



Department of Justice

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MAN SENTENCED TO 14 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ONLINE ENTICEMENT OF A MINOR FOR PURPOSES OF UNLAWFUL SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Greer, SC Resident Arrested in Hendersonville by North Carolina Law Enforcement

ASHEVILLE, NC - A Greer, South Carolina man, Michael Lee Cutter, 27, was sentenced to 14 years in federal prison for online enticement of a minor for purposes of unlawful sexual activity, U.S. Attorney Anne M. Tompkins announced today. Cutter was sentenced May 20, 2010 by U.S. District Judge Martin Reidinger of the Western District of North Carolina.

According to information offered in open court and located in official court documents, an undercover detective originally encountered Cutter in an online chatroom on May 18, 2009, and engaged him in an online chat with a person who Cutter believed to be an 11-year-old girl. After chatting several hours, according to testimony offered at court hearings, Cutter proposed that the "girl" engage in sexual acts with him in a hotel room he had rented. He left a "do not disturb" sign on his hotel room door and traveled to the Blue Ridge Mall in Hendersonville, NC to attempt to pick up the girl. Instead, Cutter was arrested by sheriff's detectives outside a music store within the mall.

Joining Tompkins in making today's announcement are Buncombe County Sheriff Van Duncan and Henderson County Sheriff Rick Davis.

On July 27, 2010, Cutter pled guilty to one count of online enticement. On May 20, 2010, the court sentenced Cutter to 14 years in prison, to be followed by a ten-year term of supervised release. The court also ordered the defendant to register as a sexual offender. Cutter has been in federal custody since his arrest in May 2009, and remains in custody pending designation of the federal prison where he will serve his sentence.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. Project Safe Childhood is a nationwide initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Thorneloe of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Asheville.

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