

PRESS RELEASE

# Defendant Threatened Violent, Antisemitic Action

Friday, June 16, 2023

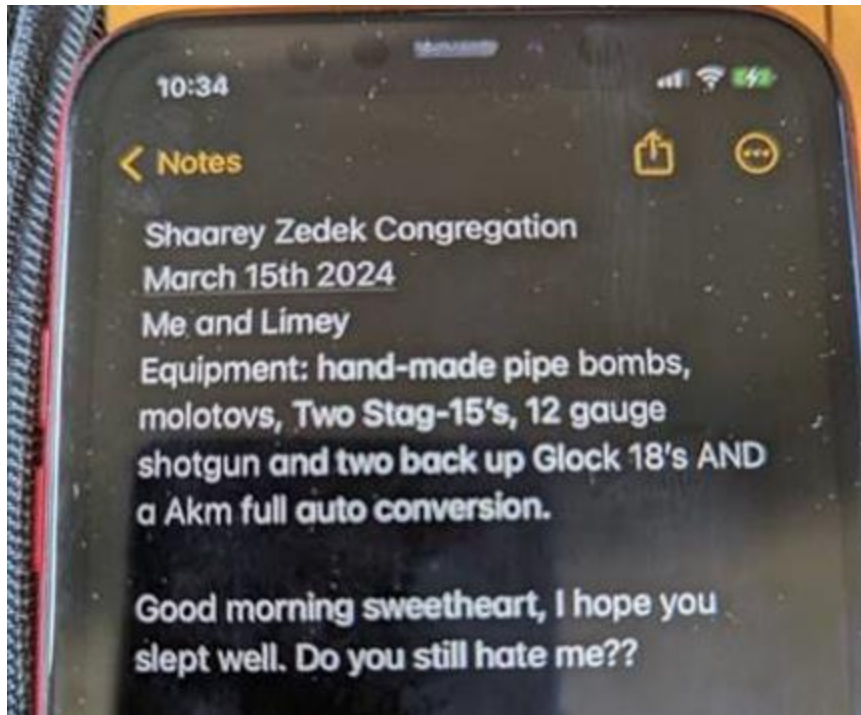
## For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Michigan

**MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN** — U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan Mark Totten today announced that Seann Pietela, 19, of Pickford, Michigan was arrested by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents and charged in a criminal complaint with transmitting a communication containing a threat to injure another.

“Antisemitic threats and violence against our Jewish communities – or any other group for that matter – will not be tolerated in the Western District of Michigan,” said **U.S. Attorney Mark Totten**. “Today and every day we take all credible threats seriously. I’m incredibly grateful to the FBI for their swift action to identify and arrest Pietela.”

As outlined in the complaint, Pietela is alleged to have communicated with others on Instagram and evinced a neo-Nazi ideology, antisemitism, glorification of past mass shooters, and a desire and intent to mimic past mass shooters or mass casualty events. Pietela allegedly communicated about planning to commit acts of violence to kill other people. Pietela’s home was searched earlier today, and law enforcement seized ammunition, magazines, a shotgun, a rifle, a pistol, various knives, firearms accessories, tactical vests, mask, a Nazi flag, a ghillie suit, gas masks, and military sniper/survival manuals. Also seized was Pietela’s phone, and in the notes app, he had identified a particular synagogue in East Lansing, a date, and a list of equipment.



“No American should face threats against them based on their race or religion,” said **James A. Tarasca, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan**. “Crimes like the one alleged in this complaint have a profound effect not only on the intended target, but on their entire community. I would like to thank the Chippewa County Sheriff’s Office for their close collaboration during this investigation. Every Michigander should rest assured that law enforcement at all levels are working together to ensure that those who engage in this type of behavior see justice under the law.

The Chippewa County Sheriff’s Office, TRI-county Drug Enforcement Team (TRIDENT), Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team (UPSET), and Michigan State Police Emergency Services Team assisted the FBI with this case.

A copy of the complaint is attached. The charges in a complaint are merely accusations, and a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

[Pietila Complaint Affidavit](#)

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*Updated June 20, 2023*