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Yamhill County Photographer Sentenced to 40 Years in Federal Prison for Production of Child Sexual Abuse Material

PORTLAND, Ore.—A Carlton, Oregon man was sentenced to federal prison today for 8 counts of production of child sexual abuse material announced U.S. Attorney Scott E. Bradford.

Robert Koester, 59, was sentenced to 40 years in federal prison and lifetime supervised release.

“Koester’s crimes against children are among the worst this district has seen. His violent abuse of these girls created scars they will carry their entire lives, and the images of that abuse will haunt them. I hope today’s sentence brings a measure of justice and healing for the victims. I am grateful for the work of the many investigative agencies that worked tirelessly to bring this terror against these teens to an end. The sentence of 40 years provides safety to Oregon and California and is emblematic of the violent crimes he committed.” said Scott E. Bradford, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon

“Today’s sentence underscores how seriously the FBI and our partners take crimes against children,” said FBI Portland Special Agent in Charge Doug Olson. “Koester used his role as a photographer to gain the trust of young people who were simply looking for a chance to pursue their dreams, and he exploited that trust. The courage these victims showed in coming forward made this outcome possible, and we stand with them as they continue to heal. We’re grateful for the work of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Oregon in bringing this case to the finish line. What happened here caused real harm, and there is no place for this behavior in our community.”

According to court documents, Koester used his professional position as a photographer to meet and earn the trust of teenage girls who were pursuing careers in modeling. He exploited that trust by drugging, molesting, strangling, and raping the victims. He recorded much of this abuse and sold the child sexual abuse material (CSAM) to others.

Koester was a professional photographer who took photographs of aspiring models and did photography work for modeling agencies. Over the course of four years, from early 2015 through late 2018, Koester lured numerous teenage girls to his residence and other locations across California and Oregon. He enticed the girls with the promise of a career in the fashion industry through his modeling agency, Frank Model Management. He encouraged them to travel to his residence in Oregon, even paying for their flights. The children would stay in his residence for multiple days and participate in photo shoots.

During this time, Koester offered the victims alcohol and drugs, including marijuana and cocaine. He coerced them to do nude photo shoots by first showing them images of naked models, then convincing them to remove their clothes. He photographed the victims in revealing positions, sometimes using hidden cameras to capture more explicit angles without the victims' knowledge. Koester further used GHB and other intoxicants to drug the girls, rendering them unconscious. He then abused the unconscious children sexually and physically and recorded the assaults. Koester often became violent in these assaults, strangling and slapping the girls. After the drugged assaults, he left the victims to wake up alone. Some of the victims were also coerced into engaging in sexual acts with him while awake. He recorded this abuse as well. Koester maintained a large collection of this self-produced CSAM, which included thousands of images. Koester was in his late forties and early fifties when these crimes occurred, and the girls were as young as fifteen.

Multiple children reported that Koester showed them the images of their own abuse and laugh while displaying the images of the abusive acts to them.

In addition to criminally prosecuting Koester, the U.S. Attorney's Office forfeited his Oregon residence in a civil forfeiture case, netting \$750,000 in the sale. The criminal case also forfeited a large amount of photographic and digital equipment.

On November 13, 2018, Koester was arrested by California authorities.

Koester has pleaded guilty to related conduct in San Diego, California, and was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Koester also pleaded guilty to related conduct in Yamhill County, Oregon, and was sentenced to 50 years in prison. He will serve those sentences concurrently with the federal sentence imposed today.

On July 16, 2019, a federal grand jury in Portland returned a 6-count indictment charging Koester with production of child sexual abuse material.

On August 19, 2020, Oregon adopted, from the District of Southern California, a 2-count information charging Koester with production of child sexual abuse material.

On March 10, 2026, Koester pleaded guilty to all 8 counts of production of child sexual abuse material in the two federal cases.

This case was investigated by FBI San Diego, FBI Portland, Carlsbad Police Department, and Yamhill County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gary Sussman, Kate Rochat, Mira Chernick, and Julia Jarett.

This case was brought in collaboration with Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.justice.gov/psc.

Anyone who has information about the physical or online exploitation of children are encouraged to call the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324) or submit a tip online at tips.fbi.gov.

Federal law defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor. It is important to remember child sexual abuse material depicts actual crimes being committed against children. Not only do these images and videos document the victims' exploitation and abuse, but when shared across the internet, re-victimize and re-traumatize the child victims each time their abuse is viewed. To learn more, please visit the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at www.missingkids.org.

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