

Attorney General Raoul: Madison County Man Charged With Possession Of Child Pornography

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CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced that a Granite City man was charged with possessing child pornography. The case is part of Raoul’s ongoing work to collaborate with federal law enforcement agencies and local law enforcement officials throughout Illinois to apprehend offenders who download and trade child pornography online.

John H. Obenhaus III, 38, of Granite City, was charged in Madison County Circuit Court with five counts of dissemination of child pornography, each a Class X felony punishable by six to 30 years in prison. Obenhaus' bond is set at \$250,000.

"Individuals who download and trade child pornography victimize children and their families, and the impact is felt by the entire community," Raoul said. "My office's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force will continue to work with local law enforcement to identify and protect communities from these offenders."

Raoul's investigators, with the assistance of the Granite City Police Department, conducted a search of a residence Tuesday, Oct. 5, in the 2700 block of Center Street in Granite City and arrested Obenhaus after discovering evidence of child pornography. Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine's office will prosecute the case.

"Crimes against children are unacceptable and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law in Madison County," Haine said. "I appreciate the efforts of the Illinois Attorney General's office, the ICAC Task Force and Granite City PD in investigating this case, and the great work of our Child's Justice Division Chief Ali Foley in charging it."

The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The arrest is part of Attorney General Raoul's work to investigate and prosecute child pornographers in Illinois. Raoul's office, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, runs the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force that investigates child exploitation crimes and trains law enforcement agencies. The task force receives CyberTips, or online reports of child pornography, from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Over the last several years, CyberTipline reports have steadily increased; in fact, Raoul's office projects that reports to the ICAC during 2021 will increase by 23% over 2020.

In response to increasing reports of online child exploitation, Raoul recently announced a series of ICAC webinars aimed at giving parents, guardians and educators tools to help children and teens foster healthy online interactions. The free webinars, which begin Oct. 7 and take place on the first Thursday of each month, will teach parents and guardians about the social media apps children and teens may be using, how to identify signs that a child may have been a victim of online child solicitation, and more. Interested parties should email Karilyn.orr@ilag.gov to register.

Illinois' ICAC Task Force is one of 61 ICAC Task Forces throughout the country and is comprised of a network of more than 225 local, county, state and federal law

enforcement agencies, and the task force covers 101 of Illinois' 102 counties. Since 2019, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has received more than 13,353 CyberTips and been involved in more than 150 arrests of sexual predators. Since 2006, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has been involved in more than 1,780 arrests of sexual predators. The task force also has provided internet safety training and education to more than 953,500 parents, teachers and students and more than 23,100 law enforcement professionals.