December 4, 2007
United States Attorney's Office
District of South Carolina

Contact: Kevin McDonald
(803) 929-3000

St. Stephen Man Convicted of Sexual Assault, Fraud, Witness Tampering and Extortion Scheme

CHARLESTON, South Carolina ---- After deliberating 3 hours, a jury returned guilty verdicts against a St. Stephen man on nine federal charges. United States Attorney Reginald I. Lloyd stated that Kelly Edward Wadford, Jr., age 54, of St. Stephen, South Carolina, was convicted of fraud and unauthorized access to computers (attempt); aggravated identity theft; attempted possession of flunitrazepam (also known as Rohypnol, a "date rape" drug) with intent to distribute; inducing interstate travel for illegal sexual activity; three counts of threatening interstate communications; attempted witness intimidation; and the use of a firearm in connection with the attempted witness intimidation, a crime of violence. On Monday, November 26, 2007, Wadford had entered guilty pleas to two counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Mr. Wadford faces a prison term of no less than seven years and as much as life, and fines of up $2,750,000.

The prosecution established over the course of a three-day trial before Judge Patrick Michael Duffy that Wadford had ordered 250 tablets of the "date rape" drug Rohypnol from a Brazilian supplier over the Internet in March of 2005, and then used the drug in April of 2005 to incapacitate a female employee that he was supervising on a sales trip in Ohio. While she was incapacitated, Wadford took compromising digital photographs of her in a Ohio hotel room. Over a year later, after Wadford had been fired from his managerial position, he gained unauthorized access to his former company's email system, and sent threatening and extortionate emails to his former co-workers, making it appear as if one of them had actually sent the emails. One of extortionate emails included a threat to distribute the compromising photos. After he was charged with federal offenses in December 2006, Wadford was stopped by police in Summerville in the vicinity of one of the victim's residence, riding a bicycle, wearing a mask, and in possession of a loaded 45 caliber handgun. Mr. Lloyd commended the Summerville Police Department and Cpl. Tim Jones for their quick response and effective intervention. "They may have saved a life," he stated.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorneys Eric Klumb and Rhett Dehart prosecuted the case.

###