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Russia's 'King of Spam' Gets 20 Years for Child Sex Abuse

By Peter Spinella

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Leonid Kuvayev, whose mass e-mail exploits branded him "the king of spam," has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for "crimes against the sexual sanctity" of underage girls.

The Moscow City Court on Thursday also ordered that 1.55 million rubles ($52,800) held in a frozen bank account previously controlled by Kuvayev will go to compensate eight of the victims, the Rapsi court news service reported.

Investigators said Kuvayev, a Russian-born businessman with U.S. citizenship, rented out a portion of a residential building near his office on Chapayevsky Pereulok, where he hosted orgies for several years with girls as young as 12.

He wooed the minors with expensive gifts and trips to restaurants and nightclubs, investigators said. He even took some on trips abroad, Kommersant reported.

In the apartment, police found whips, handcuffs and sex toys, as well as a sauna, Jacuzzi and an "enormous bed," a police source told RIA-Novosti.

Kuvayev would sometimes pay the girls 500 or 1,000 rubles ($17 or $34) for their services, Kommersant reported.

Many of the victims suffered from mental illnesses or retardation, and "because of their cognitive abilities and emotional state, they did not understand that in respect to them a crime was committed," the Investigative Committee said.

Kuvayev went to college in America and became a U.S. citizen. In the 1990s, he set up dozens of pornographic websites, online casinos and phishing sites — and sent out millions of spam e-mails promoting them. In 2005, a Massachusetts court fined him and six partners $37 million.

In 2002, when he found out that he could face jail time, he fled to Russia, which does not extradite its citizens. He has since opened several real estate firms, Internet companies and a cafe chain.

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