

Federal Court Hands 10-Year Sentence To Convicted Child Predator Teacher

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EAST ST. LOUIS – The U.S. District Court announced today that a federal judge sentenced a former elementary school teacher to 10 years' imprisonment after he admitted to soliciting child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from minors.

Jonathan C. Villmer, Jr., 26, of New Baden, Illinois, was charged by criminal complaint in August of 2023.

Villmer will be required to register as a sex offender and serve an additional 7 years on supervised release upon his release from prison. Prior to his indictment, Villmer taught first grade at New Baden Elementary School and coached both girls' and boys' junior high sports teams.

“As a teacher and coach, the defendant was entrusted to educate and mentor youth, yet instead he preyed on and exploited his young victims’ vulnerabilities,” said U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. “His predatory behaviors expressed a complete disregard for protecting children but rather abusing them. I’m thankful to the law enforcement agencies who worked to put this dangerous offender in federal prison.”

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 sexually explicit images and videos from minors that was 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, offered the minor marijuana, and requested photographs of her genitals.

Law enforcement identified other occurrences of sexually explicit conversations and requests for images with other minors within Villmer’s Snapchat account. His victims were generally 13-14 year old females.

“This sentence sends an important message to all predators: HSI will not allow crimes against children to go unpunished. We will continue to identify and investigate those who pose a threat to our communities,” said Sean Fitzgerald, special agent in charge for HSI Chicago. “Working with our law enforcement partners, our commitment to aggressively protect children from offenders like Villmer will remain steadfast.”

Based upon IP address records associated with the Snapchat account, law enforcement connected the account to Villmer. On August 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.

Homeland Security Investigations conducted 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 prosecuted 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.