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7 arrested in child porn sting charged in Houston court

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Photo: Brazos County Sheriff Office



IMAGE 1 OF 7

The 2015 arrest photo of Gregg Carl Baird, a former bank executive, who had a 2010 state conviction for viewing child pornography. Baird was a registered sex offender when he was indicted in federal court ... [more](#)

Seven people in Texas are among more than 135 charged nationwide as part of a federal child pornography sting known as Operation Pacifier.

Four - including a pediatrician, a college professor, a former bank executive and a former IT professional - have pleaded guilty in the Southern District of Texas, based in Houston, and are awaiting sentencing. Three others, including a federal drug enforcement agent, are awaiting trial.

Among those charged are:

Gregg Carl Baird, 45, of Spring, a former vice president of a credit union. Baird pleaded guilty in January to possession of child pornography. Baird was convicted in state court in Brazos County in 2010 on a child pornography charge and was a registered sex offender at the time of his arrest on the federal charge. Sentencing is set for June 17, and he remains in federal custody.



Dennis Patrick Meehan Hughes, 50, of Pearland, a pediatric oncologist and a tenured professor of pediatrics at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Hughes pleaded guilty in March to receiving, accessing and possessing child pornography, and some content was found on a state-owned laptop. Hughes no longer works for M.D.

Anderson and has forfeited his medical license in Texas. Sentencing is set for June 1, and he remains free on \$50,000 bail.

Matthew Kirk Irwin, 47, of Galveston, an assistant professor of U.S. history at Texas A&M University in Galveston. Irwin pleaded guilty in March to receiving and possessing child pornography. Sentencing is June 1, and Irwin is free on \$75,000 unsecured bond. Irwin no longer works for the university, officials said.

Louis Clifford Smith Jr., 63, of Missouri City, a former IT specialist. Smith pleaded guilty in October to receiving, accessing and possessing child pornography. Sentencing is set for Sept. 30. He is free on \$100,000 bail.

James Patrick Burke, 38, a special agent for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration based in McAllen. Burke was indicted by a federal grand jury on a charge of accessing child pornography with intent to view it. He is free on an unsecured bond of \$75,000. Trial is set for June 6 in Houston.

John Christopher Ferguson, 36, of Houston. Ferguson was a fugitive when he was indicted in January on charges of producing, receiving, accessing and possessing child pornography, according to court records. He was arrested two days later. He remains in federal custody awaiting a June 20 trial date.

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Jacob Riley Garner, 22, of the Spring area. Garner, who was assistant manager at a comics and gaming store in The Woodlands, was indicted in March on charges of receiving, accessing and possessing child pornography. He remains in federal custody pending a June 20 trial.

Gabrielle Banks

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