



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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March 28, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man from Hawaii Admits Sextortion of Missouri Teen

ST. LOUIS – A resident of Hawaii pleaded guilty Thursday in U.S. District Court in St. Louis and admitted the sextortion of a 14-year-old Missouri girl, as well as the distribution of explicit images of other minors.

Gerardo Javier Montes, 33, pleaded guilty to one felony count of distribution of child pornography.

Between Dec. 6, 2021, and Jan. 14, 2022, Montes communicated with the 14-year-old Missouri girl via numerous private messages on Reddit. She initially believed he was 21 but later found out that he was a decade older. Montes often turned the conversation to sexual matters. He provided advice on how to create nude images. He also sent her an explicit image of a 15-year-old. At one point she sent him an image of herself in a bra and a picture of herself topless. She later told Montes her full name and directed him to an online profile.

On Jan. 13, 2022, the victim tried to cut off contact with Montes. He responded by threatening to post nude photos of her on various social media sites and send them to “every school in the state.” He demanded more pictures, providing a detailed list of what he wanted, and tried to get her to engage in sexual activity with a dog. He also created a fake Reddit account, pretending to be a 15-year-old girl, to try and trick the victim into providing nude images. On Jan. 15, 2022, he sent images of the victim to someone else via Discord.

An investigation began after the FBI received a tip about the sextortion and traced the blackmailer to Hawaii. They performed a court-approved search of his home and seized electronic devices that contained child sexual abuse material.

Montes admitted as part of his plea that he traded child pornography with others online, including images of his former girlfriends when they were minors and other child victims that he provided with money, gift cards, clothes, sexual toys or electronics in exchange for nude images. Those victims include one girl in Oklahoma, one in Texas and one in Colorado.

Montes made posts and comments in teen-focused Reddit groups, as well as groups discussing depression and rape fantasies. He also admitted seeking child sexual abuse material from other minors online. In February of 2021, he asked someone who said she had been sexually abused as

a minor for nude images of herself when she was 13. In December 2021, Montes asked a 12-year-old girl if she wanted to see his genitals and asked to see her nude.

Montes is scheduled to be sentenced on August 15. The distribution charge carries a mandatory minimum prison term of five years, and a maximum of 20 years.

The FBI investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle Bateman is prosecuting the case.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has [detailed information](#) on resources for sextortion victims, including videos and discussion guides to help explain the problem to children and adults. They also have a [step-by-step guide](#) on how to report pictures or videos of children to social media companies and [flag pictures](#) so that the companies will seek out and remove the images.

To report sextortion, contact local law enforcement or the FBI by calling Call 1-800-CALL-FBI, contacting your [local FBI office](#), or reporting it online at [tips.fbi.gov](#) or [cybertipline.org](#).

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 Department of Justice Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, 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.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri, is available on-line at

<http://www.justice.gov/edmo>

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