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## Wealthy University Park Woman Faces Child Porn Charges

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**DALLAS (AP)** - A wealthy North Texas woman married to an attorney has been charged with collecting and trading child pornography online in what experts say is a rare case of a woman being caught up in such activity.

Erika Susan Perdue has been undergoing addiction treatment since her April arrest on federal charges that she accessed child pornography from the computer in her \$1.4 million, 4,000-square-foot home in the well-heeled Dallas enclave of University Park.

FBI agents who raided the home found child pornography on the computer, and Perdue admitted she'd been collecting it for 12 years, according to court records. She told investigators she used file-trading software every day to exchange images while her husband, an attorney who specializes in intellectual property cases, was at work.

"I've seen cases of women collecting or trading child porn, but not very often and not somebody in that socio-economic strata," said Nancy

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executive director of the Alliance for Children, a Fort Worth child advocacy center.

A four-count indictment claims Perdue, 41, engaged in transporting, shipping, receiving and possessing child pornography. If convicted, she could face maximum prison sentences of 20 years for three of the counts and 10 years for the other.

She isn't accused of creating the images.

The search of Perdue's home was prompted by federal agents who, working undercover, logged into file-sharing programs and obtained 21 downloaded files containing child pornography, according to an FBI affidavit. The agents traced the IP address to Perdue's home, the affidavit states.

George "Buck" Johnson, one of three attorneys representing Perdue in the case, declined to comment.

Perdue and her husband, Mark, have been married since December 2009, records show. Mark Perdue is not named in the criminal complaint.

According to a court filing by the defense team, Perdue has been undergoing unspecified treatment since her arrest at a center outside Dallas. The facility identified in the document specializes in addressing "addictive behaviors and associated conditions," according to its Web site.

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The filing says Perdue suffered a "serious psychiatric/medical setback" in early May, about two weeks after she was charged, making her unable to help with her own defense.

"Her counselor (at the center) remains optimistic that her mental state will improve with continued treatment, but not for several months," the document states.

Toby Shook, a Dallas criminal defense attorney who previously served as a state court prosecutor, said he has seen cases where women were involved in the distribution of child pornography, usually under the direction of men. But he said he couldn't recall one in which a woman was interested in trading or purchasing the images.

"It's very rare that women have an interest in sharing files," Shook said. "Almost all of the cases you see, as far as trading files, involve men."

Two Dallas-area women have been sentenced to prison for federal offenses related to child pornography within the past year, but both were involved in creating sexually explicit images, not simply viewing them.

Psychiatrist Fred Berlin, director of the Sexual Behavior Consultation Unit at Johns Hopkins University, said it's unusual for a woman to access images of child pornography but not outside the realm of possibility. Such a woman may have been abused herself as a child, he said.

"It's the exception to the rule, but it's certainly an exception that's not unheard of," Berlin said.

Berlin stressed that viewing or collecting child pornography doesn't mean a person is likely to harm children.

"There are marked differences among people who are accessing these materials," he said, "and one of the things we need to determine is the extent to which they do or do not reflect a danger to the community."