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GEORGIA MAN SENTENCED FOR TRANSPORTING A MINOR FOR ILLEGAL SEXUAL ACTIVITY

WASHINGTON - Mack Gordon Harris Sr., 67, was sentenced today to 121 months in prison for transporting a minor for illegal sexual activity, announced Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Lanny A. Breuer and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia Neil H. MacBride.

Harris, formerly of Social Circle, Ga., was also ordered today by U.S. District Court Judge James R. Spencer to serve 10 years of supervised release following his prison term, and to register as a sex offender.

Harris pleaded guilty on Nov. 30, 2009, to one count of transporting a minor for illegal sexual activity. According to court documents, in June 2005, Harris began communicating with a girl in Maryland, then 15 years old, through a Christian online chat room. Harris admitted that as he continued chatting with the victim during the next few months, he suggested they engage in sexual intercourse. He exposed himself on a computer webcam, urged her to send naked pictures, and engaged in "phone sex." Harris eventually visited the victim around the time that she turned 16, which is the age of sexual consent in Maryland. Harris admitted that several times during his visit and after the victim's 16th birthday, the two engaged in sexual intercourse.

Shortly afterward, Harris decided that he would take the victim to live with him in Georgia. Harris admitted that he instructed the victim to pack her belongings and leave farewell notes for her family. According to court documents, Harris picked up the victim in Maryland in December 2005 and began driving her to his home in Georgia. Harris admitted he told the victim that while traveling, she was not to speak with anybody, but if asked her age, she should respond that she was 25. During the journey, they stopped overnight at a hotel in Skippers, Va., where the age of consent is 18, and engaged in sexual intercourse.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth C. Wu of the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney Barak Cohen of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. The case was investigated by U.S. Postal Inspection Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

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