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NORTH CAROLINA MAN SENTENCED TO 110 YEARS FOR COMPUTER HACKING AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Orlando, Florida - U.S. District Judge Anne C. Conway, today sentenced IVORY D. DICKERSON, 33, of North Carolina, to 110 years' imprisonment for three counts of manufacturing child pornography, two counts of unlawful computer intrusions, and one count of possession of child pornography.

DICKERSON pled guilty in two criminal cases. In one case, DICKERSON pled guilty on August 24, 2007 to one count of conspiracy to manufacture child pornography and two counts of unlawful computer intrusions. In the second case, DICKERSON pled guilty on September 14, 2007 to two counts of manufacture of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography.

According to the plea agreements that he executed in those two cases, DICKERSON was involved in a conspiracy in which he and another individual used their computer skills to persuade and entice female minors into engaging in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of manufacturing child pornography that they could collect. In October 2005, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Seminole County Sheriff's Office began investigating a series of computer intrusions that were occurring to computers used by female minors who resided in Brevard County. The pattern was similar for each of the

victims who was identified. The victim was contacted by an individual who sent an e-mail or instant message (IM) communication. That individual would trick the victim into opening a file that contained a Trojan horse program that would give the individual who had sent it access to, and control over, the victim's computer. With that access and control, the individual who caused the Trojan horse to be installed would attempt to persuade the victim to manufacture child pornography.

During the course of its investigation, investigators interviewed several female minors who were the victims of this scheme. To follow-up on those interviews, investigators imaged the computers of those victims, assumed the identities of some of the victims, and recorded the results of what happened once an agent went online using the identity of one of the victims. In addition, investigators obtained information about the e-mail accounts and Internet Protocol (IP) addresses associated with the computer intrusions. This information pointed to DICKERSON as one of the sources of the computer intrusions.

On November 21, 2006, a federal search warrant was executed at DICKERSON's residence located in North Carolina. In the course of examining the items that were seized pursuant to that search warrant, investigators found a folder on DICKERSON's external hard drive called "apps" that included copies of various computer hacking tools and a different folder called "hax" that included subfolders for each of DICKERSON's victims. Further analysis of DICKERSON's external hard drive and other investigation established that DICKERSON worked in tandem with another individual to hack into the computers of female minors for the purpose of persuading and coercing those minors to manufacture child pornography that they could collect.

To date, investigators have determined that DICKERSON was involved in hacking into the computers of over 100 victims over the past couple of years. In addition, DICKERSON used a computer program that allowed him to check the Internet for web cameras, so that he could record children and adults without their knowledge.

In addition to collecting the child pornography that DICKERSON and his co-conspirator were able to persuade or entice female minors into making and sending to them, DICKERSON had an extensive collection of child pornography of his own that included over 600 images of child pornography, including images that portrayed sadistic or masochistic conduct. DICKERSON also manufactured his own child pornography. Found on DICKERSON's external hard drive were video and photo files of some of the instances where he engaged in sexually explicit conduct with a female minor victim, including a video file involving bestiality.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Seminole County Sheriff's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Roger B. Handberg.

This prosecution is part of an initiative that was begun by former Attorney General John Ashcroft who, on July 20, 2001, announced the creation of Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (CHIP) units in ten districts to respond to the grave threat and challenge presented by internet and high-tech crime. Since that announcement, the CHIP Program has been expanded to almost every district in the nation. The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida has designated four of its prosecutors as CHIP attorneys and has tasked them with coordinating the investigation and prosecution of computer hacking and intellectual property crimes in the district.