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Jury Convicts Florida Man for Using a Minor to Produce Sexually Explicit Material

PORLAND, Ore.—A federal jury in Portland found a New Smyrna Beach, Florida man guilty today for video recording himself sexually abusing a child he met on social media and sharing the abuse video with others online.

Michael Wayne Lyon, 39, was found guilty of using a minor to produce a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct.

According to court documents and trial testimony, in October 2017, Lyon began exchanging messages online with a 13-year-old child. He first claimed to be 15 years old and later “confessed” to being 17. Lyon’s conversations with the child quickly turned sexually explicit and he convinced the child to send him naked photos of herself. After Lyon admitted to being in his 30s, the child tried to end their communication. Lyon persisted, continued contacting the child, and, in March 2018, travelled to the Pacific Northwest to meet the child.

Fearing for the safety of her family, the child agreed to meet Lyon. After traveling from Seattle to Oregon in a rented vehicle, Lyon took the child to a hotel near her residence where he sexually assaulted her. Lyon video recorded himself abusing the child and later shared the video online with several of the child’s friends and acquaintances. The child’s brother and mother captured a recording of the video before it disappeared and notified law enforcement. Local authorities interviewed the child’s parents and several other witnesses, but did not pursue the case further.

From 2018 through 2020, Lyon continued contacting the child and created multiple social media accounts to avoid the child’s repeated attempts to block him. Lyon’s messages became increasingly threatening and, later, openly violent. In October 2020, he threatened to kill the child and her family. Soon after, the child’s mother reported Lyon’s abuse and threats to the FBI.

On December 11, 2020, Lyon was charged by federal criminal complaint and an arrest was issued. Nine days later, he was arrested by local law enforcement in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania and turned over to the FBI. Lyon has remained in federal custody since his arrest.

On February 2, 2021, a federal grand jury in Portland returned a two-count indictment charging Lyon with cyberstalking and using a minor to produce a visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct.

Lyon faces a maximum sentence of 35 years in federal prison with a 15-year mandatory minimum sentence, a \$500,000 fine and a life term of supervised release.

“In trials involving the sexual abuse of children, jurors are tasked with taking in and reviewing a horrendous set of facts. In this case, the young witness took the stand to tell the jury the details of what happened in her own words. The law enforcement community recognizes the courage it takes to go to police and to face an abuser at trial. Because of this strong young witness, the defendant was brought to justice, making our communities and children safer,” said Natalie Wight, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

“Michael Lyon displayed horrific and disturbing behavior victimizing an innocent child over and over again,” said William Brooks, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Portland Field Office. “The FBI and our law enforcement partners work every day to shut down child predators and deliver justice for victims. While this verdict effectively ends Mr. Lyon’s ability to sexually exploit children, the damage caused by this crime can linger for a lifetime for the victim. The FBI remains constant in our commitment to provide resources for victims to assist in the healing process.”

This case was investigated by FBI Portland’s Child Exploitation Task Force (CETF).

It was prosecuted by Pamela Paaso and Suzanne Miles, Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the District of Oregon.

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.

The FBI CETF conducts sexual exploitation investigations, many of them undercover, in coordination with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. CETF is committed to locating and arresting those who prey on children as well as recovering and assisting victims of sex trafficking and child exploitation.

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

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