



UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE PRESS RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20223
202-406-5708

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PUB 03-02

JANUARY 8, 2002

MISSING FLORIDA TEENAGER FOUND BY SECRET SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In one of the first cases of its kind for the agency, the United States Secret Service on Monday, January 7, found a teenage girl who had been lured away from her home by a man she met on the internet.

Agents from the Secret Service's Miami Field Office were contacted on Sunday, January 6 by the mother of a 16-year-old girl who had been missing since Friday, January 4. The mother believed that her daughter had been abducted by someone the teenager had met over the internet.

Agents specially-trained by the Service's Electronic Crimes Special Agent Program responded to the mother's residence to look at the family personal computer. Following an examination of the computer and its usage, the agents identified an internet account the suspect was using to communicate with the teenager. The Secret Service was then able to obtain credit card information for the account and found a motel room payment outside of Miami on January 6. The credit card was also being used on Monday to pay for a room in Naples, Florida.

After being contacted by the Secret Service, officers from the Naples Police Department responded to the hotel, where they found the teenager, and arrested the suspect, a 37-year old male. The suspect is being charged with three counts of unlawful sexual activity with a minor and one count of resisting arrest.

The United States Secret Service Electronic Crimes Special Agent Program provides special agents with highly specialized, expert training. In turn, these agents are deployed worldwide to provide quick and timely responses to agents and officers that request computer forensic assistance.

"While this case is one of the first internet abduction cases in which the Secret Service has been involved, the agency has been quite active in helping keep America's children safe," said Brian L. Stafford, Director of the U.S. Secret Service. "We actively support the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in its efforts to find missing children, by lending our expertise in forensic examinations of computers, handwriting, fingerprints, as well as age enhancements."

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In addition, Director Stafford points out that Secret Service field offices throughout the United States have been involved in hosting internet safety seminars for kids. These seminars include information on how to prevent and avoid online enticement and solicitation of children for sexual activity, exposure to unwanted sexual material, and harassment and/or offensive behavior.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For questions concerning this release, please contact the United States Secret Service Office of Government Liaison and Public Affairs at 202-406-5708.