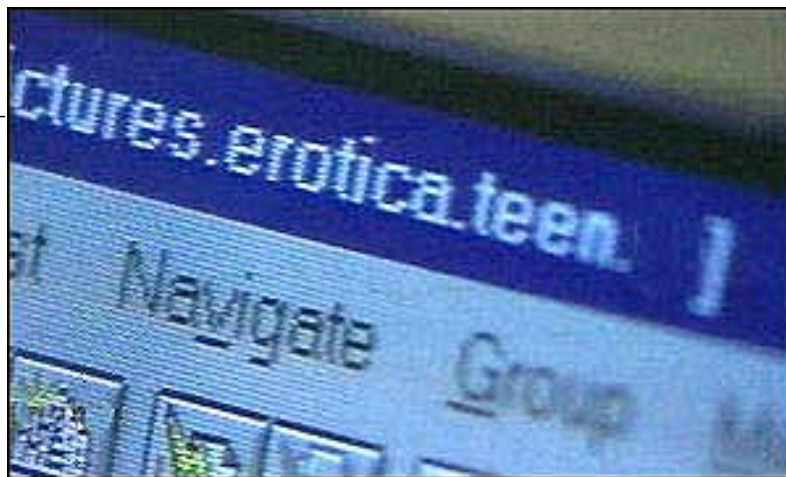


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## Child porn offender sentenced

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Detectives found 2,000 porn images on computers

A former MI6 man has been placed on the sex offenders' register after admitting downloading child pornography from the internet.

Alan Coates was a counter surveillance expert for more than 30 years before joining Cleveland Police force working behind the scenes on internal investigations.

His taste for child porn was revealed when police discovered lurid images of young children on his home computer.

A judge at Newcastle Crown Court ruled that he should not go to prison for his crimes because he had not peddled the pictures to others.

Judge David Hodson said: "The prosecution accepted that there was no distribution of the images and further, there was no intention to distribute images."

Coates, 53, of Forest

“  
**I have regard to your previous good character and the valuable work you have done over the past years for the security services**  
 ”

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Lodge, Hamsterley, County Durham, was given a community rehabilitation order for two years and ordered to sign on the Sex Offenders' Register for five years.

**Judge David Hodson**

The married father-of-two was working as communications manager for Cleveland Police at the time of the offence.

He confessed to three specimen counts of making an indecent photograph of a child under 16.

### **Surveillance work**

He was originally charged with 15 similar offences involving indecent photographs on both his home and a police works computer but a jury last year failed to reach a verdict.

Coates claimed at the time that the images were planted because he was carrying out covert surveillance work on Cleveland Police officers.

But he confessed last month to three charges relating to images found solely on his home computer - the remaining 12 counts will rest on file.



Alan Coates: Expert in counter-surveillance

Coates served with the Royal Corps of Signals and on attachment to the American Special Forces after joining the Army in 1967.

He was later transferred to MI6 after he was injured in the line of duty.

In 1988, he began working for Cleveland Police at the equivalent rank of a superintendent.

### **Unpaid bill**

He was tasked to monitor officers implicated in two

internal investigations at the force.

His shadowy computer child porn activities were only realised when a summons for payment of an unpaid bill for computer equipment arrived at Middlesbrough Police headquarters while Coates was abroad.

Officers who raided his office and home discovered a stash of nearly 2,000 pornographic images stored on floppy disks and both his computers.

Coates only confessed to a fraction of that total - he admitted downloading 35 images, 12 of which related to children, during a 44-minute internet session in June 1998.

### **'Good character'**

His barrister, Ron Mitchell, said Coates was dismissed from the force after his secret came to light which put paid to salary and ancillary benefits.

Judge Hodson told Coates: "I have regard to your previous good character and the valuable work you have done over the past years for the security services.

"I have regard to the fact you stood trial in the summer of last year.

"I also have regard to the financial circumstances in which you find yourself as a result of losing your job and any pension rights."

He added: "The custody threshold was not passed."

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