



# Former First-Grade Teacher Admits to Asking Minors for Explicit Images on Snapchat

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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EAST ST. LOUIS – U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe announced on Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024, that a former elementary school teacher appeared in federal court today to plead guilty to soliciting child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from minors. Jonathan C. Villmer, Jr., 25, of New Baden, Illinois, was charged via criminal complaint in August 2023.



Prior to his charge, Villmer was a teacher at New Baden Elementary School and coached girls' sports teams for Wesclin Community Unit School District 3.

"We know child predators lurk in our communities, but it's especially disturbing when a former first-grade teacher and coach admits to asking minors for inappropriate images," said Crowe. "I highly commend the several law enforcement departments who contributed to this investigation and identified an extremely dangerous individual working directly with minors."

The case was initiated by an otherwise unrelated investigation by the Carmi Police Department regarding the distribution of CSAM. The investigation led law enforcement officers to a Snapchat account soliciting CSAM connected to Villmer.

According to court documents, after obtaining a search warrant for Villmer's Snapchat account, police discovered explicit conversations with a 13-year-old minor. Villmer asked the minor for the "sexiest images," discussed having sex and taking the minor's virginity, and requested inappropriate photographs of her genitals.

Law enforcement identified other occurrences of sexually explicit conversations and requests for images with other purported minors within Villmer's Snapchat account. Based upon IP address records associated with the Snapchat account, law enforcement connected the account to Villmer.

On Aug. 18, 2023, law enforcement executed a search warrant on Villmer's New Baden residence and seized two cell phones and other electronic devices. Villmer was arrested on scene.

"The importance of this case and guilty plea cannot be overstated. Investigations involving the exploitation of children are horrible, but it is particularly troubling when the accused occupies a position of public trust and seeks to exploit the most vulnerable in our society," said Homeland Security Investigations Chicago Special Agent in Charge Sean Fitzgerald. "HSI will continue to work closely with our local, state and federal partners to bring those who would sexually exploit children to justice."

Villmer's sentencing is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on April 24, 2024, and his charge carries a minimum of five years and a maximum of up to 20 years' imprisonment.

Homeland Security Investigations is conducting the investigation with support from the New Baden and Carmi Police Departments, and the Jefferson County and Clinton County Sheriffs' Departments.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ali Burns is prosecuting the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and CEOS, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.