

Belleville Man Sentenced To 15 Years In Prison For Sexual Exploitation Of A Minor

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS – Larry W. Hale, 54 of Belleville, Illinois, was sentenced to 15 years in the Bureau of Prisons in a U.S. District Court on Wednesday for Sexual Exploitation of a Minor and Transportation with Intent to Engage in Criminal Sexual Activity.

According to court documents, Hale, who was 51 at the time, traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, in February 2020 to pick up a 16-year-old female and bring her back to Illinois to live with him. She was discovered in his home in July 2020. In a voluntary, videotaped interview with law enforcement, Hale admitted to engaging in a sexual relationship with the minor, stating that it began shortly after she moved into his residence.

He also admitted to knowing she was 16 years old when he picked her up in Georgia and transported her to Illinois to live with him. Finally, he admitted that there was a video of the victim performing a sex act on his cell phone.

“Sex crimes against children are particularly disturbing, and Larry Hale deliberately preyed on a vulnerable child after meeting her on an online dating site,” said U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. “His sentence reflects the severity of his crimes, and I applaud the efforts by many to remove this predator from our community.”

“The U.S. Secret Service remains committed to investigating and arresting individuals who sexually exploit children and transmit child sexual abuse material,” said U.S. Secret Service Resident Agent in Charge Stephen S. Webster. We are proud of our partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies that work collectively to investigate and prosecute crimes against minors. These predators cause significant and long-lasting damage, and we are dedicated to holding them accountable.”

The investigation was conducted with efforts by the Belleville Police Department and the U.S. Secret Service. Assistant U.S. Attorney Angela Scott prosecuted the case. This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a national initiative launched in 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the increase in child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. 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 on Project Safe Childhood, visit www.usdoj.gov/psc.