



Kenneth P. Thompson
District Attorney

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KINGS COUNTY
350 JAY STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11201-2908
(718) 250-2000
WWW.BROOKLYNDA.ORG

Office of Public Information
718-250-2300

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 31, 2014

Two Brooklyn Senior Citizens Charged With Possessing Child Pornography
Defendants Allegedly Downloaded Hundreds of Vile Images Depicting Children

Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson today announced that two men – ages 68 and 70 – have been charged in separate cases with possessing a sexual performance by a child for allegedly downloading from the Internet disturbing images and videos of children depicted in a sexual manner or performing sexual acts with adults.

District Attorney Thompson said, “It is shocking that anyone, particularly men who are 68- and 70-years-old, would watch and collect such sick images. The children in these videos are real children who are being sexually abused to satisfy deviants who troll the Internet. I am committed to fighting child exploitation and honored to have dedicated detectives in my Investigations Bureau who work tirelessly to protect innocent children.”

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Harvey Epstein, 68, of Homecrest Avenue in Sheepshead Bay and John DeCotis, 70, of East 51st Street in Old Mill Basin. Epstein was arrested yesterday and charged with 221 counts of possessing a sexual performance by a child. He was arraigned last night in Brooklyn Criminal Court and ordered held on bail of \$5,000 bond or \$1,000 cash and to return to court on December 17, 2014. DeCotis was arrested on October 2, 2014, and charged with 21 counts of possessing a sexual performance by a child. He was arraigned on October 2, 2014, and ordered held on \$7,500 bail and to return to court on April 24, 2015. They each face up to seven years in prison if convicted.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, on October 1 and 2, 2014, a detective assigned to the District Attorney’s Detective Bureau conducted an online “peer to peer” investigation to identify individuals sharing child pornography. She identified a computer IP address and viewed downloaded files of boys and girls engaging in sex acts with adult men and women. The address was traced back to Epstein’s apartment on Homecrest Avenue in Brooklyn. A search warrant was later executed on a white tower computer found in the apartment and detectives recovered 221 video files depicting children – including one in diapers – engaging in sex acts with adults or in sexual performances.

- more -

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, on September 5, 2014, a detective assigned to the District Attorney's Detective Bureau conducted an online peer to peer investigation to identify individuals sharing child pornography. She identified a computer IP address and viewed a downloaded file of a young girl dressed provocatively and engaging in sex acts with an adult. The address was traced back to DeCotis's household on East 51st Street in Brooklyn. A search warrant was later executed on a Dell tower computer taken from the home and 21 video files depicting sexual performances by children were recovered. The defendant allegedly told detectives that he had downloaded 50 to 100 videos over the last five or six years.

District Attorney Thompson said that a peer-to-peer network is a network of personal computers that allows individuals to exchange files and emails directly with every other computer on the network. Each computer can access any of the other computers on the network, although access can be restricted to those files that a computer's user chooses to make available.

The case was investigated by Detective Investigator Rada Aliyev, of the Brooklyn District Attorney's Investigations Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant Chief Richard Bellucci, and the overall supervision of Chief John Billich.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Connie Solimeo, of the District Attorney's Sex Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Coleen Balbert, Bureau Chief, and William E. Schaeffer, Chief of the District Attorney's Investigations Division.

A criminal complaint is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.