



Department of Justice

Robert M. Duncan, Jr.
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Kentucky

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CONTACT: Gabrielle Dudgeon
PHONE: (859) 685-4887
E-MAIL: gabrielle.dudgeon@usdoj.gov

Frankfort Man Sentenced to 120 Months for Attempting to Entice a Minor Online

FRANKFORT, Ky. - A Frankfort man, Ricky Joe Cornish Jr., 33, was sentenced to 120 months in prison on Tuesday, by U.S. District Judge Gregory F. Van Tatenhove, after previously pleading guilty to using the internet to entice a minor to engage in sexual activity.

According to his guilty plea agreement, on May 16, 2019, Cornish contacted an individual, who self-identified as a 15-year-old female living in Franklin County, Kentucky, using the MeetMe/Skout messenger application over the Internet, on his cellular telephone. The person Cornish contacted was, in reality, an investigator with the Kentucky Office of the Attorney General's Cyber Crimes Branch. The investigator communicated that they were also with a 17-year-old female, and Cornish expressed interest in having sex with the 17-year-old.

Later that same day, Cornish drove to an agreed-upon hotel, in order to meet the minor and engage in criminal sexual activity. When Cornish arrived at the agreed-upon meeting place in Franklin County, he was arrested by law enforcement officers. An examination of Cornish's cell phone revealed the conversation with the investigator, as well as a similar conversation with another individual, who is believed to be a minor female.

Cornish pleaded guilty in July 2020.

Under federal law, Cornish must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence; and upon his release, he will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for 20 years.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Ralph Gerds, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Secret Service Louisville Field Division; and Daniel Cameron, Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, jointly announced the sentencing.

The investigation was conducted by United States Secret Service and Kentucky Attorney General's Cyber Crimes Branch. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David Marye and Tashena Fannin.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the

Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), 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 to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov

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