

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 25-mj-8368-SMM

FILED BY YAR D.C.

Jul 10, 2025

ANGELA E. NOBLE
CLERK U.S. DIST. CT.
S. D. OF FLA. - WPB

IN RE SEALED COMPLAINT

CRIMINAL COVER SHEET

1. Did this matter originate from a matter pending in the Central Region of the United States Attorney's Office prior to October 3, 2019 (Mag. Judge Jared M. Strauss)? No
2. Did this matter involve the participation of or consultation with Magistrate Judge Eduardo I. Sanchez during his tenure at the U.S. Attorney's Office, which concluded on January 22, 2023? No
3. Did this matter involve the participation of or consultation with Magistrate Judge Marty Fulgueira Elfenbein during her tenure at the U.S. Attorney's Office, which concluded on March 5, 2024? No
4. Did this matter involve the participation of or consultation with Magistrate Judge Ellen F. D'Angelo during her tenure at the U.S. Attorney's Office, which concluded on October 7, 2024? No

Respectfully submitted,

HAYDEN P. O'BYRNE
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

By: 

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Florida

FILED BY YAR D.C. Jul 10, 2025 ANGELA E. NOBLE CLERK U.S. DIST. CT. S. D. OF FLA. - WPB

United States of America v. RONALD ALAN FRANKEL

Case No. 25-mj-8368-SMM

Defendant(s)

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 01/31/2025 to 02/02/2025 in the county of Palm Beach in the Southern District of Florida, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section 18 U.S.C. 2423(a) Offense Description Transportation of a minor with intent to engage in sexual criminal activity

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

Please see the attached affidavit of Special Agent Marisa Morris, Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Continued on the attached sheet.

Sworn and attested to me by applicant by telephone (FaceTime) per the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4(d) and 4.1

Marisa Morris signature and title: Marisa Morris, Special Agent, FBI



Date: 7/10/2025

City and state: Fort Pierce, Florida

Shaniek Mills Maynard signature and title: Hon. Shaniek Mills Maynard, U.S. Magistrate Judge

I, Marisa Morris, being duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I am a Special Agent with the Miami Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) and have held this position since April 2021. I am currently assigned to the FBI Miami Division’s West Palm Beach Resident Agency. Before becoming an FBI Special Agent, I worked for the FBI as a Staff Operations Specialist from September 2017 to December 2020 where I investigated threats to national security. I also hold a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut. I am a law enforcement officer of the United States within the meaning of Section 2510(7) of Title 18, United States Code. That is, I am an officer of the United States, who is empowered by law to conduct investigations of and make arrests for, offenses enumerated in Title 18, United States Code. My current responsibilities include conducting federal investigations of violations involving crimes against children and human trafficking.

2. As part of my responsibilities, I investigate crimes involving the sexual exploitation of minors, to include but not limited to, sex trafficking of minors, child pornography, and online enticement violations. I have received training on the proper investigative techniques for these violations, including the application and execution of arrest and search warrants.

3. The facts set forth in this affidavit are based upon my personal knowledge, information obtained from others involved in this investigation, including other law enforcement officers, my review of documents and information gained through training and experience. Since this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause to support a Criminal Complaint, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. Rather, I have set forth only those facts I believe are necessary to establish probable cause to believe that from on or January 31, 2025 through on or about February 2, 2025, RONALD

RONALD ALAN FRANKEL did transport a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a).

PROBABLE CAUSE

4. On or about February 10, 2025, a complainant contacted the FBI to report her minor daughter (hereinafter “the Minor Victim”), had been paid by an adult male named RON FRANKEL, who lived in Delray Beach, Florida, to travel to Delray Beach and engage in sex acts with FRANKEL.

5. On February 18, 2025, the FBI conducted a Child and Adolescent Forensic Interview (CAFI) with the Minor Victim. During the CAFI, the Minor Victim explained she had been looking for a “sugar daddy”¹ and met FRANKEL on Tinder.² FRANKEL’s relationship with the Minor Victim began by the two conducting FaceTime video calls multiple times a week while the Minor Victim was nude. FRANKEL paid about \$200.00 to \$300.00 USD per video session via Venmo.³ FRANKEL told the Minor Victim he would pay more money if the Minor Victim masturbated. One time, FRANKEL requested the Minor Victim to masturbate by using a hairbrush and instructed the Minor Victim on how to pose for the video. It was clear to the Minor Victim that FRANKEL was masturbating during the video calls.

6. After multiple FaceTime calls, FRANKEL sent the Minor Victim approximately \$1,000.00 USD via Venmo for a plane ticket to Florida. An extraction of the Minor Victim’s telephone indicates a money transfer of \$1,000.00 USD was sent from FRANKEL to the Minor Victim on January 21, 2025. The Minor Victim booked the ticket via Priceline.com with her own

¹ A “sugar daddy” is slang which typically refers to a rich older man who provides financial and/or material support to a younger individual, often in exchange for company or sexual favors.

² Tinder is an online networking application often used for finding sexual and/or romantic partners.

³ Venmo is a mobile payment service that allows users to send and receive funds via a mobile phone application.

debit card and, at FRANKEL's direction, told the Minor Victim's mother she would be traveling to Florida with her friends.

7. Records obtained from Priceline show ticketed travel for the Minor Victim on January 31, 2025 from Des Moines International Airport (DSM) in Des Moines, Iowa, to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The records also a ticketed return flight for the Minor Victim on February 2, 2025 from FLL to DSM.

8. The Minor Victim reported she landed in Florida and was picked up by a black Cadillac arranged by FRANKEL, which brought her to FRANKEL's residence inside a gated community, where she met him. Upon arrival to FRANKEL's residence, FRANKEL asked the Minor Victim if she wanted to shower with FRANKEL or get in the hot tub. Minor Victim swam in the hot tub and/or pool, where FRANKEL removed the Minor Victim's bottoms and performed oral sex on the Minor Victim. Then, the Minor Victim performed oral sex on FRANKEL. FRANKEL told the Minor Victim, "If you don't say no, I won't say no." The Minor Victim interpreted this statement to believe FRANKEL would pay the Minor Victim or purchase items for the Minor Victim as long as she did not decline FRANKEL's sexual requests. The Minor Victim then went to bed, and, in an attempt to prevent as many sexual encounters with FRANKEL as possible, informed FRANKEL she slept in very late into the morning

9. The Minor Victim explained she slept in a separate room from FRANKEL in FRANKEL's residence. The next day, FRANKEL began texting the Minor Victim. FRANKEL knocked on the Minor Victim's door and they went downstairs for breakfast.

10. An extraction of the Minor Victim's telephone shows the following text conversation on February 1, 2025 between FRANKEL's telephone number, ***-***-7663, and the Minor Victim:

Minor Victim: “Just woke up”

FRANKEL: “I am down stairs. Let me know when to come in your room”.

11. The Minor Victim explained after the two had breakfast, FRANKEL and the Minor Victim went upstairs and had vaginal intercourse in a different bedroom. Immediately after the sexual encounter, FRANKEL sent the Minor Victim \$3,000.00 USD via Venmo. An extraction of the Minor Victim’s telephone indicates a money transfer of \$3,000.00 USD was sent from FRANKEL to the Minor Victim on February 1, 2025.

12. The Minor Victim told the CAFI that later the same day, FRANKEL drove the Minor Victim in a Lamborghini to a nail salon and the mall in Boca Raton. FRANKEL purchased a diamond necklace and bracelet, a MacBook, AirPods, and clothing from Lululemon and Alo for the Minor Victim. Records obtained from jewelry store Gorjana and Apple Inc. confirmed these purchases. FRANKEL and the Minor Victim then returned to FRANKEL’s residence, where they engaged in vaginal intercourse again.

13. Records obtained from Apple Inc. show an email added to FRANKEL’s Apple subscriber data on September 21, 2024 with the Minor Victim’s name and an email address ending in “wdmcs.org.” According to the results of an open-source search, “WDMCS” likely refers to West Des Moines Community Schools. The West Des Moines Community Schools website states the district serves grades Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12.

14. The morning of February 2, 2025, FRANKEL and the Minor Victim had vaginal intercourse. During this sexual encounter, FRANKEL stopped and told the Minor Victim he would give her “something extra” for trying “something new.” FRANKEL then moved the Minor Victim to a prone position and had anal intercourse with the Minor Victim. The Minor Victim began crying and asked FRANKEL to stop. FRANKEL held the Minor Victim down, told the Minor

Victim to “just breathe,” and continued. FRANKEL stopped the intercourse when the Minor Victim asked a second time. Immediately after the sexual encounter, FRANKEL gave the Minor Victim \$1,000 USD cash.

15. FRANKEL asked the Minor Victim multiple times if she had any friends she could introduce who FRANKEL could pay for sex.

16. Later, FRANKEL ordered the Minor Victim a car to take her back to the airport, and the Minor Victim flew back to Des Moines, Iowa on February 2, 2025.

17. Text message records show the following conversation on February 4, 2025 between the Minor Victim and FRANKEL’s telephone number, ***-***-7663, amid a conversation about the Minor Victim’s spring break plans:

FRANKEL: “none of your friends want to go [to] Florida”

Minor Victim: “probably not”

Minor Victim: “they don’t want to”

...

FRANKEL: “wow”

...

Minor Victim: “Well that’s their choice. I only told a few of them what I’m doing and they don’t wanna do it and I’m not gonna pressure them either”

FRANKEL: “did you share about the \$\$\$\$”

18. An extraction of the Minor Victim’s telephone shows the following search terms were entered on the Minor Victim’s device on the listed dates:

January 24, 2025: “[FRANKEL’s home address in] Delray Beach florida 33446”

January 30, 2025: “mall near [FRANKEL’s home address in] Delray Beach florida 33446”

February 3, 2025: “i was anally raped”

February 3, 2025: “i was raped and can’t tell anyone”

February 11, 2025: “ron frankel court records”

19. In Florida, a person 24 years of age or older who engages in sexual activity with a person 16 or 17 years of age commits a felony of the second degree. Fla. Stat. § 794.05(1). FRANKEL was born in October 1956 and was 68 when the Minor Victim traveled from Iowa and engaged in sexual activity with him. The Minor Victim was 17 years old.⁴

20. Records received from AT&T revealed RON FRANKEL is the subscriber of telephone number ***-***-7663, which has been active since 2007. On July 2, 2025, in case number 25-mj-8359-BER, the Honorable Bruce E. Reinhart, U.S. Magistrate Judge, authorized a search warrant for location information of the cellular telephone assigned ***-***-7663. Records obtained from the cellular service provider AT&T show that the phone is located in the vicinity of FRANKEL’s residence.

21. Based upon the foregoing facts, and my training and experience, I submit that there is probable cause to believe that from on or about January 31, 2025, through on or about February

⁴ Under 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a), the government does not have to prove that the defendant knew that the victim was under the age of 18. *United States v. Cox*, 577 F.3d 833, 836 (7th Cir. 2009).

2, 2025, RONALD ALAN FRANKEL violated 18 U.S.C. § 2423(a) (transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity).

Further Affiant Sayeth Naught


Marisa Morris, Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subscribed and sworn to me by applicant
by telephone (FaceTime) per the requirements of
Fed. R. Crim. P. 4(d) and 4.1.


HON. SHANIEK MILLS MAYNARD
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

PENALTY SHEET

Defendant's Name: RONALD ALAN FRANKEL

Case No: 25-mj-8368-SMM

Count #: 1

Transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity

18 U.S.C. § 2423(a)

* **Max. Term of Imprisonment:** Life

* **Mandatory Min. Term of Imprisonment (if applicable):** 10 years

* **Max. Supervised Release:** Life (mandatory minimum term of 5 years)

* **Max. Fine:** \$250,000 fine and a \$5,000 special assessment

***Refers only to possible term of incarceration, supervised release and fines. It does not include restitution, special assessments, parole terms, or forfeitures that may be applicable.**