

PRESS RELEASE

# Man Who Threatened Violent, Antisemitic Action Indicted By Grand Jury

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

## For Immediate Release

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

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN** — U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan Mark Totten today announced that a grand jury returned an indictment against Seann Pietila, 19, of Pickford, Michigan for violent threats Pietila made online. Pietila allegedly communicated via Instagram about planning to commit acts of violence to kill other people. He also allegedly sent messages about neo-nazism, antisemitism, glorification of past mass shooters, and a desire and intent to mimic past mass shooters.

"No one should face violent threats because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or any other status," said **U.S. Attorney Mark Totten**. "We have seen a rise in antisemitism across the nation and here in Michigan, and my office is committed to using all our powers to protect the public and ensure accountability."

The indictment charges Pietila with three counts. The first two counts charge that he transmitted threatening communications in interstate commerce. The maximum penalty under that statute is five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Pietila also faces one count of threat to kill or injure by means of fire, which is punishable by up to ten years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

"The crimes alleged in this indictment have made members of our community feel unsafe as they practice their religion. No American should fear engaging in their constitutionally protected rights," said **James A. Tarasca, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Michigan**. "I appreciate the coordinated efforts of our state and local law enforcement partners to disrupt this defendant before he could put his plans into action."

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher O'Connor and investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The FBI was assisted by 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.

[A copy of the indictment is attached.](#) The charges in an indictment are merely accusations, and a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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