

Pair pleads to obscene mailing charge

By Annette Z. Fox/Register-Herald Reporter

A Lewisburg couple pleaded guilty Monday in U.S. District Court in Beckley to charges they sold and transferred obscene videos over the Internet.

Michael Corbett, 33, and Sharon Corbett, 28, made the plea to one count of mailing obscene material. Two other defendants, Joseph Tanner, 26, and Randall Rogers, 36, of Quitman, Ga., pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to mail obscene material and conspiracy to use the Internet for the purpose of sale and distribution of obscene material.

According to U.S. Attorney Kasey Warner, the investigation revealed the Corbetts offered to sell 53 videotapes and DVDs through their Web site which "depict(ed) graphic and sexually explicit scenes of defecation and urination."

Tanner and Rogers, who own and operate Tdigital Services Inc., "managed and maintained the Website with knowledge of its content and shared in the profit."

Warner said the Corbetts forfeited \$15,000 from their bank accounts and other assets, and agreed to pay the United States \$60,000 in lieu of forfeiting their home from which the material was sold. However, the Corbetts profited by "much more" than the \$60,000, according to one federal attorney who handled the case. Tanner forfeited \$80,000 and all obscene material and equipment used in the crimes.

Sentencing for the four defendants is scheduled for Nov. 12 in Beckley. Each defendant faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The four were originally indicted on one count each of conspiring to mail obscene matters and transfer of obscene matters in interstate commerce and three counts of aiding and abetting one another in violation of mailing obscene matter.

The complaint also alleged that during the investigation conducted by the U.S. Postal Inspections Service in conjunction with the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Department of Justice, it was determined the Corbetts mailed six to 30 parcels per day, five days per week, to locations throughout the United States and to foreign countries. Bank account records indicate that in one three-month period the Corbetts earned about \$70,000 in customer receipts from their video tape distribution business.

Kasey Warner, right, U.S. District Attorney for southern West Virginia, speaks to the media in front of the Robert C. Byrd Federal Court Building in Beckley Monday. A Lewisburg couple pleaded guilty to charges they sold and transferred obscene videos over the Internet. (Rick Barbero/The Register-Herald)

