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Local Cop Arrested in Child Internet Sex Sting

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

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by Corey Herman and Cathy Gandolfo

HARRISBURG, Pa. - June 12, 2007 (WPVI) -- A police officer is accused of propositioning and sending graphic webcam videos to investigators posing as a 13-year-old girl.

Edward Berzins, 37, of Blackwood, New Jersey is an officer with the Gloucester Township, NJ, Police Department.

The announcement of his arrest was made by Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett. The "girl" Berzins was communicating with was actually an undercover agent from the Attorney General's Child Predator Unit. Berzin's arrest is the 77th arrest since the creation of the Child Predator Unit.

Investigators say Berzins approached the undercover agent in an Internet chat room on in April. During their initial chat, he allegedly sent the girl a live webcam transmission of his face and also discussed exposing himself on the webcam.

During 2 more online chats, he allegedly sent the girl three nude webcam videos.

Police arrested Berzins at his home Monday. He is charged with one count each of unlawful contact with a minor, criminal attempted obscene and sexual performances and criminal use of a computer, all third-degree felonies which are each punishable by up to seven years in prison and a \$15,000 fine.

Berzins was released on 50 thousand dollars bail and ordered not to use the Internet and not to have unsupervised contact with minors.

The Gloucester Township Police Department and the Camden County Prosecutors Office cooperated with Pennsylvania authorities and issued a joint statement: "We in New Jersey's professional law enforcement community are deeply disturbed and saddened by these allegations against officer Berzins and we commend Pennsylvania officials for their diligent work on the case."

Berzins faces a preliminary in Harrisburg on June 21st. Meanwhile he has been suspended without pay from the Gloucester Township Police