

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
Eastern District of Michigan

United States of America

v.

Joshua Joseph Ronnebaum

Case No. 25-30745

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of March 23, 2018 to November 13, 2025 in the county of Wayne in the
Eastern District of Michigan, the defendant(s) violated:

<i>Code Section</i>	<i>Offense Description</i>
18 U.S.C. § 2252A(a)(2)	Receipt of child pornography
18 U.S.C. § 2252A(a)(5)(B)	Possession of child pornography

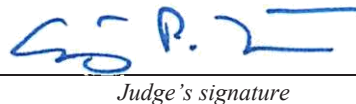
This criminal complaint is based on these facts:
See attached affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence
and/or by reliable electronic means.

Date: December 8, 2025City and state: Detroit, MI
Complainant's signature

Dustin Swensson, Special Agent, FBI
Printed name and title


Judge's signature

Hon. Anthony P. Patti, United States Magistrate Judge
Printed name and title

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR
A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT AND ARREST WARRANT**

I, Dustin Swensson, a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), being duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

1. I have been employed as a Special Agent of the FBI since 2016 and am currently assigned to the FBI Detroit Division. Prior to being employed by the FBI, I served in the US Army and later worked for several defense contractors as a counter-terrorism analyst. While employed by the FBI, I have drafted affidavits for arrest warrants and search warrants, including searches of residences and electronic devices. I have investigated numerous federal violations, including cases involving child pornography and the sexual exploitation of children. I have gained experience through training at the FBI Academy, post Academy training, and everyday work related to conducting these types of investigations.

2. I have received training in the area of child pornography and child exploitation and have had the opportunity to observe and review numerous examples of child pornography (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2256) in all forms of media, including computer media. Moreover, I am a federal law enforcement officer who is engaged in enforcing criminal laws, including 18 U.S.C. § 2252A. I am authorized by law to request an arrest warrant.

3. This affidavit is submitted in support of an application for a criminal

complaint and arrest warrant for Joshua Joseph Ronnebaum for violations of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252A(a)(2) (receipt of child pornography) and 2252A(a)(5)(B) (possession of child pornography).

4. The statements contained in this affidavit are based in part on information provided by U.S. law enforcement officers, written reports about this and other investigations that I have received, directly or indirectly, from other law enforcement agents, information gathered from investigative sources of information, and my experience, training, and background as a Special Agent.

5. This affidavit is submitted for the limited purpose of securing a complaint and arrest warrant. I have not included every fact known to me concerning this investigation. Instead, I have set forth only facts necessary to establish probable cause that Ronnebaum has violated 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252A(a)(2) and 2252A(a)(5)(B).

FBI Investigation of Subject-1

6. In March 2025, the FBI and local law enforcement in Toledo, Ohio arrested Subject-1 after Subject-1 traveled to Toledo to engage in sex acts with a notional 7-year-old girl and a notional 6-month-old female infant. Prior to traveling to Toledo for this purpose Subject-1 communicated with an FBI agent operating in an online undercover capacity (OCE) who posed as the parent of the notional children. Subject-1 also sent the OCE a video containing child sexual abusive material (CSAM) and had received CSAM from the subject of another FBI

investigation. Subject-1's cellular phone was seized after his arrest and the FBI obtained a search warrant for the device.

7. Around June 5, 2025, FBI agents interviewed Subject-1 pursuant to a proffer agreement. During this interview Subject-1 identified Joshua Ronnebaum as an individual who had a sexual interest in children. Subject-1 said he met up with Ronnebaum to do drugs, have sex and watch CSAM. Subject-1 also said Ronnebaum possessed CSAM and lived in a "mansion" with three other men near 7 Mile in Detroit, Michigan. According to records from the Michigan Secretary of State, three other men have driver's licenses that resolve to Ronnebaum's identified address in Detroit, Michigan, including another man who is the subject of an FBI investigation, Target-1. Additionally, the identified residence is located approximately 0.2 miles from 7 Mile Road.

8. Ronnebaum's telephone number was saved as XXX-XXX-0110 in Subject-1's cellular phone, and agents located communications between the two occurring between June 2022 and July 2023.

9. Agents also located a June 10, 2022, picture of Ronnebaum sent to Subject-1 depicting a distinct bathroom in the home, which was readily identified as the same bathroom appearing in a publicly-available online article related to the historic home where Ronnebaum lives. Also relevant, in the publicly-available article, Ronnebaum is quoted as saying "I love the attic because it's so different

from the rest of the house and it's where I like to relax[.]” The article goes on to explain:

Designed with their three nephews and six nieces in mind, the space includes a trundle-bedded sleeping area as well as a living area. There is also a charming Japanese-oriented niche created by Ronnebaum. “It is furnished with tatami mats, a traditional Tansu chest of drawers and collectibles that I purchased all over Japan when I lived there for four years,” [Ronnebaum] says.

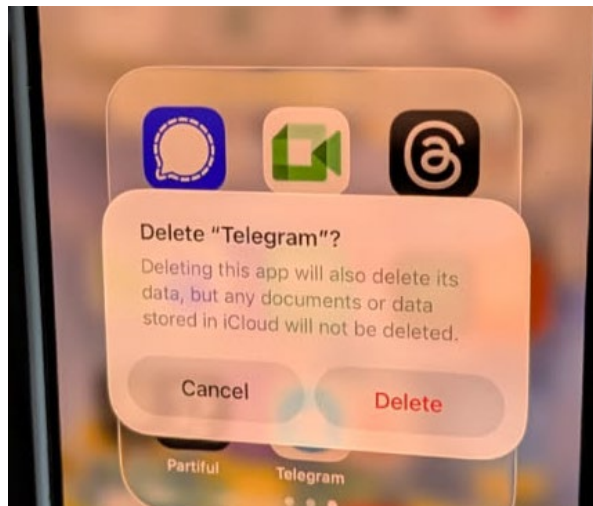
Execution of Federal Search Warrants at Ronnebaum’s Residence

10. In November 2025, the FBI obtained federal search warrants for the identified residence and the persons of Ronnebaum and Target-1. On November 13, 2025, agents executed those search warrants.

11. During the execution of the search warrant the FBI interviewed Ronnebaum and confirmed his cell phone number was XXX-XXX-0110. Agents also observed the same bathroom in the home that appeared in Ronnebaum’s photo that he sent to Subject-1.

12. The FBI seized approximately 38 media storage devices in total from the identified residence. Of those devices, approximately 19 were identified as being possibly associated to Ronnebaum due to being in areas of the home under his control, such as in Ronnebaum’s bedroom and office. The seized devices associated with Target-1 or other individuals living in the home included nine additional phones, four computers, five iPads, and one USB thumb drive.

13. One seized device associated with Ronnebaum is an iPhone 16 Pro cellular phone which used telephone number XXX-XXX-0110. FBI agents located that cellular phone on the nightstand next to Ronnebaum's bed. While the residence was being cleared for safety by the FBI, agents observed the screen on the phone to be on and displaying the following message: *"Delete 'Telegram'? Deleting this app will also delete its data, but any documents or data stored in iCloud will not be deleted."* A photo of the phone displaying this message is below:



Telegram is an application that allows for end-to-encrypted messaging. With my training and in my experience, I have investigated dozens of cases where Telegram is used by offenders trafficking in CSAM. Based on my training, experience, and knowledge of other details of the investigation, I believe the message displayed on Ronnebaum's phone indicates that when Ronnebaum realized FBI agents were at his home, he attempted to delete Telegram from his phone prior to exiting his residence.

Forensic Review of Ronnebaum's iPhone 12 Pro

14. One electronic device seized during the execution of the search warrant was an iPhone 12 Pro cellular phone which was found in Ronnebaum's closet. The Apple account associated with this phone was named "Joshua Ronnebaum" and this phone was also associated with telephone number XXX-XXX-0110. An initial forensic review of this device revealed that on March 23, 2018, Ronnebaum received via an internet-enabled messaging application at least four images which meet the federal definition of child pornography. Ronnebaum received these images from a username consistent with Target-1's first and last name. The images are described below:

- a. An image of a minor boy performing oral sex on an adult man.
- b. An image of an adult man performing oral sex on a minor boy.
- c. An image of a prepubescent boy performing oral sex on an adult man.
- d. An image of a nude prepubescent boy with his buttocks and genitals exposed and whose hands are bound behind his back

15. The initial forensic review of this device revealed that on May 2, 2019, Ronnebaum received via the same internet-enabled messaging application another two images which meet the federal definition of child pornography. Ronnebaum again received these images from a username consistent with Target-1's first and last name. The images are described below:

- a. An image of a nude minor boy exposing his anus and genitals.
- b. An image of a nude minor boy exposing his genitals.

16. The device contains at least 155 images which meet the federal definition of child pornography, including numerous images depicting infants and toddlers. Some of the images appear to have been downloaded from MEGA, a cloud-based file storage and file sharing website/application. Some of the images associated with a MEGA download are described below with their corresponding metadata:

- a. May 23, 2023: An image of a toddler being anally penetrated by the penis of an adult man.
- b. May 23, 2023: An image of an adult man touching the face of an infant with his erect penis.
- c. May 22, 2023: An image of a man inserting his penis into the anus of a male toddler.
- d. October 6, 2022: An image of a prepubescent boy performing oral sex on an adult man.

Forensic Review of Ronnebaum's iPhone 16 Pro

17. An initial forensic review of the Ronnebaum's iPhone 16 Pro revealed that on March 29, 2018, Ronnebaum received a text message from telephone number XXX-XXX-2992, which belongs to Target-1, that contained an image which meets

the federal definition of child pornography. The image depicted a minor boy being anally penetrated by the penis of an unidentified man.

18. The initial forensic review of this device also revealed numerous conversations using different internet-enabled messaging applications wherein Ronnebaum discussed with other individuals his sexual interest in children, desire to sexually abuse children, and at least three conversations where Ronnebaum stated he previously sexually abused two minor boys.

19. Examples of these conversations are below. One conversation occurred on Session, an encrypted messaging application, which is of particular concern due to Ronnebaum's stated fondness for his time in Japan, as described above:

7/13/2025

Unidentified account: 5-8 is ideal

Ronnebaum: Fucking love those ages

Ronnebaum: Start em young

Ronnebaum: Loving dads cocks from a young age

...

Ronnebaum: Grooming them to be cock hungry little boys

...

Ronnebaum: Baby cocks and tight pink holes

Ronnebaum: Imagine how they taste and smell!

7/15/2025

Ronnebaum: Need to get some sexy blonde boys to breed

Unidentified account: for damn sure – fill them with daddy cocks

7/27/2025

Ronnebaum: You have any experience? *devil emoji*

Unidentified account: maybe. Ha ha u?

Ronnebaum: Yep

Ronnebaum: 10 and 12 when I was in my 20s

7/28/2025

Ronnebaum: I was an English teacher in Japan. The boys were family friends and my students

Ronnebaum: They use [sic] to come stay the night with me. We'd all get naked and play with our cocks. They loved to duck [sic] my dick and make me cum *devil emoji*

...

Ronnebaum: Happened a few times

Ronnebaum: They loved to play with my white cock

...

Ronnebaum: I sucked them yeah. Their little cocks

20. A second sample conversation occurred on Telegram. I know from my investigation, including through review of phone extractions and location data from Target-1's phone, that the men in the home frequently travel overseas and outside of Michigan within the United States:

11/9/2025

Unidentified account: We should plan a trip overseas and make this a reality

Unidentified account: Love being a pedo

Ronnebaum: Fuck yea

Ronnebaum: Where can we go?

Unidentified account: Thailand I hear

Ronnebaum: That we can fuck boys

Ronnebaum: Hot

...

Unidentified account: Wanna suck baby cock too

Ronnebaum: ^Same

Ronnebaum: So hot

...

Unidentified account: I wanna have my hubby and a young boy watch w movie naked in bed and rape him in bed all night

Ronnebaum: Fuck yes!

...

Unidentified account: What you'd do in your 20s?

Ronnebaum: Played with a 10 and 12yo

...

Ronnebaum: We'd get naked and play with each other and suck each other

...

Ronnebaum: They were my students *devil emoji*

Ronnebaum: I was living in Japan

...

Ronnebaum: Kids of family friends. They'd come stay the nite with me

Ronnebaum: So hot. So intoxicating

11/11/2025

Ronnebaum: *Sends an image of a male toddler in a diaper*

Unidentified account: Fuck who is this?

Ronnebaum: Saw it on FB

Ronnebaum: So fuckable

11/12/2025

Unidentified account: *Sends a side profile image of a naked male toddler with some of the toddler's penis visible*

Ronnebaum: Fuck yes

Ronnebaum: Where u find those

21. A third sample conversation occurred on WhatsApp:

10/14/2019

Ronnebaum: Played with some boys several years ago

Ronnebaum: 11 – 12

Ronnebaum: I was 25

Unidentified account: Fuck that's hot

Unidentified account: Fuck him ?

Ronnebaum: No unf

Ronnebaum: There were 2

Ronnebaum: Ww did oral

Ronnebaum: All together

...

Unidentified account: Into yng porn?

Ronnebaum: Yeah u?

10/27/2019

Ronnebaum: I really want to meet u

Unidentified account: I wanna fuck a boy with you too

Ronnebaum: Fuck yes

Unidentified account: What age?

Ronnebaum: How young u want

Unidentified account: 4?

Ronnebaum: perfect

Ronnebaum: Stretch that hole

Unidentified account: Can you be in his hole while I'm in his mouth

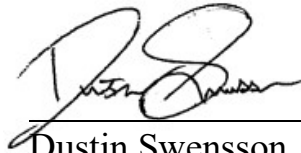
Ronnebaum: Fuck yes

Ronnebaum: Sit him down on my cock

CONCLUSION

22. Based on the foregoing, there is probable cause to believe that Joshua Joseph Ronnebaum committed violations of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2252A(a)(2) (receipt of child pornography) and 2252A(a)(5)(B) (possession of child pornography).

Respectfully submitted,



Dustin Swensson, Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to before me and signed in my
presence and/or by reliable electronic means.



HONORABLE ANTHONY P. PATTI
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Date: December 8, 2025