



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney Martin Estrada
Central District of California

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Contact: Ciaran McEvoy

Public Information Officer

ciaran.mcevoy@usdoj.gov

(213) 894-4465

Moorpark Man Sentenced to Over 11 Years in Prison for Trying to Entice Sexual Activity from Someone He Thought Was a Minor

LOS ANGELES – A Ventura County man was sentenced today to 140 months in federal prison for soliciting on social media platforms sexually explicit photos from an individual he thought was a 14-year-old girl.

Thomas Kern Gissell, 29, of Moorpark, was sentenced by United States District Judge John F. Walter, who also placed Gissell on 20 years of supervised release when Gissell eventually is released from prison and ordered him to pay \$5,100 in special assessments and \$27,000 in restitution.

Gissell pleaded guilty on January 5 to one count of attempted enticement of a minor to engage in criminal sexual activity.

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office began investigating Gissell after receiving information that he had contacted undercover law enforcement officers posing as teenage girls. According to the affidavit in support of a complaint filed in this case, Gissell engaged in online chats with the individuals and asked them to send nude photos.

Specifically, in August and September of 2022, Gissell knowingly attempted to entice a person whom he believed was a 14-year-old girl to engage in sexual activity. Gissell further admitted in his plea agreement to sending the purported 14-year-old girl images of a lingerie gift card and images of the lingerie he wanted her to purchase with the gift card that he provided.

Gissell was originally arrested in February 2023 pursuant to charges filed by the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. The matter was subsequently presented to the United States Attorney's Office, which filed the federal complaint in late February 2023.

The Ventura County Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force is comprised of investigators and prosecutors with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, the Simi Valley Police Department, the Oxnard Police Department, the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, the FBI, and the United States Attorney's Office.

Members of the Task Force are specially trained in investigating online child sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and they strive to provide rapid responses to

the sexual victimization of children. The Gissell investigation is the first criminal case brought by the Task Force.

Assistant United States Attorney Kellye M. Ng of the Violent and Organized Crime Section prosecuted this case.

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