

US Man Accused of Sex Crimes With Children

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THE CAMBODIA DAILY

A US man living with several young children was arrested Tuesday morning on suspicion of committing sex crimes.

Officers with the municipality's anti-trafficking unit arrested Jarett David Denton, 66, at his Phnom Penh home, where they found him in the company of five young boys between the ages of 7 and 10 years old.

Citing testimony obtained from the children, police charged that Denton was having sex with the children while he supported them financially. "He feeds the children

very charitably, but he has sex with them," said Keo Thea, a juvenile protection officer in the unit.

Briefly questioned by reporters at the unit's headquarters, Denton said he had known the children for years but never touched them in a sexual way. He said that two of the children had lived with him since he arrived in Cambodia in 2000 and that they came into his custody after their mother died.

"They were living with me, but there was no sex involved," Denton said. "They have their room where they watch TV, and I have my own private space."

He added that he was paying for the children's education at pri-

rate schools in Phnom Penh.

Police questioned the children Tuesday morning before interrogating Denton. Officials said he could appear in the Municipal Court on Thursday to face charges of debauchery. The NGO Action Pour Les Enfants assisted in the arrest after following the suspect over the past six or seven months, Director Hang Vibol said. Denton came under suspicion after he was seen playing with children in the street, he said.

Since adopting a new law to net so-called "sex tourists," the US has pressed criminal charges against at least three of its citizens arrested in Cambodia for sex crimes.