



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 21, 2026  
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**Michigan Man Sentenced to 28 Years of Imprisonment for Online Sexual Extortion of  
Minor Victims**

Richland, Washington- Pete Serrano, First Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington, announced today that Andrew Steven Otto, age 27, of Escanaba, Michigan, was sentenced after pleading guilty to two counts of Production of Child Pornography and one count of Possession of Child Pornography. United States District Court Judge Mary K. Dimke imposed a sentence of 28 years of imprisonment to be followed by a lifetime term of supervised release, and \$30,640.68 in restitution.

According to court documents and information presented at the sentencing hearing, beginning in November of 2023, and continuing for months thereafter, Otto, then a 24 year old male, presented himself to be a 15 year old male on an online application frequently used by children and teens. During this timeframe, Otto pursued a 14 year old girl in the Eastern District of Washington, manipulating the child into believing that the two were in an online relationship. Otto told the child she was beautiful and that he wanted to date her. Otto solicited sexually explicit photos of the minor; when she refused, Otto assumed another person's online identity and threatened the child. These threats included physical harm to the victim and the victim's mother. After the victim sent one photo, Otto used the other online identity to extort the child, threatening to post the sexually explicit photo on the child's school website.

Otto pursued another 11 year old child in the State of Illinois in the same manner. He complimented her and made her believe that he loved her. Thereafter, he requested sexually explicit images of the minor. When the minor refused, he coerced her, using multiple, fraudulent, online identities to threaten her. Otto also used these identities to inform the minor that Otto had died by suicide because of the child's lack of response.

Both minor victims experienced significant and ongoing trauma as a result of Otto's crimes.

The Southeast Regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force members went to Escanaba, Michigan, to locate Otto. There, they worked with local Homeland Security Investigations agents and local law enforcement to arrest Otto for his crimes. A search warrant was executed at Otto's residence and multiple electronic devices were seized. A forensic examination of these devices included sexually explicit images and videos of the local Eastern District of Washington victim and the Illinois victim. Investigators located additional sexually explicit content depicting other children, as well as communications wherein Otto sought and received a sexually explicit video depicting a 6 to 8 year old child.

At the sentencing hearing, Judge Dimke commended the local victim's bravery and resilience throughout the court process. She highlighted the "absolute terror" that each minor victim must have felt in the face of Otto's tactics. Judge Dimke also informed Otto that it appeared that he did not sufficiently understand the level of harm that he had inflicted on the young victims, and that this posed a significant concern for Otto's potential rehabilitation.

"Otto preyed upon these young victims in the most harmful way possible. With the help of our local and federal law enforcement partners, my office will continue to pursue individuals such as Otto, who victimize young children in our community, regardless of where they live. I am grateful for the cooperation of our local ICAC team, Homeland Security Investigations, and the law enforcement agencies in Michigan who brought Otto to justice," said First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano.

"Mr. Otto's crimes are particularly heinous and highlight the actual dangers lurking online for minor children," said Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Seattle acting Special Agent in Charge April Miller. "We will continue to aggressively work as part of the Internet Crimes Against Children task force to find and arrest those responsible for taking advantage of our children."

"The collaborative partnership of the Southeast Regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (SER-ICAC) unites our law enforcement counterparts from Richland, Kennewick, Pasco, Benton County, and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in conjunction with the concerted efforts of law enforcement agencies in Michigan and the United States Attorney's Office, has proven instrumental again in securing a guilty plea with a substantial sentence, " stated Commander Damon Jansen with the Richland Police Department. "Outcomes like this, marked by their severity, contribute significantly to the administration of justice for the children within our community and beyond who have endured egregious abuse yet have emerged as survivors."

The case was investigated by the Southeast Regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Kennewick Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, Escanaba Department of Public Safety and the Michigan State Police. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Laurel J. Holland.

2:24-CR-6008-MKD