



Department of Justice

United States Attorney James R. Dedrick
Eastern District of Tennessee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2008
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/tne/>

CONTACT: SHARRY DEDMAN-BEARD
PHONE: 865-545-4167
FAX: 865-545-4176

DAVID C. KERNELL INDICTED FOR ALLEGED HACK OF GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN'S E-MAIL ACCOUNT

[KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE] – David C. Kernell, 20, was indicted by a federal grand jury in Knoxville, Tennessee., for intentionally accessing without authorization the e-mail account of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney James R. Dedrick for the Eastern District of Tennessee announced today. Kernell turned himself into federal authorities for arrest and will be arraigned today before the Honorable C. Clifford Shirley, United States Magistrate Judge, Eastern District of Tennessee.

The single count indictment, returned on October 7, 2008, and unsealed today, alleges that on approximately September 16, 2008, Kernell, a resident of Knoxville, obtained unauthorized access to Governor Sarah Palin's personal e-mail account by allegedly resetting the account password. According to the indictment, after answering a series of security questions that allowed him to reset the password and gain access to the e-mail account, Kernell allegedly read the contents of the account and made screenshots of the e-mail directory, e-mail content and other personal information. According to the indictment, Kernell posted screenshots of the e-mails and other personal information to a public website. Kernell also allegedly posted the new e-mail account password, thus providing access to the account by others.

If convicted of the charge, the defendant faces a maximum of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and a three year term of supervised release. A trial date has not been set.

"Cyber crime is the FBI's top criminal investigative priority. We would like to thank all of the internet service providers and others who partnered with us to bring this matter to a quick and successful resolution." said Richard Lambert, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Knoxville Field Division.

The case is being prosecuted by Section Chief Michael DuBose and Trial Attorney Mark Krotoski of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section in Washington, DC and Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Weddle of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Tennessee. The case is being investigated by the FBI's Anchorage and Knoxville Field Offices.

An indictment is merely an allegation. Defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.