

✓ US Pedophile Tried in Absentia For Having Sex With Two Girls

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The Sihanoukville Municipal Court on Thursday tried in absentia a US pedophile suspect, who is currently serving more than 22 years in prison in the US for sex crimes committed there, a court official said Monday.

The verdict for Terry Darrell Smith, 55, who was charged with debauchery in August 2006 for allegedly having sex with two girls aged 13 and 14 at his Sihanoukville bar, Tramp's Palace, will be read Thursday, Judge Sok Soeun said.

"[Smith] was tried in absentia of debauchery even though he was already sentenced to 22 years in prison by the US court," he said.

Sok Soeun said that Smith's Cambodian girlfriend Chea Sovannary, 27, who was charged with procuring girls and facilitating Smith's sexual abuse, was also tried Thursday and is being held at the municipal prison.

Sihanoukville court Director Svay Sisarouth released Smith and Chea Sovannary on bail Aug

31, 2006, sparking outrage from an anti-pedophile NGO. Owing to the outcry, Smith was rearrested in Phnom Penh weeks later and deported shortly thereafter following a request by the US Embassy.

Svay Sisarouth said at the time that she released Smith because he was too sick to remain behind bars, a claim that was later denied by the doctor who examined him.

Svay Sisarouth said Monday that she was not aware of Smith's trial because she was in Phnom Penh all last week.

Beth Heckert, district attorney for the US state of Oregon's Jackson County, wrote by e-mail that Smith was sentenced to 22.5 years on July 6 after being convicted of two counts of sodomy, one count of sex abuse in the first degree, and one count of using a child in sexually explicit display.

"Under Oregon Law he will serve everyday of his sentence, no early parole," she wrote, adding that all of Smith's charges involved one girl.

Heckert wrote that Smith said during the trial that he intended to appeal.