

## Sex case from page A1

Through AOL member profile screens, subscribers of the on-line service can fill out a "bio" that tells other subscribers about themselves. Potter's member profile also shows he's single and his hobbies are fishing, hunting, camping and auto racing.

Police said they found nine Polaroid pictures when they arrested Potter at his parents' West Bloomfield home on Friday. All nine showed the boy's naked body, and one picture showed Potter performing oral sex on the boy, said Lt. Mike Madigan of the West Bloomfield Police.

"There was only one picture that showed the boy's face," Madigan said.

What police don't know is whether any of the pictures of child pornography found in files on Potter's computer are of his own making. Madigan said

police are concerned he might have had improper contact with members of the Farmington Hills-based Boy Scout troop led by Potter. On Saturday, West Bloomfield police officer Tom Stimmel called the parents of 30 to 40 boys in the troop and asked them to talk with their children about Potter. As of Tuesday, police had not heard back from any of the families, according to Madigan.

It is unclear just how far Potter's interest in child pornography extends — whether he is a consumer of pornographic pictures downloaded from the Internet and other on-line services, or whether he also is a supplier, uploading computer images of pictures like the ones police found in Potter's bedroom.

When police searched Potter's room during the arrest, Madigan said they did not find a digital

camera or an image scanner, both commonly used to create computer image files.

But the U.S. Customs Service has been investigating Potter since early this summer regarding possible involvement in child pornography over the Internet, Kelly confirmed.

### Electronic footprints

Special agent Kelly is the technological equivalent of Quincy, Jack Klugman's television character who solved crimes as a forensic pathologist. Kelly follows the electronic trail of child pornographers. But the process of revealing the contents of a suspect's computer takes much longer than Quincy's 60-minute investigations.

"It takes weeks. It is a slow and methodical process," Kelly said. "There is not an A-B-C method."

Monday night at the West Bloomfield Police Department, it took Kelly almost 30 minutes to copy all the files from Potter's computer to a portable hard drive.

Kelly will restore these files onto a computer at his Detroit office. There he'll begin to unravel the facts that reside in the computer.

"I'll take a look at all the files on the computer and in the

cache," he said. "But every case dictates what direction we go into."

"It's really looking at a person's total involvement."

That involvement can include everything from making pictures available on the Internet or other on-line services to advertising and selling the pictures via chat rooms and newsgroups.

For instance, a person looking for child pornography may visit a chat room on the Internet where people can talk to each other by typing in messages that appear on the computer screen instantaneously. If a buyer or seller determines that another person also has an interest in child pornography, the two can move to a private chat room to conduct business there. Many Web sites also offer child pornography for sale by credit cards.

"Technology offers the child pornographer many avenues — bulletin boards, the Internet ...," Kelly said. "He will seek out child pornography wherever he can find it."

The answers to if and where Potter found or distributed such pictures electronically are on his Packard Bell.

Computer image files, also known as GIF's or JPEG's, will

## Bond hiked to \$150,000

BY GREG KOWALSKI  
STAFF WRITER

Bond for a 32-year-old West Bloomfield man accused of sexually molesting a 4-year-old boy, was increased Wednesday to \$150,000 with no surety by 48th District Court Judge Kimberly Small.

Steven Sidney Potter is charged with two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and faces up to life in prison if convicted.

Small said she increased the bond because of the seriousness of the charges and because she viewed Polaroid pictures of Potter and the boy engaging in a sex act. Those pictures made conviction "likely," she said.

And she stressed that while no other charges have been filed she worried that others may come forward claiming to be victimized by Potter.

Potter's attorney, S. Allen Early, said Potter could not post bond and he was taken into custody. A preliminary exam was set for 9:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 21.

Allen asked that the original bond of \$10,000 not be increased. "The mother of the victim called me yesterday," Early said. "The mother opposes the increase of the bond. She feels this should not be made a circus."

Early said Potter poses no threat to the community and is not likely to flee.

show Kelly what type of pictures, if any, Potter is interested in. Bookmarks in Potter's Internet browser, will also point to favorite, often-visited web sites.

Kelly will have to crack Potter's password on the AOL account, but once he does, saved E-mail messages and newsgroup postings will reveal who Potter has been talking to on-line.

Kelly would not say what led U.S. Customs to investigate Potter earlier this summer. "We had information," he said.

As part of its Child Pornography Enforcement Program, U.S. Customs has a hotline, 1-800-BE ALERT, and an e-mail address, [icpic@customs.sprint.com](mailto:icpic@customs.sprint.com).

which anyone can use to report information about child pornography. Under cover customs agents spend time surfing the Internet, looking at Web sites and sitting in chat rooms.

"You go into any of the chat rooms for kids and they are filled with pedophiles," Kelly said.

But Kelly said he tries to focus on finding objective evidence — like computer images and electronic trails.

"I've learned to just separate, as you do where there's a victim in the case," he said. "But maybe it's easier for me. I only see the pictures. I don't meet the people or hear the kids scream."

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