



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Washington

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[USAWAE.Media@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAWAE.Media@usdoj.gov)

**Multi-State Child Exploitation Investigation Results in the Arrest of Men in Washington and Iowa on State and Federal Charges**

On September 24, 2025, the Southeast Regional Internet Crimes Against Children (SER-ICAC) Task Force, comprised of detectives from the Richland and Kennewick Police Departments, Deputies from the Benton County Sheriff's Office, and Special Agents from Homeland Security Investigations, executed search and arrest warrants in Richland, Washington, and Mason City, Iowa, arising from child exploitation investigations in the Tri-Cities area.

Joseph Ralland Whipple, 34, was arrested in Mason City, Iowa, on federal charges of producing, distributing, receiving, and possessing sexually explicit images of minor children in Tri-Cities, Washington. A search warrant was executed at Whipple's residence in Iowa and multiple electronic devices were seized. The SER-ICAC was assisted by the Mason City Police Department and the Iowa Department of Public Safety. Whipple made an initial court appearance in federal court in Iowa and was detained pending further proceedings in federal court in the Eastern District of Washington. Whipple has also been charged in Benton County Superior Court with two counts of Rape of a Child in the First Degree with the Aggravating Circumstance of Pattern of Sexual Abuse and two counts of Child Molestation in the First Degree for his alleged conduct with multiple minor children. His bail has been set at one million dollars.

Charles Lon Seltz, 57, was arrested in Richland, Washington, on state charges of Rape of a Child in the First Degree. The SER-ICAC and Richland Police Department executed a search warrant at Seltz's residence and seized multiple electronic devices. Seltz was subsequently charged in Benton County Superior Court with four counts of Rape of Child in the First Degree with the Aggravating Circumstance of a Pattern of Sexual Abuse. His bail has also been set at one million dollars.

*An indictment is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

The case is being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Offices for the Eastern District of Washington and the Northern District of Iowa and the Benton County Prosecutor's Office.