



## THE BUFFALO NEWS

# Cheektowaga-Sloan substitute teacher arrested on child porn charge

By Phil Fairbanks (https://buffalonews.com/author/phil\_fairbanks/) | Published April 16, 2019 | Updated April 17, 2019

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A Cheektowaga teacher and coach posed as a young girl on social media to acquire nude photos of underage boys, the FBI said Tuesday.

Steven Gasiorek, 33, a resident of Sloan, was arrested Tuesday morning and charged with possession of child pornography.

A substitute teacher and coach in the Cheektowaga-Sloan school district, Gasiorek is accused of using Instagram to impersonate a young girl from California so he could exploit a 14-year old boy in Virginia.

But federal prosecutors said they have evidence he victimized boys in Western New York, as well.

"This defendant is a collector of child pornography that he enticed children to make," Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth R. Moellering said Tuesday. "This is a defendant who abused his position of power and trust."

The FBI's complaint against Gasiorek claims the boy in Virginia thought he was communicating with a girl and sent Gasiorek several sexually explicit photos of himself.

On Tuesday, Moellering told U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeremiah J. McCarthy that other victims may come forward and indicated the government cannot estimate how many young boys were exploited by Gasiorek.

She also revealed that Gasiorek made admissions Tuesday about his students and players at John F. Kennedy Middle School.

"He admitted he preyed on his own students and boys on his team," she told the judge. "He further admitted fantasizing about these boys."

In court papers, the FBI indicated the investigation began with a tip that went from a local law enforcement officer in Virginia, where the 14-year old boy lives, to the Cheektowaga Police. A subsequent search of Gasiorek's laptop, obtained with a warrant, revealed photos from three other boys, ages 11, 12 and 13, according to the complaint.





"It's believed the conduct extended over a long period of time, maybe as long as 10 years," said U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy Jr. (https://buffalonews.com/)

Kennedy said the government is looking for information on possible victims at JFK and elsewhere and said, "it's important parents have a conversation with their kids."

Gary Loeffert, special agent in charge of the FBI in Buffalo, said the case should also serve as warning to parents.

"Every child has a cellphone, a laptop, a gaming system or a device that makes them vulnerable to this crime," Loeffert said Tuesday.

Listed on the district website as a middle school baseball coach, Gasiorek is also a long-term substitute teacher at JFK. He is also listed on another website as manager of a youth soccer team.

Jeffrey Bagley, an assistant federal public defender, asked the court to consider pretrial home confinement for Gasiorek and argued that there is no evidence his client's conduct went beyond the allegations of child pornography.

"There's been no suggestion by the government that Mr. Gasiorek had any physical contact with children," Bagley told McCarthy.

In court papers, the FBI details some of the Instagram conversations Gasiorek is alleged to have had with the boy in Virginia.

In one of them, according to agents, Gasiorek sent the victim a nude photo of a girl and said, "What do you think of me?" The FBI said he then sent another message that said, "Send one back. I'll send another."

"I'll send one in a minute," the boy is alleged to have told Gasiorek. "Gotta make sure they think I'm sleeping."

The boy, according to court papers, eventually sent a sexually explicit photo of himself.

In a statement Tuesday, School Superintendent Andrea L. Galenski said the district is cooperating with federal authorities and evaluating the next step as to Gasiorek's status.

"Immediately upon learning about this, he is no longer in any of our buildings," she said.

Gasiorek is not the not the first local teacher charged in a child pornography case.

Timothy Bek, a former West Seneca teacher, was sentenced to 30 years in prison in 2012 after pleading guilty to five counts of producing child pornography and one count of possessing it.

The sentencing ended a yearlong criminal case that began with allegations that the long-term substitute English teacher used a fake Facebook persona to persuade high school students to send him explicit pictures of themselves.

FBI agents accused Bek of identifying himself to potential victims as "Sarah Grayson," an attractive teenage girl. They said the incidents occurred while he was working at West Seneca schools.

Federal prosecutors also claim they found more than 13,500 child porn images were found on his personal computer. (https://buffalonews.com/)

Bek, 25, was arrested about five days after the FBI arrested his older brother Jason in the West Seneca home they shared with their parents.

As part of a plea deal, the elder Bek, 30, admitted receiving child pornography and trying to entice a minor into a sexual encounter. The minor was actually an adult law enforcement official posing as an underage male.

Anyone with information about Gasiorek's alleged crimes are encouraged to call the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force tip line at 843-1616.



(https://buffalonews.com/author/phil\_fairbanks/) **Phil Fairbanks** – Phil Fairbanks covers federal courts and criminal justice issues and occasionally veers off into the world of refugees, human traffickers and streets gangs.

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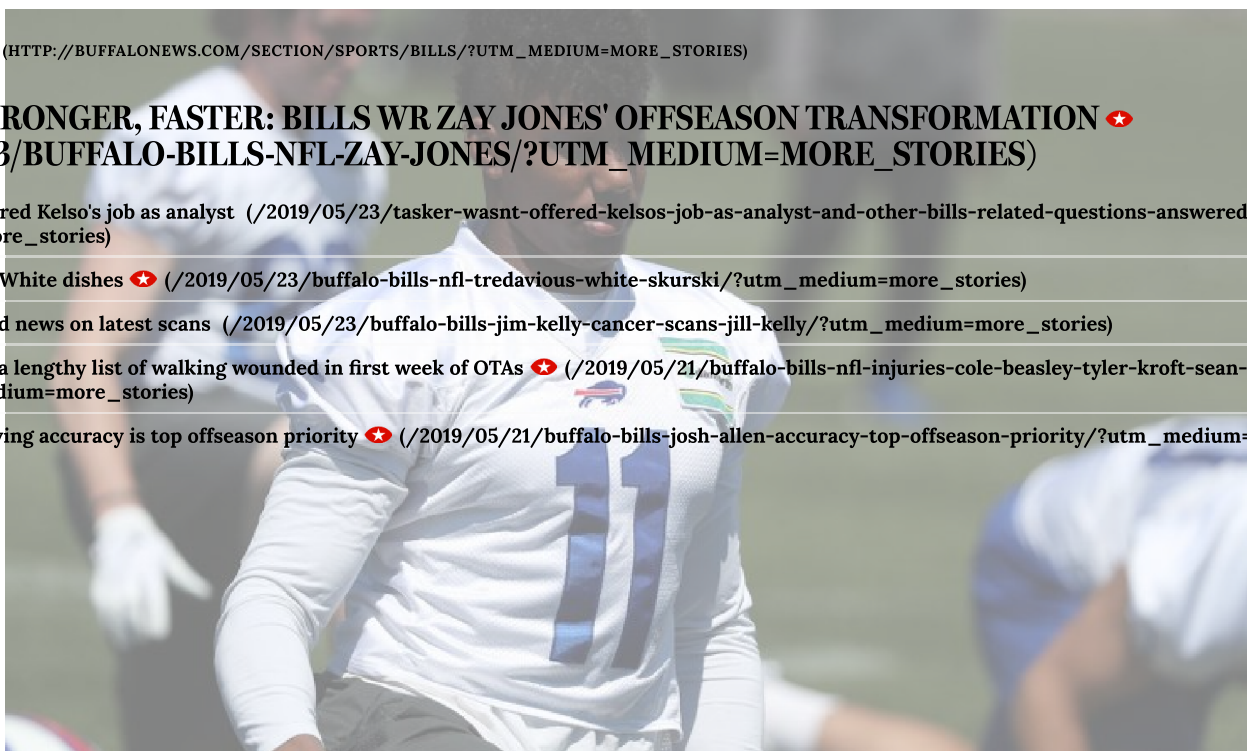
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