

TEXAS: Marshall pastor due in court on online solicitation charges

Written by Robin Y. Richardson
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MARSHALL — Testimony was scheduled to begin today in 71st District Court in the trial of Raymond Earl Cooper, charged with online solicitation of a minor.

Cooper, former pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene in Marshall, was arrested in May 2012 and charged with soliciting a person online whom he believed to be 14 years old.

A warrant was issued for his arrest after the Louisiana State Police Internet Crimes against Children Task Force out of Lafayette, La., alerted Marshall police and Texas Rangers.

At the time, investigators said an undercover operation conducted by the task force determined an individual, later identified as Cooper, solicited someone whom he believed to be a 14-year-old female in an Internet chat room.

According to the complaint filed by Texas Ranger Jason Dudley, Hall Hutchison, a trooper with the Louisiana task force, contacted them before Cooper's arrest, informing them the pastor

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exposed himself on a webcam to someone he believed to be an underage female.

The detective sent a subpoena of production for evidence to Yahoo, and obtained Cooper's IP address.

Following his arrest, Cooper was relieved of duties at the church where he had served as a pastor.

Online solicitation of a minor is a third-degree felony. If convicted, the punishment range is imprisonment in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for a term of no more than 10 years or no less than two years. A fine not to exceed \$10,000 may also be imposed.

Harrison County Criminal District Attorney Coke Solomon said the trial should end Wednesday.

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http://www.news-journal.com/news/police/former-marshall-pastor-due-in-court-on-online-solicitation-charges/article_ff4f06cf-6c0b-534d-9bbb-8cf4d3f5caa4.html