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Athens man held on \$250K bond after being charged with extortion and stalking of ex-girlfriend

ATHENS, Ohio – Patrick Crist, 27, of Athens, was arrested Monday and indicted by an Athens County Grand Jury on charges that include extortion and stalking of an ex-girlfriend.

Crist appeared in Athens County Common Pleas Court Tuesday in front of Judge George McCarthy and pleaded not guilty. He was placed under a \$250,000 bond as requested by the Athens County Prosecutor's Office.

Crist is charged with:

- Extortion (F3) — three counts
- Menacing by stalking (F4) — two counts
- Telecommunications harassment (M1)
- Nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images (M3)

In June 2020, the victim in this case reported to the Washington County Sheriff's Office that her social media accounts had been hacked and that photos and videos were downloaded from those accounts. She then started to receive emails from a false account that demanded her current passwords, threatening to release and post the videos and pictures if she did not comply. Videos of the victim were later posted on a pornographic website.

"(Crist) has been making the victim's life unbearable" Chief Assistant Prosecutor Liz Pepper told the court. "The IP addresses for the accounts and emails came back to his residence."

The activity continued and included Crist allegedly giving out the victim's home address and setting up meetings with other men through the false account.

Crist was interviewed by Washington County Sheriff's Office deputies in March and search warrants were obtained for various social media accounts and IP addresses. The case was presented to the Washington County Prosecutor's Office which determined the Athens County Prosecutor's Office would have proper jurisdiction.

Monday, investigators with the prosecutor's office executed a search warrant and confiscated a number of computer- and internet-related electronics from Crist's home.

Pepper cited the seriousness of the offenses, the threats to the victim and the allegation that Crist continued the activity even after being investigated by Washington County authorities as indicators that a \$250,000 bond is necessary. Defense attorney Sky Pettey said Crist is not a flight risk, does not have a felony record and lives with his parents in asking that Crist be released on his own recognizance.

McCarthy ordered the \$250,000 bond. If Crist posts bond, he is to be placed on house arrest at his parents' residence and wear an ankle monitor. He is to have no contact with the victim.

A pretrial in the case is set for June 1 and a jury trial is scheduled for July 1.

