



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For Immediate Release
August 26, 2005

Contact: Mark Plowden
803-734-3670
mplowden@ag.state.sc.us

Columbia Man Arrested For Child Sex Crimes

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that Steve Wayne Gunter, 52, of 240 Jamil Road, Apt. 21, in Columbia was arrested on Thursday, August 25, 2005, on warrants obtained for First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor (§16-15-395), Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor - Second Degree (§16-3-655(3)), and Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor (§16-17-490).

First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor carries a maximum penalty of twenty (20) years imprisonment, with a mandatory minimum of three (3) years imprisonment. Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor - Second Degree carries a maximum penalty of twenty (20) years imprisonment. Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor carries a maximum penalty of three (3) years imprisonment or a fine of \$3,000.

During the period December 6 through December 21, 2004, Gunter began sexual discussions in an Internet chat room(s) with a girl he believed was fourteen (14) years old. In reality, he was speaking to investigators with the Aiken County Sheriff's Office, who were conducting an undercover investigation. On December 21, 2004, Gunter traveled from Columbia to meet the "girl" for sexual contact at a predetermined location. Upon his arrival, Gunter was arrested for Criminal Solicitation of a Minor (§16-15-342), which carries a maximum penalty of ten (10) years imprisonment.

During the investigation, Gunter told law enforcement authorities that he possessed child pornography at his home, with at least one image assumed to be of a girl ten (10) years of age. Further investigation revealed that Gunter had driven to meet a girl living in Sumter County whom he met over the Internet, and whom he had engaged in sexual contact with on multiple occasions. Investigators learned that Gunter and the victim first established contact when she was approximately fourteen or fifteen years of age, and began having sex when she was sixteen (16).

On December 22, 2004, a search warrant was executed at Gunter's residence. The search revealed a VHS tape of Gunter and a girl (of unknown age) engaged in sexual intercourse. The girl was the same victim Gunter had identified earlier in the investigation.

The victim in the case was identified and located by the Sumter County Sheriff's Office. The victim was interviewed, and corroborated that Gunter began communicating with her when she was fifteen (15) years

of age, had traveled to meet her, and engaged in sex acts. She also corroborated that Gunter had videotaped sex acts on at least two occasions when the victim was sixteen (16) years old. The victim also stated that Gunter often provided her with marijuana and champagne.

At a bond hearing held in Sumter County on Thursday, August 25, Judge Kathy Ward set Gunter's bond at \$50,000. Conditions of the bond include no contact with any victim(s) or any person under the age of eighteen (18). A mental evaluation of Gunter was ordered, and the results are to be submitted to the court within fifteen (15) days. Gunter was ordered to comply with any recommendations for treatment resulting from that evaluation.

The case was investigated by the Aiken County Sheriff's Office, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, and the State Law Enforcement Division. The Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force is prosecuting the case.

#