

No.

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

DAYTON MICHAEL CRAMER,
Petitioner,

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Respondent.

**On Petition for Writ of Certiorari
to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals**

**APPENDIX TO
PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI**

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IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

No. 18-12620

Non-Argument Calendar

D.C. Docket No. 4:17-cr-00014-MW-CAS-1

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

DAYTON MICHAEL CRAMER,

Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the United States District Court

for the Northern District of Florida

(October 3, 2019)

Before: WILSON, WILLIAM PRYOR, and GRANT,

Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:

Dayton Michael Cramer appeals his conviction

for attempted enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2422(b). Cramer argues the district court erred in denying his motions for judgment of acquittal because his conviction was based on insufficient evidence. He also claims his conduct did not violate § 2422(b) as interpreted by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. After careful review of the parties' briefs and the record, we affirm.

I.

We review de novo a denial of a motion for judgment of acquittal on sufficiency of the evidence grounds, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the government and resolving all reasonable inferences and credibility evaluations in the government's favor. *United States v. Capers*, 708 F.3d 1286, 1296 (11th Cir. 2013). We need not rule

out every hypothesis of innocence because the “jury is free to choose among reasonable constructions of the evidence.” *United States v. Peters*, 403 F.3d 1263, 1268 (11th Cir. 2005). The jury’s verdict must be affirmed unless no reasonable trier of fact could have reached a conclusion of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. *See United States v. Foster*, 878 F.3d 1297, 1304 (11th Cir. 2018).

A conviction under § 2422(b) for attempting to induce a minor to engage in sexual activities requires the government to prove the defendant “(1) had the specific intent to induce a minor to engage in sexual activity, and (2) took a substantial step toward the commission of that offense.” *United States v. Stahlman*, No. 17-14387, slip op. at 47 (11th Cir. Aug. 19, 2019). “The statute criminalizes an intentional attempt to achieve a mental state— a

minor's assent." *United States v. Van Buren Lee*, 603 F.3d 904, 914 (11th Cir. 2010) (emphasis in original) (internal quotation mark omitted). A defendant can be convicted under § 2422(b) even if he attempted to exploit a fictitious minor and communicated only with an adult intermediary. *United States v. Gillis*, No. 16-16482, slip op. at 9–10 (11th Cir. Sept. 13, 2019) (per curiam).

Cramer argues the evidence failed to establish either element because he never had contact with the fictional minor, Paisley; he traveled to meet only Paisley's purported stepmother; and he did not bring any items or gifts indicating he intended to meet or have sex with Paisley. Cramer also claims he unequivocally abandoned his plans to meet Paisley.

Based on the evidence presented at trial, a reasonable jury could have found that Cramer had

the requisite intent. With regard to intent, “the government must prove that the defendant intended to *cause assent* on the part of the minor, not that he acted with the specific intent to engage in sexual activity.” *See Van Buren Lee*, 603 F.3d at 914 (emphasis added) (internal quotation mark omitted).

Cramer initiated an online conversation with a person he believed to be the stepmother of a minor after reading a post on Craigslist warning that a stepmother was seeking an older man to give her 13-year-old stepdaughter some “experience.” The ensuing conversation demonstrates that Cramer intended to cause Paisley’s assent: Cramer asked what the stepmother wanted him to teach Paisley, whether Paisley was a virgin, and whether Paisley wanted to learn. He said he needed to know that Paisley wanted to do the things that the stepmother

wanted her to learn. He said he would not hurt Paisley and did not want to surprise her. And he said he did not have a problem with the fact that Paisley was 13, claiming he had previously engaged in sexual activity with teens.

Cramer also sent a picture of himself for the stepmother to show Paisley and then followed up with an explicit picture of his genitalia. He gave a detailed and explicit account of what he intended to do with Paisley, claiming he would go slow, give her a massage to help her relax, gradually move to sexual activity, and stop at any point if she wanted to stop. Finally, Cramer discussed potential meeting times with the stepmother.

Although Cramer ultimately backed out of meeting Paisley, sufficient evidence demonstrated his decision stemmed from his fear that the

stepmother was associated with law enforcement, not from a change of heart about pursuing Paisley's assent to sexual activity. Indeed, Cramer repeatedly asked for assurances that the stepmother was not associated with law enforcement, claiming that was his "only reluctance in the matter." He ultimately agreed to meet the stepmother so she could prove she was not associated with law enforcement. Cramer's decision to meet the stepmother corroborates his criminal intent because he would not have had reason to fear her association with law enforcement unless he intended to pursue Paisley's assent to sexual activity. *See Van Buren Lee*, 603 F.3d at 915 (noting defendant's concern over whether a purported mother of two minor daughters was part of a sting operation helped demonstrate his criminal intent under § 2422(b)). Therefore, the record

contains ample evidence that Cramer intended to induce Paisley's assent to sexual activity with him.

A reasonable jury also could have found that Cramer took a substantial step toward causing Paisley's assent to engage in sexual activity with him. A substantial step is an objective act that marks the defendant's conduct as criminal such that his actions as a whole strongly corroborate the required culpability. *United States v. Murrell*, 368 F.3d 1283, 1288 (11th Cir. 2004). In the context of § 2422(b), "the government must prove that the defendant took a substantial step toward causing assent, not toward causing actual sexual contact." *Van Buren Lee*, 603 F.3d at 914. We must evaluate the totality of Cramer's conduct to determine whether the record supports that he took a substantial step toward inducing a minor to engage

in sexual conduct. *Id.* at 916; *United States v. Yost*, 479 F.3d 815, 820 (11th Cir. 2007) (per curiam).

The totality of Cramer's conduct demonstrates he took a substantial step toward inducing Paisley's assent to sexual activity, including his communications with the stepmother, the photographs he sent, his detailed description of the sexual acts he planned to do with Paisley, his efforts to arrange a meeting, and his repeated concerns about law enforcement. Further, despite backing out of meeting Paisley, Cramer traveled to an arranged meeting spot to meet the stepmother and ensure she was not part of a sting operation.

This court recently held that a defendant's travel to meet an intermediary to ensure he was not affiliated with law enforcement constituted a substantial step toward inducing a minor to engage

in sexual activity. *See Gillis*, slip op. at 5, 10.

In *Gillis*, the defendant backed out of a planned meeting with a purported father and his fictional daughter in part because he was concerned it was a sting operation. *See id.* at 5. The father assured the defendant it was not, and they planned another meeting so they could show each other they were “real” before going back to the father’s house to meet the daughter. *Id.* We found the defendant took a substantial step toward inducing a minor’s assent to sexual activity when he drove to meet the father. *Id.* at 10.

Although Cramer and the stepmother did not prearrange a meeting with Paisley the same day as their meeting, that is a distinction without difference because “our precedent and the precedents of many of our sister circuits hold that [§] 2422(b) prohibits

attempts to cause minors to agree to engage in illegal sexual conduct, not attempts to engage in illegal sexual conduct with minors.” *Van Buren Lee*, 603 F.3d at 916. Regardless of whether Cramer anticipated seeing Paisley or engaging in sexual conduct with her the day of the arranged meeting, a reasonable jury could have concluded that he crossed the line from mere “talk” to attempted inducement when he drove to meet the stepmother. *See Gillis*, slip op. at 10; *Yost*, 479 F.3d at 820. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine why Cramer would have arranged a meeting with the stepmother to ensure she was not affiliated with law enforcement unless he intended to continue pursuing Paisley’s assent to sexual activity. Therefore, sufficient evidence supports Cramer’s conviction.

II.

Cramer also asks us to endorse the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit’s interpretation of § 2422(b) that communications with an adult intermediary to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor are punishable only if “the defendant’s interaction with the intermediary is aimed at transforming or overcoming the minor’s will in favor of engaging in illegal sexual activity.” *See United States v. Hite*, 769 F.3d 1154, 1160 (D.C. Cir. 2014). But this court has already rejected that interpretation of § 2422(b). *See Murrell*, 368 F.3d at 1287.

In *Murrell*, we considered the meaning of the term “induce” for purposes of § 2422 when deciding whether a defendant could be convicted for inducing a minor to engage in illegal sex acts by communicating only through an adult intermediary.

See 368 F.3d at 1287. Our court acknowledged “induce” could mean “to lead or move by influence or persuasion; to prevail upon,’ or alternatively, ‘to stimulate the occurrence of; cause.’” *Id.* (alterations accepted) (quoting *The Am. Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 671 (William Morris ed., 1st ed. 1981)). We endorsed the latter definition because the former would essentially render the term “persuade” superfluous. *See id.* Therefore, our binding precedent¹ forecloses a reading of the statute that would make interactions with an adult intermediary punishable only if such interactions were aimed at transforming or overcoming the

¹ Under this court’s prior panel precedent rule, a prior panel’s holding is binding on all subsequent panels unless and until it is overruled by the Supreme Court or by this court sitting en banc. *United States v. Michael Lee*, 886 F.3d 1161, 1163 (11th Cir. 2018), *petition for cert. filed*, (U.S. July 23, 2019) (No. 19-5331).

minor's will in favor of sexual activity.

Accordingly, we affirm Cramer's conviction.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

Northern District of Florida

UNITES STATES OF AMERICA

v.

DAYTON MICHAEL CRAMER

AMENDED¹

JUDGMENT IN A CRIMINAL CASE

Case Number: 4:17CR00014-001

USM Number: 25543-017

R. Timothy Jansen (Retained)

Defendant's Attorney

THE DEFENDANT:

___ pleaded guilty to count(s) _____

¹ Amended to include forfeited items listed on Page 8 and 9 of the Judgement filed on 6/15/18 pursuant to [79] ORDER GRANTING [77] MOTION TO CORRECT JUDGMENT.

__ pleaded nolo contendere to count(s)_____

which was accepted by the court.

X was found guilty on count(s) 1 on March 21, 2018

after a plea of not guilty.

The defendant is adjudicated guilty of these offenses:

Title & Section

18 U.S.C. § 2422(b)

Nature of Offense

Enticement of a Minor to Engage in Sexual Activity

Using Interstate Commerce

Offense Ended

February 14, 2017

Count

1

The defendant is sentenced as provided in pages
2 through 9 of this judgment. The sentence is imposed
pursuant to the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984.

__ The defendant has been found not guilty on
count(s) _____
__ Count(s) _____ is __ are dismissed on the
motion of the United States.

It is ordered that the defendant must notify the
United States attorney for this district within 30 days
of any change of name, residence, or mailing address
until all fines, restitution, costs, and special
assessments imposed by this judgment are fully paid.
If ordered to pay restitution, the defendant must notify
the court and United States attorney of material
changes in economic circumstances.

June 15, 2018

Date of Imposition of Judgment

s/Mark E. Walker

Signature of Judge

Mark E. Walker, United States District Judge

Name and Title of Judge

06/20/2018

Date

IMPRISONMENT

The defendant is hereby committed to the custody of the United States Bureau of Prisons to be imprisoned for a total term of: **120 months as to Count 1.**

X The court makes the following recommendations to the Bureau of Prisons:

1. BOP designation at FCI Jessup, Georgia, first,
2. BOP designation at FCI Coleman, Florida, second.

X The defendant is remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal.

__ The defendant shall surrender to the United States Marshal for this district:

__ at _____ a.m. __ p.m. on _____.

__ as notified by the United States Marshal.

__ The defendant shall surrender for service of sentence at the institution designated by the Bureau of Prisons:

__ before 2 p.m. on _____.

__ as notified by the United States Marshal.

__ as notified by the Probation or Pretrial Services Office.

RETURN

I have executed this judgment as follows:

Defendant delivered on _____

to _____

at _____, with a certified copy of this

judgment.

UNITED STATES MARSHAL

By _____

DEPUTY UNITED STATES MARSHAL

SUPERVISED RELEASE

Upon release from imprisonment, the defendant
shall be on supervised release for a term of: **10 years**
as to Count 1.

MANDATORY CONDITIONS

1. You must not commit another federal, state or
local crime.
2. You must not unlawfully possess a controlled
substance.
3. You must refrain from any unlawful use of a

controlled substance. You must submit to one drug test within 15 days of release from imprisonment and at least two periodic drug tests thereafter, as determined by the court.

X The above drug testing condition is suspended, based on the court's determination that you pose a low risk of future substance abuse. (*check if applicable*)

4. You must make restitution in accordance with 18 U.S.C. §§ 3663 and 3663A or any other statute authorizing a sentence of restitution. (*check if applicable*)

5. X You must cooperate in the collection of DNA as directed by the probation officer. (*check if applicable*)

6. X You must comply with the requirements of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (42 U.S.C. § 16901, et seq.) as directed by the probation

officer, the Bureau of Prisons, or any state sex offender registration agency in which you reside, work, are a student, or were convicted of a qualifying offense. *(check if applicable)*

7. X You must participate in an approved program for domestic violence. *(check if applicable)*

You must comply with the standard conditions that have been adopted by this court as well as with any other conditions on the attached page.