

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CRIMINAL NO. 2:26-cr-445

v.

- 18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C)
18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1)
18 U.S.C. § 1591(b)(1)
18 U.S.C. § 1591(c)
18 U.S.C. § 1594(d)
18 U.S.C. § 1594(e)
18 U.S.C. § 2251(a)
18 U.S.C. § 2251(e)
18 U.S.C. § 2252A(a)(2)
18 U.S.C. § 2252A(b)(1)
18 U.S.C. § 2252A(a)(5)(B)
18 U.S.C. § 2252A(b)(2)
18 U.S.C. § 2253(a)(2)
18 U.S.C. § 2253(a)(3)
18 U.S.C. § 2256(8)
18 U.S.C. § 2422(b)
18 U.S.C. § 2428
28 U.S.C. § 2461(c)

KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH

INDICTMENT

BACKGROUND

At all times material to this Indictment:

1. The Defendant, KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH, was an adult male who resided in the District of South Carolina. The Defendant was a public official, serving as a City Councilman and as Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Hanahan, South Carolina.

2. Beginning in at least December 2021 and continuing until April 2026, in the District of South Carolina, the Defendant, KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH, used the internet, phones, computers, and smart phone applications to target, recruit, and sexually exploit children, including minors in his own community. He pressured and convinced minors to engage in illegal sex acts,

including sex trafficking and the production and distribution of child pornography, often in exchange for money, which he paid using phone-based peer-to-peer payment platforms.

3. The Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, enticed and encouraged minors to engage in recorded sex acts with other minors, including with some of their own family members. Once he obtained the child pornography, the Defendant saved the files in organized, password-protected folders accessible on his phone. He named the folders after the actual names of the minor victims. The Defendant also distributed the child pornography further, without victim consent, including to other minors. He used those files both to pose as a minor and to entice other minors to produce additional content.

4. The social media and peer-to-peer payment platforms the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, used to facilitate the scheme included the following:

- a. Instagram, an internet-based photo and video sharing social network service operated by Meta, Inc. that is headquartered in the Northern District of California.
- b. Snapchat, an internet-based multimedia instant message application operated by Snap, Inc. that is headquartered in the Central District of California.
- c. TikTok, a social media application that allowed users to communicate by video and text, which is operated by USDS Joint Venture LLC, and is headquartered in the Central District of California.
- d. Telegram, a cloud-based instant messaging and voice over IP service that offered end-to-end encryption and is headquartered in the United Arab Emirates.
- e. X, a social media platform and microblogging service operated by X Corp., which was formerly known as Twitter and is headquartered in the Western District of Texas.
- f. Omegle, an online service that allowed users to be paired with other users for one-on-one video chat sessions anonymously and without registering. The platform was headquartered in the District of Vermont and ceased operations on November 9, 2023.
- g. Skype, a free application that allowed users to communicate by voice call,

video call, and instant messaging operated by Microsoft, which had headquarters in Luxembourg. It ceased operations on May 5, 2025.

- h. Dropbox, Inc. (“Dropbox”), a cloud-based storage service provider that is headquartered in the Northern District of California.
- i. The peer-to-peer payment platforms that the Defendant used to facilitate the scheme included Apple Pay, CashApp, PayPal, and Venmo. The providers were headquartered in the Northern District of California (Apple Pay, CashApp, PayPal) and the Southern District of New York (Venmo).

5. When he used those platforms, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, who is 48 years old, often pretended to be a minor. He also operated under display names and false names that hid his true identity, including Kendall, Kendall Secrest, Kenduhlw, K Hipps, K Hipcheck, Jeff Seaford, John Hargraves, Tommy, [redacted]_HHS, Larry_jbird, kingcashapp50, kingvenmo50, paypalking25, ncboy28215, scguy29464, King Dollar Sign, king51cash, and cash1022k.

6. The minors exploited by the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, through this scheme included the 13 minor female victims and 6 minor male victims listed below, who ranged in age from 12-years-old to 17-years-old at the time of the exploitation:

- a. Minor Female Victim 1 (MFV1), a minor who resided in North Carolina.
- b. Minor Female Victim 2 (MFV2), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- c. Minor Female Victim 3 (MFV3), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- d. Minor Female Victim 4 (MFV4), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- e. Minor Female Victim 5 (MFV5), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- f. Minor Female Victim 6 (MFV6), a minor who resided in North Carolina.
- g. Minor Female Victim 7 (MFV7), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.

- h. Minor Female Victim 8 (MFV8), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- i. Minor Female Victim 9 (MFV9), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- j. Minor Female Victim 10 (MFV10), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- k. Minor Female Victim 11 (MFV11), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- l. Minor Female Victim 12 (MFV12), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- m. Minor Female Victim 14 (MFV14), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- n. Minor Male Victim 1 (MMV1), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- o. Minor Male Victim 2 (MMV2), a minor who resided in North Carolina.
- p. Minor Male Victim 3 (MMV3), a minor who resided in North Carolina.
- q. Minor Male Victim 4 (MMV4), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- r. Minor Male Victim 5 (MMV5), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.
- s. Minor Male Victim 6 (MMV6), a minor who resided in the District of South Carolina.

COUNT 1*(Sex Trafficking of a Minor)*

THE GRAND JURY CHARGES:

7. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

8. That from in or around February 2025 and continuing through in or around April 2026, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, knowingly and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce, recruited, enticed, provided, obtained, and maintained by any means, a person, that is, MMV2, who had not attained the age of 14 years old, knowing, in reckless disregard of the fact, and with reasonable opportunity to observe that MMV2 had not attained the age of 18 years old and would be caused to engage in a commercial sex act.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591(a)(1), 1591(b)(1), and 1591(c).

COUNT 2*(Attempted Production of Child Pornography)*

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

9. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

10. That from in or around January 2025, and continuing through in or around April 2025, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly attempt to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MMV3, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means,

including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 3

(Attempted Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

11. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

12. That from on or about January 5, 2022, and continuing through on or about January 23, 2024, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly attempt to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MMV1, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 4

(Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

13. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and

incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

14. That from on or about September 10, 2023, and continuing through on or about September 27, 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MFV6, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 5

(Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

15. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

16. That from in or around November 2022, through on or about October 17, 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MFV8, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and

facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 6

(Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

17. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

18. That from in or around July 2021, and continuing through on or about November 2022, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MMV4, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 7

(Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

19. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

20. That in or around February 2025 and continuing through in or around February 2026, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP**

HEDGPETH, did knowingly employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MMV2, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 8

(Receipt of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

21. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

22. That from in or around March 2025, and continuing through in or around April 2025, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, knowingly did receive child pornography and materials that contained child pornography, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2256(8), using a means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce, and that had been mailed, shipped, and transported in interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, in that the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, received child pornography and materials that contained child pornography depicting MMV3.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(2) and 2252A(b)(1).

COUNT 9

(Attempted Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

23. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

24. That from in or around December 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly attempt to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MFV10, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 10

(Attempted Production of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

25. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

26. That in or around July 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly attempt to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a minor, MFV12, to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct, and the visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign

commerce by any means, including by computer, and such visual depiction was actually transported and transmitted using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(a) and 2251(e).

COUNT 11

(Attempted Receipt of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

27. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

28. That from in or around June 2024, and continuing through in or around July 2024, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, knowingly did attempt to receive child pornography and materials that contained child pornography, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2256(8), using a means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce, and that had been mailed, shipped, and transported in interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, depicting MFV11.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(2) and 2252A(b)(1).

COUNTS 12 – 20

(Coercion/Enticement of a Minor and Attempt)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

29. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

30. On or around the dates set forth below, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, used a facility and means of

interstate and foreign commerce to knowingly persuade, induce, entice, and coerce individuals listed below (“Minor Victims”) who had not attained the age of 18 years, to engage in sexual activity, which would constitute a criminal offense, and attempt to do so, as identified below:

Count	Date / Date Range	Minor Victim	Illegal Sex Act
12	February 2025 – April 2026	MMV2	Sex Trafficking of a Minor as charged in Count 1; Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 7; and Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
13	January 2025 – April 2025	MMV3	Attempted Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 2; and Attempted Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
14	January 5, 2022 – January 23, 2024	MMV1	Attempted Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 3; and Attempted Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
15	September 10, 2023 – September 27, 2023	MFV6	Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 4; and Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
16	June 2022 – October 17, 2023	MFV8	Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 5; and Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395

17	July 2021 – December 30, 2023	MMV4	Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 6; and Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
18	December 2023	MFV10	Attempted Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 9; and Attempted Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
19	July 2023	MFV12	Attempted Production of Child Pornography as charged in Count 10; and Attempted Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395
20	June 2024 – July 2024	MFV11	Attempted Production of Child Pornography / First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-395

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2422(b).

COUNT 21

(Distribution of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

33. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

34. That in or around July 2021, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, knowingly did distribute child pornography and

materials that contained child pornography, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2256(8), using a means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce, and that had been mailed, shipped, and transported in interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, in that the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, distributed child pornography and materials that contained child pornography depicting MMV4 and MMV5.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(2) and 2252A(b)(1).

COUNT 22

(Distribution of Child Pornography)

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

35. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

36. That on or about September 10, 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, knowingly did distribute child pornography and materials that contained child pornography, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2256(8), using a means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce, and that had been mailed, shipped, and transported in interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, in that the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, distributed child pornography and materials that contained child pornography depicting MMV4 and MFV6.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(2) and 2252A(b)(1).

COUNT 23*(Possession of Child Pornography)*

THE GRAND JURY FURTHER CHARGES:

37. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 6 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

38. That on or about April 14, 2026, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, did knowingly possess materials that contained images of child pornography, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2256(8), which had been mailed, shipped and transported in interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, and that were produced using materials that had been mailed, shipped and transported in interstate and foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, in that the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, possessed materials that contained images of child pornography depicting MFV1, MFV2, MFV3, MFV4, MFV5, MFV6, MFV7, MFV8, MFV9, MFV11, MFV14, MMV2, MMV3, MMV4, MMV5, and MMV6.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(5)(B) and 2252A(b)(2).

FORFEITURE

SEX TRAFFICKING/COERCION AND ENTICEMENT OF A MINOR:

Upon conviction for violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1591 and 2422, as charged in this Indictment, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, shall forfeit to the United States any property used or intended to be used, in any manner or part, to commit or facilitate the commission of the offenses, and any property, real or personal, constituting, derived from or traceable to proceeds the Defendant obtained, directly or indirectly, as a result of such offenses.

PRODUCTION/RECEIPT/DISTRIBUTION/POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY:

Upon conviction for violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251 and 2252A as charged in this Indictment, the Defendant, **KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH**, shall forfeit to the United States his interest in:

- (i) any visual depiction described in section 2251, 2251A, 2252 or 2252A of chapter 110 of the United States Code, or any book, magazine, periodical, film, videotape, or other matter which contains any such visual depiction, which was produced, transported, mailed, shipped or received in violation of chapter 110 of the United States Code;
- (ii) any property, real or personal, constituting or traceable to gross profits or other proceeds obtained from such offenses, and;
- (iii) any property, real or personal, used or intended to be used to commit or to promote the commission of such offenses.

PROPERTY:

The property subject to forfeiture pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(C), 1594(d) and (e), 2253(a)(2) and (3) and 2428, and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Proceeds/Forfeiture Judgment:

A sum of money equal to all proceeds the Defendant obtained, directly or indirectly, from the offenses charged in this Indictment, and all interest and proceeds traceable thereto, and/or such sum that equals all property derived from or traceable to his violation of Title 18.

SUBSTITUTE ASSETS:

If any of the property described above, as a result of any act or omission of the

Defendant:

- a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;
- b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;
- c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court;
- d. has been substantially diminished in value; or
- e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty,

it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by 18 U.S.C. § 982(b)(1) to seek forfeiture of any other property of the Defendant up to an amount equivalent to the value of the above-described forfeitable property.

All pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981(a)(1)(C), 1594(d) and (e), 2253(a)(2) and (3) and 2428, and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).

Atue

BILL

FOREPERSON

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RECORD OF GRAND JURY BALLOT

c/ 2:26-cr-445

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. KEVIN PHILLIP HEDGPETH

(SEALED UNTIL FURTHER ORDER OF THE COURT)