

Ex-judge stated he expected be caught in child porn case

By [Terry McConn](#)

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WALLA WALLA — Former District Court Judge John Junke indirectly, but deliberately, tipped off authorities in September that he was downloading Internet child pornography.

And, in what law enforcement officials are calling unprecedented cooperation, he immediately confessed and started counseling.

His desperate attempts at redemption have led to unequalled sentencing recommendations by a county prosecutor and a Walla Walla police detective.

“I’ve never seen anything like this,” Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Joe Golden said in an interview.

“It’s kind of drastic, but this is the way he chose to do it.”

Junke reported to the Walla Walla County Jail this morning, just as countless defendants did on his orders when he was District Court judge in the 1990s.

He had been free on his own recognizance. But after formally pleading guilty Tuesday afternoon to possessing the child pornography, he is required to remain in jail at least until his sentence is imposed later this month by Visiting Superior Court Judge David Frazier from Whitman County.

At that time, Golden and police Detective Mike Boettcher will recommend Junke be released to start an alternative sentence requiring him to undergo three years of community custody, including sex-offender therapy.

In fact, Golden and Boettcher were recommending no jail time when Junke pleaded guilty. They wanted him placed on house arrest pending sentencing, but Frazier determined state law requires him jailed.

Most defendants who plead guilty to and openly admit possessing child pornography in Walla Walla County are sentenced under the treatment alternative rather than to prison, but a year in jail almost always is imposed.

However, Junke essentially turned himself over to authorities late last summer after being unable to stop viewing the child pornography. “To eventually get control of the demon I possess,” as he put it in court Tuesday.

In a formal statement in support of his guilty plea, he wrote that he took his computer to a repair shop in Milton-Freewater in September “knowing that it was likely, if not certain, that what was contained on its hard drive would be disclosed to the Walla Walla Police — which is exactly what happened.”

Junke declined to discuss his case with the Union-Bulletin on Tuesday.

But Golden told the newspaper Junke expected to be caught. “It wasn’t a surprise at all. It was his way of seeking help.”

In addition, Junke immediately turned over other devices when police served a search warrant at his home. He also started counseling sessions with a treatment provider and is participating in a support/recovery group.

He downloaded pornography-blocking software onto a different computer he obtained, and willingly surrendered his gun and concealed weapons permit to police.

Boettcher said Junke took responsibility and confessed from the beginning, saving his department dozens of hours of investigation, which is deserving of a sentencing recommendation that could benefit him.

According to Golden, “Junke is completely open about this. He’s relieved it’s over.

“He said this part is easy compared to what he’s been going through for the last several years.”

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