"Clearly, the facts of this case were quite disturbing and we are grateful law enforcement acted when they did," U.S. Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz said in a news release. "I hope that this case sends a clear message that we will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those who participate in these types of activities."

The United Kingdom native was snared in an international investigation into the molestation and exploitation of children that began when a Milford man was arrested in 2010. The Homeland Security probe has since resulted in the arrest of about 51 suspects and the identification and rescue of more than 160 children in the United States, Canada and Europe.

Authorities executed a federal search warrant at Mr. Portway's West Side home on July 27, 2012. They seized computer equipment and discovered tens of thousands of images and videos showing children being raped and tortured. Some images showed dead children, federal documents said.

During the search, authorities found a locked door in the basement behind which investigators made the shocking discovery.

### Related

- [Feds seek 27-year sentence for Worcester man in child porn case with dungeon](#)
- [Porn case: Worcester neighbors shaken by dungeon in basement](#)

“Inside the second door was a dungeon, which was lined with acoustical sound-deadening material and contained a chair, television, and what appeared to be cable access to the Internet,” a statement of the facts detailed.

Also inside was a “child-sized homemade coffin.”

There were other items of torture. A cage, a steel table top and butchering kits were found as well, authorities said.

“This dungeon was described in detail by Portway in recovered chats as a place he intended to use to keep kidnapped children while he sexually abused them and as a place to eventually murder and cannibalize the children,” federal documents said.

In a plea agreement, Mr. Portway can be sentenced to 18 to just over 27 years in federal prison. He is to be deported after his imprisonment. He would be placed on a lifetime supervised release.

Sitting next to his lawyer, Richard J. Sweeney, Mr. Portway gave direct answers to U.S. District Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman's questions.

Mr. Portway engaged in numerous online chats with other people interested in eating, murdering, abducting and raping children. Part of those conversations involved trading child pornography.

During these chats, Mr. Portway solicited the help of others to abduct a child, Assistant U.S. Attorney Stacy Dawson Belf said in court. Authorities said Mr. Portway communicated with a Kansas man, named Michael Arnett, who has pleaded guilty to similar charges. Mr. Portway asked him to kidnap a child. Mr. Portway intended to rape, kill and eat the child, prosecutors allege.

“These solicitations for help abducting a child included discussing real children, by name and photo, that Arnett claimed to know and have access,” federal records said.

A transcript of an October 2010 conversation between the man in Mr. Arnett and Mr. Portway, contained in an affidavit, details the two men talking longingly about a photo of a child in Baltimore.

The Kansas man said it probably would not be too hard to find out where in Baltimore the boy lived. “Question is, would you go that far to snatch him?”

“I might, if I could get him,” Mr. Portway answered, according to the affidavit. “On just the chance of getting him, probably not. There are thousands of boys closer than that.”

The plea involving Mr. Portway is part of Operation Holitna, an ongoing HSI-led investigation that originated in Boston. The state police, Worcester police and Worcester County District Attorney's Office were part of the investigation.

In 2010, authorities arrested Milford resident Robert Diduca on child pornography production charges. He has since been sentenced to 18 years in federal prison.

Mr. Diduca's computer led investigators to the Netherlands where a Dutch national was arrested and charged with production, distribution and possession of child pornography, as well as the sexual assault of 87 minors, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Massachusetts said in a release.

“Since we began this operation — Operation Holitna — a worldwide network of offenders has been, and continues to be, unraveled, including Portway,” Bruce M. Foucart, special agent in charge of HSI Boston, said in the release. “Portway's guilty plea should serve as a stern warning to those inclined to abuse children or share images of child pornography: There isn't a place in the United States, on the Internet, or the planet in which you are truly safe. We will investigate you, we will prosecute you and we will bring you to justice.”

Anyone with information related to this investigation is asked to call the U.S. Attorney's Office in Massachusetts at (617) 748-3274.

Contact Scott J. Croteau at [scroteau@telegram.com](mailto:scroteau@telegram.com). Follow him on Twitter [@ScottCroteauTG](https://twitter.com/ScottCroteauTG)

---

Order the Telegram & Gazette, delivered daily to your home or office! [www.telegram.com/homedelivery](http://www.telegram.com/homedelivery)

---

Copyright 2014 Worcester Telegram & Gazette Corp.