

Jury convicts Belleville man of producing child pornography

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BELLEVILLE - James L. Porter, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced that late Tuesday morning, a federal jury in East St. Louis found **Joseph E. Suggs, 41, of Belleville**, Illinois, guilty of two counts of production of child pornography and one count of attempted production of child pornography.

Evidence at trial showed that on June 6, 2014, Suggs approached two juveniles, aged 13 and 16, in Bellevue Park and offered them money in exchange for nude photographs. Defendant was arrested by the Belleville Police Department. During a forensic examination of the camera he possessed at the time of his arrest, photos of the 16-year-old juvenile's genitalia were found. Sentencing has been scheduled for September 8, 2016 in front of the Chief Judge Michael J. Reagan. Suggs faces a minimum sentence of fifteen years in federal prison.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children, and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc. For more information about internet safety education, please visit www.usdoj.gov/psc and click on the tab "resources."

The investigation into this crime was conducted by the Belleville Police Department and

the United States Secret Service Criminal Investigative Division. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Laura Reppert and Angi Scott.