

## Underwear-stealing teacher gets 13 years in prison

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A federal judge Thursday sentenced former Brockport kindergarten teacher Roland Yockel II to 13 years, saying his clear pedophilic tendencies render him “very dangerous.” Yockel, who was arrested last year after a vast stash of child pornography was discovered at his home, admitted in court that he struggled with a problem. He apologized to children who were brutally victimized in the thousands of images and videos he watched. But U.S. District Judge Elizabeth Wolford said she was not only concerned about Yockel’s addiction to child pornography. She noted that he had worked as a kindergarten teacher, and prosecutors say he was mostly interested in children about the same age as those he taught. He also worked as a recreation counselor in Hamlin, and stole underwear from some of the children and stashed it under his mattress. Yockel earlier pleaded guilty to receipt of child pornography, and said he was trying to break his addiction when he was arrested. “You didn’t seek to avoid children,” said Wolford, who sentenced him to 13 years and 15 years of post-release probation. “You sought to be around children. And that’s troubling.”

Attorneys for Yockel had argued that, with treatment, he would likely not be a risk to children, while government prosecutors contended that Yockel’s actions — including online chats about sexual acts he fantasized about with youngsters — were clear proof of his dangerousness.

There has been no evidence that Yockel sexually abused any children.

Investigators say they discovered thousands of images of child pornography on Yockel’s computers and more than 130,000 images of “child erotica,” meaning the age of the youth in the images could not be determined. “The size of (Yockel’s) child pornography collection demonstrates an obsession with the sexual exploitation of children,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle Rossi wrote in court papers. Yockel “devoted substantial time and energy in order to accumulate his collection and he made it mobile by transferring it to other media, including 17 DVDs and multiple hard drives.”

As well, during a search of the Hilton home where Yockel lived with his parents, investigators found the childrens’ underwear hidden under his mattress. Yockel said he never sexually touched or molested children but did fantasize while watching them at camp. Yockel’s attorney, Michael DiPrima, said in court papers that Yockel, lacking sexual experience, fell into viewing pornography in his 20s and then stumbled down “the rabbit hole” into child pornography.

He then found his way to online chat rooms where he discovered kindred spirits who would discuss their fantasies. “Rather than developing normal healthy sexual development ... he was seeking sexual pleasure through these lurid chat room conversations, receding into a sexual fantasy world replete with role-playing with other chatroom participants,” DiPrima wrote.

DiPrima asked that Yockel be sentenced to the minimum sentence allowed by law — 5 years.

A psychologist who specializes in risk assessment was contracted by the defense and determined that Yockel’s sickness could be managed with treatment.

Yockel suffers from a “pedophilic disorder,” the psychologist determined, and is a “below average risk” to commit a sex offense. But Wolford noted that the psychologist acknowledged that the measurements for such an analysis weren’t entirely reliable.

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