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PRESS RELEASE

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CSUC PROFESSOR SENTENCED IN CHILD PORN CASE

A former Chico State University professor was sentenced today in Butte County Superior Court on a charge of possessing child pornography.

Laird Easton, 64, was sentenced to two years of formal probation by Judge James Reilley. The judge additionally sentenced Easton to 90 days in jail, but stayed that time pending successful completion of probation. The judge further ordered Laird to register as a sex offender and attend sex offender treatment.

Easton, then a professor of history at CSUC, was arrested on January 21, 2021 after a Butte County Sheriff's Office investigation. The investigation had revealed a person tied to Laird's personal and university email accounts had downloaded and uploaded child porn images from/to the internet. During the service of a search warrant at his home, sheriff's detectives contacted Easton and determined he was actively viewing child porn on his cell phone as those detectives were knocking at his door.

Detectives located over 100 images of child pornography and over 100 images of child erotica in Easton's personal electronic devices. Detectives determined Easton wrote fantasy story lines for the images he possessed.

During his interview with the Probation Department for the preparation of his sentencing report, Laird said he suffered from a child porn addiction, but justified in his mind that he was hurting no one as he obtained the porn off the internet for free. However, in today's sentencing hearing, Deputy District Attorney JJ Stark-Modlin, informed the judge that the possession of child pornography, regardless if free or paid, creates a market for the molestation of more children.