Sex Offender Arrested in Elma, Facebook Sting After Parent Gets Involved

Local News

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Elma, WA - A level two registered sex offender from Snohomish, Washington was arrested today in the city of Elma, after allegedly travelling there to have sex with someone he thought was an 11-year old boy.The “boy” turned out to be a detective, part of the Washington State Patrol’s (WSP) Missing and Exploited Children’s Task Force (MECTF) The arrest took place when the suspect showed up at a men’s restroom in a remote part of an Elma park, where he had arranged to meet his intended victim.The case began because the boy’s mother was alertly monitoring his online activities. When she saw inappropriate chat conversations on his Facebook account, she notified the Elma Police Department which in turn sought assistance from MECTF.

MECTF detectives then assumed an undercover role and for nearly a month continued the online dialogue with the suspect. During that time the suspect sent child pornography and had graphic online conversations with the supposed 11-year old.It was during those conversations that the two agreed to meet at the specific location. When the suspect showed up, he was greeted by detectives and taken into custody.The suspect is identified as 35-year old Joel R. Alexander. Alexander was required to register as a sex offender following a 2001 conviction for Second Degree Child Rape. Alexander was booked into the Grays Harbor County Jail with no bail, facing a number of potential charges:Attempted Rape of a Child 1st DegreePossession of Child Sex DepictionsSending and Receiving Child Sex DepictionsCommunication with a Minor for Immoral PurposesFailing to Register as a Sex Offender in Snohomish CountyDetectives later executed a search warrant at Alexander’s residence in Snohomish and the investigation continues, including identifying any other potential unidentified victims. Assistance with this investigation was provided by the U.S. Marshal’s Service Sex Offender Investigations Branch and the Elma Police Department, with support of the Grays Harbor County Prosecutor’s Office. MECTF is a multi-agency task force within the WSP comprised of detectives from the WSP and the Lakewood Police Department. MECTF provides support to local agencies across the state in cases involving missing and abducted children and child exploitation.