



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney
Eastern District of Washington

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USAWAE.Media@usdoj.gov

SPOKANE MAN SENTENCED TO 5 YEARS FOR RECEIPT OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Spokane, Washington – First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano announced that on October 14, 2026, United States District Court Judge Rebecca L. Pennell sentenced Nicholas Howard to five years in custody, to be followed by a life term of federal supervised release. Judge Pennell also ordered Howard to pay \$31,000 in restitution to his victims and a \$5,000 special assessment under the Amy, Vicky, and Andy Child Pornography Assistance Act of 2018. The United States argued for a term of imprisonment of 210 months, while Howard’s attorney, Bevan Maxey, requested the 60-month term ultimately imposed by the Court.

As reflected in court documents and public proceedings, Howard had a long history of viewing child pornography and hid his sexual interest in minors from friends and family for 20 years. On the Dark Web, Howard was a “senior member” of a website dedicated to child sex abuse and images memorializing that abuse. The Federal Bureau of Investigation reviewed 179 posts by Howard, where he communicated with other users and traded images and videos of child sex abuse material. Howard wrote in his posts of his attraction to children aged “7–14 years old” and said that that he “understood the appeal of being sexually active with a minor female” and that he “fantasized about this for decades.” Howard also shared that he “became sexually aroused” when explaining sex to his nine-year old daughter, that he “masturbated to minor females he knows or comes across in real life,” and that he “followed multiple minor aged females on Instagram to whom he masturbates to.” Howard wrote that “he would engage in sexual intercourse with his [11-year-old] daughter’s friend if he could” and appreciated that the website was “truly full of [his] people.”

The FBI executed a search warrant at Howard’s residence and seized a number of Howard’s devices. On Howard’s phone, the FBI discovered 223 images and 23 videos of child sex abuse material, including depictions of minors as young as toddlers. The footage included sadistic abuse of young, prepubescent girls. Howard also possessed videos of Nazi ideology and violent footage of adult women being hung and strangled. Howard’s phone further revealed that he had been viewing child sex abuse material just minutes before picking up his young daughters on the day of his arrest and used anti-forensic software to help delete and conceal evidence of his crime.

AUSA Wick relied upon these aggravated facts to support the recommended sentence of 210 months.

“This defendant posed a significant risk to the community,” stated Serrano. “Without the extraordinary investigative efforts of the FBI and my office, Howard would have continued to engage in this egregious conduct, trafficking in images and videos depicting the sexual abuse of children on the Dark Web. This office remains committed to protecting the public and ensuring that individuals who engage in these offenses are brought to justice.”

“For decades, even leading up to right before his arrest, Mr. Howard repeatedly and incessantly harmed dozens of victims by accessing child abuse material,” said W. Mike Herrington, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Seattle field office. “This digital media is impossible to erase from the internet and depicts these young people at the worst moments of their lives. The FBI and our partners will continue to hold child predators accountable.”

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the U.S. Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals, who sexually exploit children, as well as to identify and rescue victims.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Spokane Office and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ann Wick.

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