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Local man found guilty of possessing, distributing child pornography

HARRISONBURG, Va. – A man the Harrisonburg Police Department arrested in 2021 was found guilty this week of possessing and distributing child pornography.

Rodney Williams, 52, of Harrisonburg, was found guilty by a jury on 50 counts of possessing child pornography, one count of distributing child pornography and 24 counts of distributing child pornography 2nd or subsequent offense following a two-day trial that ended April 12. Sentencing is set for July 7, 2023, in Rockingham County Circuit Court.

The investigation began when HPD received a Cyber Tip from the National Center for Mission and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Detectives assigned to HPD's Internet Crimes Against Children unit (ICAC) executed a search warrant on Williams' residence where they seized items relating to the investigation. A detective from HPD forensically examined a cell phone belonging to Williams and located hundreds of images and videos of child pornography. The detective was also able to see that Williams shared images and videos with others.

Williams was initially arrested on Aug. 26, 2021, where he faced 20 counts of possessing child pornography. The investigation continued, leading to additional charges being filed at a later date.



(Above) Rodney Williams

HPD's ICAC unit is a member of the Northern Virginia/Washington, DC Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (NOVA/DC ICAC). HPD was assisted by investigators from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and routinely works with HSI on child exploitation investigations.

"The Commonwealth appreciates the jury's careful consideration on an emotionally difficult case, and feels confident that justice was served," Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Alycia Eldridge said. "And we thank the dedicated detectives from the Harrisonburg Police Department and Homeland Security Investigations for their efforts in the investigation and prosecution of child exploitation cases."

Williams was remanded to the custody of the Rockingham County Sheriff's Office pending a sentencing hearing.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,700 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.