

MICHIGAN

Mich. sex offender sentenced to federal prison for assaulting child

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A Michigan sex offender has been sentenced to more than 27 years in federal prison, the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan said.

Justin Lee Sloothaak of Holland pleaded guilty to sexually exploiting a child after authorities found evidence he sexually assaulted a west Michigan child in 2022, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Investigators from the FBI and the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office learned Sloothaak, 32, had filmed the assault on his phone and included the video in a collection of child pornography videos.

Sloothaak committed the offense while on parole for a 2015 sexual assault of another child, officials said.

"This is, absent murder, probably the most traumatizing thing you can do to a human being, especially a minor," U.S. District Judge Jane Beckering said in the release.

"The FBI is deeply committed to protecting the most vulnerable members of our society, particularly our children, and bringing predators like the defendant to justice," said Cheyvoryea Gibson, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan. "The sentence in this case reflects the gravity of the crimes committed, which are particularly distressing given the defendant's repeated attempts to harm and exploit minors. I want to express my gratitude to the dedicated law enforcement partners of the West Michigan Based Child Exploitation Task."

The case arose from Project Safe Childhood, a national initiative against child exploitation and abuse. The initiative provides resources to find and rescue victims and prosecute people who exploit children on the Internet.