

Joshua Adam Schulte Charged with the Unauthorized Disclosure of Classified Information and Other Offenses Relating to the Theft of Classified Material from the Central Intelligence Agency

Published: 2018-06-19 · Archived: 2026-04-02 11:00:38 UTC

John C. Demers, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, Geoffrey S. Berman, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and William F. Sweeney Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), announced today that Joshua Adam Schulte was charged in a 13-count Superseding Indictment (the “Indictment”) in connection with his alleged theft of classified national defense information from the Central Intelligence Agency (“CIA”) and the transmission of that material to an organization that purports to publicly disseminate classified, sensitive, and confidential information (“Organization-1”). The Indictment also charges Schulte with the receipt, possession, and transportation of child pornography, as well as criminal copyright infringement. Schulte, who is presently detained on the child pornography charges, will be arraigned by U.S. District Judge Paul A. Crotty.

“Leaks of classified information pose a danger to the security of all Americans,” said Assistant Attorney General Demers. “It adds insult to injury when, as alleged here, the leaks come from former government officials in whom Americans placed their sacred trust. The National Security Division, alongside our partners in the Intelligence Community, will not waver in our commitment to pursue and hold accountable these officials, and I commend all those at the Department of Justice and the FBI who have worked diligently to investigate this matter and bring these charges.”

“Joshua Schulte, a former employee of the CIA, allegedly used his access at the agency to transmit classified material to an outside organization,” said Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman. “During the course of this investigation, federal agents also discovered alleged child pornography in Schulte’s New York City residence. We and our law enforcement partners are committed to protecting national security information and ensuring that those trusted to handle it honor their important responsibilities. Unlawful disclosure of classified intelligence can pose a grave threat to our national security, potentially endangering the safety of Americans.”

“As alleged, Schulte utterly betrayed this nation and downright violated his victims. As an employee of the CIA, Schulte took an oath to protect this country, but he blatantly endangered it by the transmission of Classified Information.” said Assistant Director-in-Charge William F. Sweeney, Jr. “To further endanger those around him, Schulte allegedly received, possessed, and transmitted thousands of child pornographic photos and videos. In an effort to protect this nation against crimes such as these, the FBI’s Counterintelligence Division in New York will continue to keep our mission at the forefront of our investigations in protecting the American public.”

According to the Indictment, other court filings, and statements made during court proceedings:

On March 7, 2017, Organization-1 released on the Internet classified national defense material belonging to the CIA (the “Classified Information”). In 2016, Schulte, who was then employed by the CIA, stole the Classified Information from a computer network at the CIA and later transmitted it to Organization-1. Schulte also

intentionally caused damage without authorization to a CIA computer system by granting himself unauthorized access to the system, deleting records of his activities, and denying others access to the system. Schulte subsequently made material false statements to FBI agents concerning his conduct at the CIA.

Schulte was previously arrested on August 24, 2017, on charges relating to his receipt, possession, and transportation of approximately ten thousand images and videos of child pornography. In March 2017, members of the FBI had searched Schulte's residence in New York, New York, pursuant to a search warrant and recovered, among other things, multiple computers, servers, and other portable electronic storage devices, including Schulte's personal desktop computer (the "Personal Computer"). On the Personal Computer, FBI agents found an encrypted container (the "Encrypted Container"), which held over 10,000 images and videos of child pornography. The Encrypted Container with the child pornography files was identified by FBI computer scientists beneath three layers of password protection on the Personal Computer. Each layer, including the Encrypted Container, was unlocked using passwords previously used by Schulte on one of his cellphones. Moreover, FBI agents identified Internet chat logs in which Schulte and others discussed their receipt and distribution of child pornography. FBI agents also identified a series of Google searches conducted by Schulte in which he searched the Internet for child pornography.

Schulte, 29, of New York, New York, is charged with one count each of (i) illegal gathering of national defense information, (ii) illegal transmission of lawfully possessed national defense information, (iii) illegal transmission of unlawfully possessed national defense information, (iv) unauthorized access to a computer to obtain classified information, (v) theft of Government property, (vi) unauthorized access of a computer to obtain information from a Department or Agency of the United States, (vii) causing transmission of a harmful computer program, information, code, or command, (viii) making material false statements to representatives of the FBI, (ix) obstruction of justice, (x) receipt of child pornography, (xi) possession of child pornography, (xii) transportation of child pornography, and (xiii) copyright infringement. A chart containing the charges and maximum penalties is below. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

Mr. Berman praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the FBI.

The prosecution of this case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sidhardha Kamaraju and Matthew Laroche are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Scott McCulloch of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

Source: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/joshua-adam-schulte-charged-unauthorized-disclosure-classified-information-and-other-offenses>