

Man agrees to plead guilty in ESPN reporter case

GREG RISLING - Associated Press Writer - Associated Press

An Illinois insurance executive agreed to plead guilty to interstate stalking after secretly making nude videos of ESPN reporter Erin Andrews, according to court documents filed Thursday and first obtained by The Associated Press.

Michael Barrett, 48, of Westmont, Ill., will plead guilty in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles on Tuesday, said Thom Mrozek, a spokesman with the U.S. attorney's office.

Barrett is suspected of renting hotel rooms adjacent to Andrews in three cities last year, altering the peepholes and shooting videos of Andrews in two of the locations — in Columbus, Ohio, in February 2008 and in Nashville, Tenn., seven months later. He adjusted a hotel peephole in Milwaukee, Wis., in July 2008 and called 14 hotels to find out where Andrews was staying, prosecutors said.

Barrett is accused of uploading the videos to the Internet and trying to sell them to the Los Angeles-based celebrity gossip site TMZ this year. Several TV networks and newspapers aired or published images of Andrews taken from the videos.

"Mr. Barrett accepts full responsibility for his conduct," said Barrett's attorney David Willingham. "He apologizes to Ms. Andrews, and expresses his deep regret for his conduct that caused her so much pain. It is his sincere hope that these events can now become an opportunity to make positive changes in his life."

Barrett could face up to five years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. But as long as he accepts his responsibility for his actions, shows remorse and stays out of trouble, prosecutors will recommend a sentence of 27 months in prison, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Wesley Hsu.

Barrett will have to pay full restitution to Andrews, according to the terms of the plea agreement, but the amount is unclear. He also would be subject to a three-year protective order that would bar him from contacting or coming within 100 yards of Andrews and her family.

An e-mail message left with attorney Marshall Grossman, who represents Andrews, was not immediately returned Thursday.

Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles have agreed not to pursue further charges against Barrett. However, he could face criminal action in other states stemming from other videos he allegedly shot of unsuspecting nude women through peepholes.

Hsu said dozens of videos were later posted on the Internet, including one of a naked woman, entitled "Hot Blonde Out of Shower," that FBI agents sought to have

Man agrees to plead guilty in ESPN reporter case

Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

Yahoo Inc. turn over after serving a search warrant at the tech giant's Northern California offices last week.

The video was posted in June to Flickr.com by a user believed to be Barrett. The video, which appeared to be taken through a hotel room peephole, was viewed nearly 3,000 times before it was taken down. Flickr is owned by Yahoo.

Federal agents also wanted additional information pertaining to Andrews from Google Inc. Hsu wouldn't say whether the items have been given to authorities yet. Both Yahoo and Google have declined comment.

Source URL (retrieved on 04/28/2015 - 4:00am):

<http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2009/12/man-agrees-plead-guilty-espn-reporter-case>