A True Story

(This is a true story of a young man who went to college in the Midwest. His true name has been changed to protect him)

Bob was a typical Midwestern kid from a small town and a small school. Bob ranked high in class rank in his school, had a great ACT score, and his goal was to become a math teacher and a coach. He was a good athlete and came from a hard working and good family. He was well-liked in his community and many families liked to hire him as a baby sitter because he spent time playing with the kids. They loved to have him come and babysit.

Bob graduated from high school and went to college. Things went very well the first two years. In his third year, he moved into a rental house off campus with some other guys. One day one of the guys in the house asked Bob if he could borrow his laptop. Bob always felt it was important to help other people and especially a friend, so the lent the laptop to his housemate.

Several weeks later, Bob was walking across campus and was confronted by two police officers. They had a search warrant for his laptop. Bob surrendered his laptop to the officers. He was very worried about it, called his parents about it, but he decided he would have to wait and see what would happen.

A few weeks later as Bob walked across campus, he was confronted by two police officers who served an arrest warrant to him. He was read his Miranda rights and taken to the police station. The police informed Bob he was being arrested for the possession of child pornography on his laptop. Bob immediately denied ever having used or looked at child pornography, but the officers told him child pornography had been found on his computer.

Bob called his parents, and they hired a defense attorney. How the police found out that his particular computer had child pornography is not known but probably had to do with tracing an IP address. This started a long, hard nightmare for Bob and his family. His parents had to pay several thousands of dollars for a defense attorney. It was very expensive. Bob was sure that the guy that borrowed his computer was the culprit, but it was hard to prove.

The case took over one year and was finally settled in a plea bargain. Several of the community members who hired him to babysit went to court to testify in favor of Bob’s character. Eventually in order to avoid a chance of prison, Bob agreed in a plea bargain to a five year probation which also required that he be on a sex offender list for ten years or more. His dream of being a math teacher and a coach were gone. He could not leave the state where the college was located for a period of years.

The purpose of this story is this: Never, Never, Never lend you laptop or Internet device out to anyone even if you know them or they are a friend. You will have no control of what they will do with that computer or device, and you could put yourself into the middle of a nightmare like Bob. Do not under any circumstances trust anyone with your computer or Internet device. Before this happened, Bob would tell you he never thought anything like this could happen to him.