



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 4, 2023
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Contact: Public Affairs Officer
Phone: (503) 727-1000
USAOR.PublicAffairs@usdoj.gov

Eagle Point Woman Sentenced to 13 Years in Federal Prison for Taking Sexually Explicit Photos of a Child and Distributing Them Online

MEDFORD, Ore.—An Eagle Point, Oregon woman was sentenced to 13 years in federal prison today for taking sexually explicit photos of an 8-year-old child and sending them to multiple individuals she met online.

Kayla Dee Lester, 31, was sentenced to 156 months in federal prison and 20 years' supervised release.

According to court documents, in 2020, Lester took sexually explicit photos of an 8-year-old child and distributed them to multiple individuals online using Whisper, a social media application that allows users to post and share photo and video messages anonymously. When interviewed by police, Lester admitted to using Whisper and other social media applications to meet people and solicit child pornography. She further admitted to sending the images she took of the 8-year-old child to others in hopes they would send her child pornography in return.

On September 17, 2020, a federal grand jury in Medford returned a three-count indictment charging Lester with using a minor to produce visual depictions of sexually explicit conduct, and distributing and possessing child pornography. On May 10, 2023, Lester pleaded guilty to distributing child pornography.

On July 6, 2023, while awaiting sentencing, Lester was arrested for possessing an internet-connected cell phone in violation of her release conditions. Her cell phone was found to contain nude images of herself and other adults who she was chatting with online as well as chats between Lester and others wherein she described sexually abusing her 8-year-old victim. A forensic search later conducted on her phone revealed 44 videos of child pornography. On July 10, 2023, Lester's pretrial release was revoked.

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) with assistance from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and the Southern Oregon High-Tech Crimes Task Force. It was prosecuted by Judith R. Harper, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

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 report.cybertip.org.

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, they 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.

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.

Created in January 2007, the Southern Oregon High-Tech Crimes Task Force provides cybercrime investigations and digital evidence forensic analysis for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in Southern Oregon. Member agencies include the Medford Police Department, Oregon State Police, the Jackson County Sheriff and District Attorney's Offices, and HSI.

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