

Madison County charges James Michael Francis Lopes with disorderly conduct, criminal trespassing to private property

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
April 25 2016 4:32 PM





EDWARDSVILLE – Metro East residents are likely feeling a sense of relief that **James Michael Francis Lopes**, 40, has been arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing to private property.

Lopes was apprehended at approximately 8 p.m. on the charges after a near uproar on Facebook and social media about his approaches and verbal exchanges to different residents over the weekend, Lakin and Gibbons said.

Madison County Sheriff John Lakin and State's Attorney Thomas Gibbons held a press conference at the Madison County Sheriff's Office in Edwardsville on Monday afternoon.

Below is a video captured at the press conference Monday afternoon with Sheriff Lakin and State's Attorney Gibbons:

Sheriff Lakin said law enforcement in the community received great support from residents in this case. Sheriff Gibbons commended the Madison County Sheriff's Department for their quick work in making an arrest.

"The public and citizens showed great concern about an individual that was making alarming comments in our community," Sheriff Lakin said. "It is wonderful we have a

judicial and court system we do have in Madison County that we were able to work quickly today to be able to hold this individual with no bond until we can get him the appropriate help he needs.”

Sheriff Lakin said there was some concern in law enforcement that there were some in the community trying to take their own action in this case by following the individual.

“Now that his photograph is out there, we would be concerned about his safety if he were to make bond real quickly,” Lakin said. “If someone did see him in the community they would ask us first and the courts why is this individual on our streets, but more importantly we would be concerned for his safety. It is probably a good idea for him to be where he is now (in jail).”

State’s Attorney Gibbons said in the brief period he has been investigating this case, his office has determined there was a prior case in Oregon where Lopes was charged in Oregon with an attempted sex offense of a little girl.

“That case garnered quite a bit of attention in Oregon where he was actually released on that case based on an order of the Supreme Court not on the finding of absence of guilt but on an issue related to mental illness, which has led us to concern about the individual’s fitness,” Gibbons said.

“He (Lopes) certainly has been accused in the past but there is no conviction on his record in that case. That gives us a great deal of concern about his motivation. We will certainly be looking into that. Beyond that in Madison and St. Clair County I have found no record of arrest. It does appear this individual moves around quite a bit.”

Lakin referred to Lopes as “transient” with his living behavior.

Gibbons said he reviewed some of Lopes’ discussions online and said with the nature of the content it has to be determined where it becomes criminal and what is protected by the First Amendment.

“I have reviewed some of the online content posted by this individual and I find it completely disgusting, absolutely and completely contrary to any sort of decent thinking,” Gibbons said. “It is definitely not in line with the thinking of our community. However, speech is protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution. The postings on social media of a general nature like that normally are protected by the First Amendment.

“However, we are concerned that there may have been conversations initiated in the community by this individual with members of the community possibly related to

children that we want to gain information about. It is possible that specific conversations and specific interactions could rise to the level of a criminal act. Whereas postings and videos have generally not risen to this in the past.”

Anyone with any information in this case, contact the Madison County Sheriff’s Department at 618-692-6087. The sheriff said any information relevant in this case would be appreciated.

Below is an embedded Facebook post from James Michael Francis Lopes for what he calls Rise Star Church. For viewers, it is graphic in nature.

[Rising Star Church Facebook page](#)