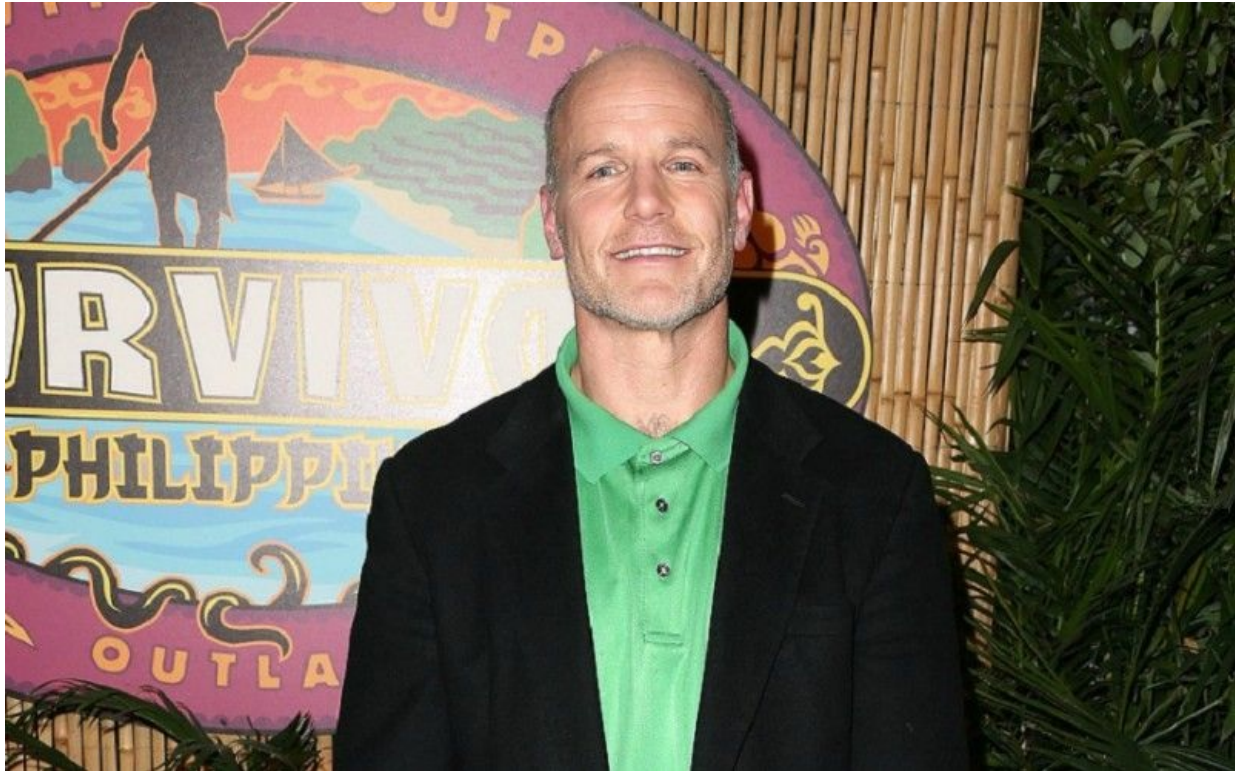


Survivor Contestant Sentenced for Child Pornography



Summary: A former *Survivor* contestant was sentenced to a minimum 1 year in prison after child pornography was found on his computer.

Michael Skupin, a two-time contestant on *Survivor* was sentenced by a judge in Michigan for child pornography and larceny. He will spend one to four years behind bars. He was also give four years' probation for the theft charge.

The prosecutor for the case said before sentencing, "I think he is a threat. We are asking for the maximum sentence." Skupin was ordered to pay \$31,800 in restitution and additional several thousands in dollars for court costs. He had pleaded not guilty to 11 charges of child pornography and racketeering. He was convicted on four of the counts of child pornography. He pleaded no contest to one count of larceny by conversion.

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette ordered the investigation that led to Skupin. He said, "The children in these videos and images were exploited, and each time the images were shared and viewed continued their suffering. My hope is that today's conviction will bring some closure to the families and the children that are victims in this case."

The investigation began when a woman went to a local new station about being a victim of a gifting scheme. She claims she invested in Skupin's Pay It Forward scheme where her donation would filter through a chart of investors. Once other investors donated, she would be paid by their money. Other investors eventually come forward that they had also paid into the scheme. Police began an investigation into Skupin, where they discovered the child pornography on his computer.

Skupin asked for mercy, claiming he was innocent before sentencing. He begged the judge to consider the hardship his imprisonment would cause on his children and stepchildren. He said, "I maintain that I didn't do it. That's all I maintain. There were hundreds of people who had access to my computer. I have 11 children who I'm raising, and I have about \$1,000 a month in child support. There's so much fallout that would result in me going away."

In his statement before sentencing, he focused on the Pay It Forward program that he claims he took over in order to help people. As for the child pornography charges against him, he places all the blame elsewhere, "My conviction was based on temporary internet files created by my computer, the internet. I got scared and took a plea, paid a bulk of restitution by selling my remaining possessions."

Skupin was the first person on *Survivor* to be medically evacuated from the reality show when he fell into a fire. He competed on *The Australian Outback* and *Philippines* seasons.

Why do you think people are so engrossed with child pornography? Tell us in the comments below.

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