



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Idaho

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, August 14, 2024
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Bellevue Man Sentenced to 27 Years in Federal Prison for Sexually Exploiting Children

BOISE – Spencer Riding, 26, formerly of Bellevue, Idaho, was sentenced to 27 years in federal prison for sexual exploitation of children, U.S. Attorney Josh Hurwit announced today. U.S. District Judge Amanda K. Brailsford also sentenced Riding to a lifetime of supervised release to follow his prison term.

According to court records, in 2019, Riding used social media to contact a 15-year-old minor child. Through social media, Riding persuaded the child to send him topless photos. Using these photos, Riding threatened the minor child. He threatened to send the topless photos to strangers on the internet if she did not send him child pornography. The child sent him child pornography to avoid release of her explicit photos. Eventually, the child and her family came forward to law enforcement.

Law enforcement, through the report from the child and investigative efforts, secured a search warrant for Riding's residence. The search warrant authorized law enforcement to seize and forensically analyze his digital devices. Law enforcement seized a cell phone and forensically examined it. On the phone, law enforcement discovered images of child pornography from an additional child victim. Law enforcement investigated the production of these images. They discovered that Riding engaged in a similar criminal pattern of coercion, whereby he contacted a minor child over social media, secured compromising photos, and threatened to release sexually explicit images if the child did not send additional child pornography.

Riding was indicted by a federal grand jury for the conduct above. While pending sentencing, law enforcement in Wyoming received a tip that Riding was engaged in further child pornography crimes using social media. Law enforcement secured another search warrant for his residence and executed it in 2022. Law enforcement discovered that Riding had contacted a minor child in Wyoming and traveled there to record sexual acts with the child. Riding entered a subsequent plea of guilty to a superseding information that reflected criminal conduct against all known victims.

U.S. Attorney Hurwit commended the cooperative efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Gooding County Sheriff's Office, the Wyoming Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Department of Homeland Security, and the St. Helen's Police Department, which led to the charges. This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David G. Robins and Cassandra McGrady.

This case was brought as part of 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 U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) of the Department of Justice, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.justice.gov/psc.

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