

Pierce County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POWELL CHARGED WITH VOYEURISM AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

TACOMA, WA - - Today Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Lindquist charged Steven Craig Powell, 61, with 14 counts of Voyeurism and one count of Possession of Depictions of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct in the Second Degree. Powell is the father of Joshua Powell, whose wife, Susan, went missing in Utah in 2009. Law enforcement personnel are actively searching the Utah desert for her remains.

On August 25, 2011, as part of the ongoing homicide investigation, detectives from the Pierce County Sheriff's Department and West Valley City Police Department executed a search warrant at the Puyallup residence where Joshua and Steven Powell reside. Several computers, digital media, recordings, and photographs were seized. West Valley Police personnel reviewed videotapes and compact discs and found thousands of images of females being videotaped without their knowledge, including Susan Powell. The photographer focuses on the women's buttocks, breasts, and genital areas. Many images were of minor females.

Some of the images and videos saved to compact disc were organized into subfolders, including "Taking bath-1," "Taking bath-2," and "Open window in back house." In these subfolders there are images of two girls who were as young as eight and ten-years-old at the time of the recording. The girls are unclothed and taking a bath, using the toilet, and getting dressed or undressed. In many of the images the photographer zooms in on the girls' breasts, buttocks, and genital areas. When contacted by law enforcement, the mother of the victims identified her daughters in the images. She explained that she sometimes left the blinds open in the upstairs due to the heat. Crying, she said that she never thought someone would be watching and photographing her daughters.

Investigation by the Pierce County Sheriff's Department determined that the victims lived next door to Steven Powell from June, 2006 to August, 2007. Steven Powell's bedroom window faces the side of the victims' residence and the line of sight matches the camera angle seen in the videos.

The 14 counts of Voyeurism are based on separate incidents when each victim was recorded in the bathroom. The charge of Possession of Depictions of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct is based on possessing the images. These charges are Class C felonies with a standard sentence of up to five years in prison.

Powell was arrested Thursday afternoon and is expected to be arraigned on Friday, September 23 in Pierce County Superior Court. Charges are only allegations and a person is presumed innocent unless he or she is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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