



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **SANFORD WASSERMAN SENTENCED IN U.S. DISTRICT COURT**

Bill Mercer, United States Attorney for the District of Montana, announced today that during a federal court session in Billings, on December 2, 2005, before U.S. District Judge Richard F. Cebull, SANFORD WASSERMAN, a 65-year-old resident of Lauderhill, Florida, appeared for sentencing. WASSERMAN was sentenced to a term of:

- Prison: 5 years
- Special Assessment: \$100
- Supervised Release: 3 years

WASSERMAN was sentenced in connection with his guilty plea to conspiring to distribute obscene materials. WASSERMAN had a previous conviction for distribution of obscenity in the Southern District of Texas in 2001.

During 2001 and 2002, while doing business as "Pet Tec," WASSERMAN conspired to ship obscene videotapes throughout the United States in response to orders placed by customers who received mail order catalogs as part of the conspiracy. The videotapes depicted violent "gang rapes" of women, sexual intercourse between humans and animals,

and other sexual activity which involved urination, defecation and sadistic and masochistic conduct.

The Supreme Court's decision in Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973), stated that material which appeals to prurient sexual desire, is patently offensive, and contains no serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value falls outside the protection of the First Amendment right of free speech. The Miller Court also stated that the standard should be determined on a local, rather than national, community standard. An average person, applying local community standards, would find that the videotapes provided by WASSERMAN specifically appealed to prurient sexual desire, were patently offensive, and contained no literary, artistic, political or scientific value of any kind.

WASSERMAN reserved the right to appeal the sentence. Because there is no parole in the federal system, the "truth in sentencing" guidelines mandate that WASSERMAN will likely serve **all** of the time imposed by the court. In the federal system, WASSERMAN does have the opportunity to earn a sentence reduction for "good behavior." However, this reduction will not exceed 15% of the overall sentence.

U.S. Attorney Bill Mercer prosecuted this case in conjunction with Damon King of the Criminal Divisions Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section for the United States.

The investigation was conducted by the Northwest Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service in Billings and Seattle.

Mercer stated that this is the longest sentence ever imposed in an obscenity case. Co-defendant Thomas W. Lambert received a 30-month sentence earlier this year for the same crime. Gary Robinson of Billings received a twelve-month sentence for the distribution of obscenity in 2004.

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