

Federal Jury Convicts Belleville Man of Attempting to Arrange Sex with Young Girl

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS – A Belleville man faces at least 10 years in prison after a federal jury found him guilty today of attempting to arrange sexual activity with a minor. According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Sean P. Van Horn, 49, responded on April 29, 2020, to a Craigslist ad placed by FBI agents advertising.

Van Horn then began exchanging emails with an undercover agent who portrayed himself as the father of a 10-year-old girl. Over the course of roughly one month, Van Horn sent the agent multiple inappropriate graphic messages.

Van Horn also asked to meet up with the agent and the fictitious girl. FBI agents arrested Van Horn on May 28, 2020, when he showed up at the prearranged location in O'Fallon, Illinois.

Graphic messages sent by Van Horn to the undercover agent were shown to the jury during the two-day trial held at the federal courthouse in Benton, Illinois. Jurors also heard a recorded call that Van Horn made to his girlfriend while he was in custody in which he admitted to being on Craigslist "doing things I shouldn't have been doing."

Sentencing has been scheduled for Nov. 16, 2021, in front of United States District Judge Stacie M. Yandle. Attempted enticement of a minor is punishable by at least 10 years and up to life in prison.

FBI-Springfield conducted the investigation.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Karelia Rajagopal and Casey Bloodworth.