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## **After-School Staffer Guilty of Sex Crimes**

*After-School Program Employee “Groomed” His Teenage Victims*

San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that a former after-school instructor has pleaded guilty to sexual battery and sending harmful matter with the intent to seduce a minor. He was ordered to register as a sex offender, effectively preventing him from working with children.

Stephen Tyler Wescott, 31, “groomed” two teenage girls at James Madison High School in Clairemont, escalating the behavior to sending obscene texts, exposing himself, and touching his victims.

He was sentenced on April 13, 2022, to one year of probation, plus 120 days in jail, which was stayed pending the completion of his probation period. He was also ordered to register as a sex offender for a minimum of 10 years, which means he will have to keep authorities apprised of his address and will appear on a publicly available database of registrants. Any failure to abide by the terms of his probation or registration could result in jail time.

**“For an after-school instructor to abuse his position of trust is especially disturbing because schools are supposed to be a safe haven where children are protected from predators,”** San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“Parents and guardians should monitor their children’s behavior for changes in dress, eating patterns, and lack of interest in activities they once enjoyed, and always question their activities and interactions with adults.”**

Wescott worked for the San Diego Unified School District’s after-school program IMIN (as in “I’m in”) from summer 2017 through June 2018. According to the school district’s website, IMIN is a grant-funded program which provides after-school learning opportunities for high school students such as career exploration, credit recovery, and enrichment activities.

The crimes Wescott was charged with took place in the spring of 2018, and involved two girls, then aged 15 and 17.

Wescott groomed both of his victims over time, building relationships with them, making them feel comfortable with him and winning their trust, so they could be more easily manipulated and abused. Both girls reported that Wescott communicated with them via text and social media about sex and masturbation. Both also saved screenshots of their communications with him.

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At one point, Wescott sent a photo of his penis to the older girl through Snapchat, an instant messaging app in which messages generally disappear after a short period of time. He asked her to send him nude pictures of herself and told her not to tell anyone.

Wescott also followed the younger girl into an empty classroom, positioning himself in the doorway so she didn't feel she could leave. He lifted her shirt and pulled down her shorts, touching her private parts. He then asked if she'd like to see his penis, and even though she said no, he exposed himself anyway, masturbating in front of her and inviting her to touch him.

On another occasion, the older girl was sitting on the floor of a classroom near Wescott's desk as he supervised a classroom full of teens. The girl recorded him on her cell phone masturbating under his desk and later showed the footage to authorities.

Wescott also attended a school district-sponsored camping trip where he groped one of his victims.

This case was prosecuted by Deputy City Attorney Felicia Loera, under the supervision of Rebecca Zipp, Chief Deputy City Attorney of the Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Unit. The City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Unit handles misdemeanor cases of child abuse, including neglect, molestation, and statutory rape, domestic violence, elder abuse, sexual battery, and stalking. This unit was designated as a state-of-the-art program by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and focuses on early intervention at the misdemeanor level.

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