

NEWS RELEASE

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TV Station Bought Personal Info of 3000 Kids in Name of Accused Child Killer

Last week, a television station purchased the names and addresses of more than 3,000 children, under the name of Ward Weaver, who has been charged with aggravated murder in the deaths of two Oregon City girls, Ashley Pond, 12 and Miranda Gaddis, 13. The TV news story points out the danger of allowing children's personal information to be bought and sold.

KGW-TV reporter Nicole Doll bought the children's personal information on the Internet for \$360 dollars. The names she purchased included some living in Oregon City, where the two victims lived.

"This shows the level of care that listbrokers take when it comes to making a buck," said Gary Ruskin, executive director of Commercial Alert. "It's the best example yet of why children's personal information should not be for sale."

The TV segment was broadcast on March 3rd by KGW-TV, in Portland, Oregon.

Last week, U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Ted Stevens (R-AK) introduced legislation (S. 2160) to prohibit corporations from selling the personal information of children below 16 years of age for commercial marketing purposes, without parental consent. Text of the legislation is available at www.commercialalert.org/kidsprivacy.pdf.

The listbroker privacy bill is a part of the Parents' Bill of Rights, a package of legislation proposed by Commercial Alert to help parents combat the commercial influences that prey upon their children and that promote products and values of which parents do not approve. The nine provisions of the Parents' Bill of Rights (www.commercialalert.org/pbor.pdf) would help right the balance between parents and the commercial culture and would enable parents to reduce the role of the latter in their children's lives if they so choose.

A transcript of the KGW-TV segment follows.

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KIDS PLAYING)

YOUR CHILDREN - YOUR MOST PRECIOUS GIFTS...YOUR BIGGEST RESPONSIBILITY.

(KIDS PLAYING)

PARENTS DO ALL THEY CAN TO KEEP THEM SAFE.

TAPE #3 TC: 50:23 "I told them adults shouldn't be asking them any kind of information, if they're looking for their puppy or kitten."

BUT WHAT IF A STRANGER COULD BUY YOUR FAMILY'S PERSONAL INFORMATION. COULD KNOW EXACTLY HOW MANY FAMILIES ON YOUR BLOCK HAVE YOUNG KIDS, EVEN KNOW YOUR ADDRESS, YOUR NAME. AND DO IT FOR ONLY A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT UNIT 8 DID. WE USED THE FICTITIOUS NAME WARD WEAVER... THAT'S THE NAME OF THE MAN WHO'S AWAITING TRIAL IN THE DEATHS OF TWO OREGON CITY GIRLS -- ASHLEY POND AND MIRANDA GADDIS. WE SET UP A FREE E-MAIL ACCOUNT...AND WERE EASILY ABLE TO BUY PARENT'S NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF MORE THAN 3000 CHILDREN AGE FIVE TO FOURTEEN IN OREGON CITY AND SURROUNDING AREAS FROM AN ONLINE MARKETING DATABASE COMPANY. THE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE ASKED US NO QUESTIONS, THERE WERE NO BACKGROUND CHECKS... AND FOR 360 DOLLARS THE "KID LIST" WAS E-MAILED TO US. TAPE #3 48:38 "It narrowed it down to four houses on this block that have children between the ages of five and fourteen. Wow, pretty scary." CATHY POPPEN'S NAME WAS ON OUR LIST... WE TOOK THE LIST TO HER OREGON CITY NEIGHBORHOOD AND PARENTS CATHY WERE OUTRAGED THAT IT SEEMED "ANYONE" COULD BUY THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION. tape #3 39:15 "I was kinda shocked, because how many people know my child, you know." tape #3 49:55 "Ward Weaver, in essence, bought your family's information.. Yeah, pretty scary." TAPE #1 39:45 "Yeah, I want to know where it came from." Standup tape 2 (JIM, Pick which one you want, okay!) "Most of us are unaware just how much information is out there. How much private, intimate details bout our lives are for sale. But you might be surprised, in many cases, you're handing over that information yourself." CHANCES ARE , YOU'VE BOUGHT A NEW PRODUCT AND FILLED OUT ONE OF THESE WARRANTY CARDS. THE ANSWERS TO THOSE PERSONAL QUESTIONS ARE PASSED ON TO MARKETING COMPANIES... YOUR INFORMATION SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. Tape #1 43:39 "It's a huge emerging issue. the whole area of informational privacy from the databases that getting collected to dna, all these kinds of things are really now just beginning to be tackled legislatively by the law. LEWIS AND CLARK LAW PROFESSOR STEVE KANTER SAYS IT'S A FINE LINE -- BALANCING THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY WITH THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH. TAPE #1 49:18 "But certainly, when it comes to children, it is a scary proposition that predators or stalkers or other people that may mean children harm have access to personal information about them." TAPE #2 29:39 "That's nobody's business, but my family's and maybe my family doctor's." STEVE DOELL IS THE PRESIDENT OF CRIME VICTIMS UNITED...THE GROUP WORKS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME..HE SAYS PREDATORS ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS TO PREY. TAPE # 1 34:06 "If you've thought about it, believe me the criminal has thought about it." PARENTS WE SPOKE TO SAY -- THE REVELATION OF OUR LIST - HOW EAST IT WAS TO BUY -- WILL MAKE THEM WORK HARDER TO KEEP THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION, JUST THAT, PERSONAL... (JIM PLEASE COVER THIS LAST BITE) TAPE #3 49:27 "They shouldn't be able to sell your information, no one should be able to sell your information."

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Commercial Alert is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy. For more information, see our website at: <http://www.commercialalert.org>.