



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office  
District of Oregon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2021

[USAO-OR.gov](http://USAO-OR.gov) | [@USAO\\_OR](https://twitter.com/USAO_OR)

Contact: Public Affairs Officer

Phone: (503) 727-1000

[USAOR.PublicAffairs@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAOR.PublicAffairs@usdoj.gov)

**Coos Bay Man Sentenced to 30 Years in Federal Prison for Sexually  
Exploiting a 3-Year-Old Child**

EUGENE, Ore.—A Coos Bay, Oregon man was sentenced to federal prison today for producing sexually explicit images and videos of a 3-year-old child.

Keith James Atherton, 33, was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison followed by a life term of supervised release.

According to court documents, on July 13, 2018, an undercover agent from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) viewed child sexual abuse material streamed on a video chat website. Less than 24 hours later, Atherton was identified as the perpetrator, located, and taken into federal custody. Further investigation revealed that Atherton had produced several sexually explicit images and videos involving a 3-year-old child. Investigators seized more than 10 digital devices from Atherton, containing at least 35,000 images and 8,000 videos depicting the sexual abuse of infants, toddlers, and young children.

On July 18, 2018, a federal grand jury in Eugene returned a three-count indictment charging Atherton with using or attempting to use a minor to produce a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct and possession and distribution of child pornography. On February 24, 2021, Atherton pleaded guilty to using or attempting to use a minor to produce a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct.

Acting U.S. Attorney Scott Erik Asphaug of the District of Oregon made the announcement.

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations with assistance from the Coos Bay Police Department, the Coos County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey S. Sweet prosecuted the case with assistance from the Coos County District Attorney's Office.

Anyone who has information about the physical or online exploitation of children are encouraged to contact HSI at (866) 347-2423 or submit a tip online at [www.ice.gov/tips](http://www.ice.gov/tips).

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](http://www.missingkids.org).

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.justice.gov/psc](http://www.justice.gov/psc).

# # #