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Dayton Man Pleads Guilty to Sexual Exploitation Crimes Involving Minors

DAYTON- Mark Wayne Miller, age 45, of Dayton, pled guilty yesterday to one count of Sexual Exploitation of Children, arising out of Miller's successful efforts to persuade minor-age girls to engage in sexually explicit conduct for him in front of webcams, and one count of Computer Intrusion, arising out of his equally successful efforts to secretly intercept, watch, and record live webcam footage of minor-age girls, without the girls knowing that Miller was watching and recording. Miller faces a minimum of 35 years and up to life in prison when sentenced.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Stanley J. Borgia, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cincinnati Field Division; announced the plea entered before Senior United States District Judge Walter H. Rice yesterday.

According to a statement of facts read in court and confirmed by Miller, he developed sexual relationships with minor-aged females over the internet, usually in online chat rooms. Using a fictitious name and a photo of an unknown young male, Miller assumed the persona of the young male, and through his "chat," persuaded the minors to engage in sexually explicit conduct in front of active webcams. Miller watched and recorded the girls, and distributed at least some of the recorded footage to others. Miller also contacted many of these minors by phone. His activities were exposed after one of the girls sent a love letter to the fictitious young male, addressed to Miller's former place of employment. Miller's former employer received the letter, found additional evidence relating to child pornography while cleaning out Miller's work area, contacted some of the minors, and notified local law enforcement, which contacted the FBI. Miller was taken into custody shortly thereafter.

According to the same statement of facts, Miller also "eavesdropped" on minors' webcams. This high-tech video voyeurism entailed Miller obtaining the minors' passwords to a popular internet portal through a scheme commonly known as "phishing," and then using the passwords and certain readily available software known as Camseek and Firecam, to secretly gain access to the minors' webcam sessions. When these minors activated their webcams, unbeknownst to them, Miller was watching and recording. Miller specifically targeted webcams used by minor-age females and sought to, and at times, did, obtain, view, and record at least some motion images of these minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct, without the minors knowing that Miller was watching and recording.

Miller was on probation with the State of Ohio and was a registered sex offender when he was arrested on November 28, 2005. Miller remains in the custody of the U.S. Marshal.

“There are no words to convey just how disturbing cases are that involve the sexual exploitation of children. Computers are a necessary and important part of life today. But they are also a means by which people can exploit the vulnerable. Parents needs to be extra vigilant and communicate with their children to help prevent this type of behind-closed-doors activity. Predators who use the Internet to prey on susceptible minors in order to harm or exploit them will be sought out by the FBI and prosecuted to the fullest extent by this office,” Lockhart said.

Judge Rice set sentencing for Miller on April 13, 2006, at 10:00a.m.

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