

Man sentenced in videotape sex-abuse case

By KEITH EPPS | Posted: Thursday, April 7, 2005 1:10 am

Judge calls acts 'vile and unspeakable'

A Spotsylvania County man who videotaped himself having sex with a young teenager was sentenced yesterday to 54 years in prison.

Gary Dean Wilkinson, 44, would be about 98 if he finishes serving the sentence imposed in Spotsylvania Circuit Court by Judge William H. Ledbetter Jr.

Ledbetter called Wilkinson's actions among the more "vile and unspeakable" he'd seen in his 18 years on the bench.

According to the evidence, Wilkinson moved to Spotsylvania from Illinois in August 2003. He molested the child repeatedly from that time on.

He pleaded guilty to eight counts of rape and one count of sodomy. In exchange for his guilty pleas, prosecutor Stuart Sullivan dropped 35 other charges.

One of the videotapes Wilkinson made led to his arrest. Last June, the tape made it into the hands of a woman whose father owns the property where Wilkinson lived.

Sullivan said he's not sure how the tape got out, though he suspects the victim had something to do with it.

The woman viewed the tape, which featured a variety of sex acts between Wilkinson and the girl. She then called police and turned the tape over to Detective Troy Skebo.

Skebo executed a search warrant at Wilkinson's home and found three more tapes.

The girl told police that Wilkinson forced her to have sex with him about four times a week between August 2003 and last June. She said she went along with his demands because she feared his anger.

Wilkinson got the child pregnant at one point. He took her to Virginia Beach to get an abortion, court records show.

Defense attorney Wendy Harris asked Ledbetter to give Wilkinson a sentence below the minimum of 28 years and nine months called for in the state sentencing guidelines.

She said Wilkinson's actions were partially the result of his own "terrifying" childhood, which included physical and sexual abuse.

Harris said Wilkinson could be a productive citizen again with proper counseling. She said he was able to keep his dark side under wraps until his wife left him a few years ago.

Sullivan said Wilkinson took the child's dignity and freedom and deserved a "powerful" response from the judge.

Given a chance to speak just before Ledbetter pronounced sentence, Wilkinson simply stated, "I apologize."

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