



Warren C. Evans
Sheriff

News Release

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Release Date: August 26, 2008

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Deputies arrest 2 suspected Internet child predators within 15 minutes of each other

- *One suspect offered to pay intended victim's cell phone bill in exchange for sex*

Two adult men have been charged with attempting to arrange to have sex with who they thought were two different underage children, a boy and a girl, after being arrested minutes apart in separate investigations late last week, Sheriff Warren C. Evans announced today.



At approximately 5:15 PM on Thursday, deputies arrested Kevin Hardges, 26, of Ypsilanti after he showed up at an agreed-upon meet location just outside of Detroit where he expected to find a 15-year-old boy with whom he had arranged to have sex. At 5:30 PM, just 15 minutes later, another team of officers arrested Donald Carns, 30, of Allen Park, who was expecting to be met by a 14-year-old girl.

Evans said that Hardges had chatted with an investigator who had been posing as a 14-year-old boy (who had just turned 15 since the chat relationship lasted more than a full year). During most of that online relationship, Hardges repeatedly expressed his desires to have sex with the boy. According to investigators, Hardges planned to have anal and oral sex with the boy either at his home or in his car, once they met. At one point in his chats, Hardges, whose screen name is "learnthahrdway" allegedly wrote, "u a virgin, right? U know it's gonna hurt."

Evans said that Hardges even offered to pay the boy's cell phone bill if he enjoyed having sex with him enough.

"The offer of a gift is one of the key ways these predatory men will coax and cajole underage boys and girls into having sex with them. It's a form of control and manipulation that children everywhere are vulnerable to," Evans said.

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Carns was arrested in suburban Wayne County after showing up for a rendezvous to have sex with who he believed was a 14-year-old girl he had been chatting with online since February. Evans said that Carns had established contact with several investigators posing as children during the course of his Office's investigation. Evans said that Carnes planned to take the "girl" he chose to fully pursue to a nearby hotel and have sex with her.

In an odd twist, Carns, who had claimed in his chats to be nearly a decade younger than his actual age of 30, had emailed graphic and non-graphic images to investigators that he indicated were of him, taken with his web camera. In reality, they were images of strangers he had downloaded off of the Internet. Nevertheless, Carns faces charges for distributing obscene material to a minor over the Internet.

Hardges and Carns have been arraigned on charges of Illegal Use of the Internet /Child Sexually Abusive Activity, a 20-year felony, and are being held at the Wayne County Jail on \$50,000 bond (10%).