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## State attorney says computer records don't warrant charges

By [Dave Pieklik](#)

### According to documents released Monday afternoon, investigators say they discovered child pornography on Mark Lunsford's home computer.

Lunsford, the father of 9-year-old Jessica Lunsford, who was killed in February, denies looking at the images, while the sheriff's office says none of the images had been "downloaded, filed or saved."

The 852 pages made public by the State Attorney's office in Brooksville contained transcripts of interviews with accused killer John Couey's housemates Dorothy Dixon, Matthew Dittrich and Madie Secord and also information about the hundreds of leads investigators checked out during the opening days of Jessica Lunsford's disappearance.

Prosecutors continue to prepare for their capital murder case against Couey, who they say admitted to kidnapping and murdering the 9-year-old Homosassa girl.

He has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Contained in the documents released by the State Attorney's office were notes from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement that mention the pornography. The images, documents say, were found Feb. 24 — the day Jessica was reported missing from her South Sonata Avenue home — by Citrus County sheriff's detectives during their investigation of the missing girl.

Though the documents did not go into specifics about the images, Assistant State Attorney Pete Magrino said the images were found on Lunsford's computer. However, he said his office is not pursuing charges.

"There was no evidence found by law enforcement that the computer was used in the manufacturing or production of child pornography, only that there were a limited number of items that were viewed," Magrino said. "To expend additional law enforcement resources and prosecutor resources to make a case, when balancing societal goals. I mean, Mr. Lunsford's been through enough."

Along with the images, a list of more than 50 "sexually oriented" Web sites that Lunsford visited on the morning before Jessica disappeared was released by prosecutors last month. Talking in his office Monday, Magrino declined to give an exact

number of images that investigators found, but said it was in the "single digits."

He said while Lunsford said he viewed pornographic images, the questionable images could have gotten on the computer any number of ways, such as through "pop-ups" or by accident.

Sheriff spokeswoman Gail Tierney said a "handful" of images were found by members of the sheriff's computer forensics unit in the computers delete bin. She said the images had not been downloaded, filed or saved.

Tierney said Sheriff Jeff Dawsy has been "in agreement" with the State Attorney about not pressing charges because the office felt Lunsford has been through enough, and added that any attempt at prosecution "would have been challenging" because the images had not been saved.

Magrino acknowledged there would likely be some public outcry concerning the images and his office's decision not to prosecute. He theorized the Public Defender's Office might even use the information to build its case for defending John Couey, the man accused of Jessica's kidnapping and murder.

He said any criticism is just a minor distraction.

"This office is focusing its attention on prosecuting a murderer," he said.

Contacted by phone, Lunsford said he was not worried about the latest details emerging from the case. He said he looked at nude photos of women, but that he never looked at child pornography.

"I never touched that (stuff)," he said.

Saying it was "embarrassing," he said he did look at adult pornography on the Internet by clicking on links but that he never actually opened any files. He said he remembered talking to investigators about the images during their investigation and told them what images he viewed, and that he was assured everything was fine.

He feels such behavior, as long as it's legal, should remain private but said he understood why the information was released. But like Magrino, he said he's not getting distracted from his own mission.

He said he continues pressing for tougher sex offender laws across the nation, including a radio interview with a North Carolina radio station and attending hearings in Kentucky. He said that won't change now.

"My focus is on tougher laws for predators. If you don't like me because I look at naked women, I don't care," Lunsford said. "I'm not putting a black mark on my daughter's name."

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