

Registered Sex Offender Sentenced to 30 Years for Producing Child Pornography With 4-Year-Old

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EAST ST. LOUIS - The U.S. Attorney's Office announced Wednesday a registered sex offender who took sexually explicit photographs of a four-year-old girl in East St. Louis will spend the next three decades behind bars.

Andrew Wigfall, III, of East St. Louis has been sentenced to 30 years in federal prison and a lifetime term of supervised release for producing child pornography. The 47-year old defendant pleaded guilty to the charge earlier this year.

Wigfall's crime first came to light on Jan. 26, 2019, when numerous local law enforcement agencies received calls that his Facebook Messenger account was

distributing child pornography. Among the illicit photographs were images of Wigfall with a nude four-year-old girl. The child's grandmother saw the pictures and recognized they had been taken in her basement. She explained to police that Wigfall was a friend who often came over to her house to play dominoes with her husband when they were babysitting their grandchildren. She reported that neither she nor her husband had any idea the photographs had been taken, and they were unaware at the time that Wigfall was a registered sex offender.

When interviewed by police, Wigfall admitted taking explicit photographs of the girl with his cell phone just a few weeks earlier. He told investigators he had lost his phone on Jan. 25 and was not the person responsible for distributing the images over Facebook. Efforts by law enforcement to track and locate the phone were unsuccessful.

At the sentencing hearing, the victim's grandmother expressed outrage on behalf of the family: "I never thought this would happen to us. I'm supposed to protect my children and grandchildren. But my trust was betrayed.... wasn't there to be my husband's friend. He was there to seek out my granddaughter." She added that her husband feels "like it's all his fault" and that he constantly "apologizes to me that he let this man into our home."

In handing down the sentence, Chief United States District Judge Nancy J. Rosenstengel explained that a 30-year term was necessary to protect the public, specifically citing Wigfall's history of sexual offending. Wigfall has a prior conviction in St. Clair County Circuit Court for aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 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 case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the East St. Louis Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Laura Reppert.