Beat: News

Former pastor and coach pleads guilty to child exploitation

From Tennessee and Evansville, Indiana

Memphis, Tennessee, 18.05.2022, 18:52 Time

USPA NEWS - Joshua Henley, 33, formerly of Benton County, Tennessee, and Evansville, Indiana, pled guilty Monday in federal district court to an eight-count indictment, admitting that he produced child sexual abuse material involving three minors, transported a minor interstate with the intent to engage in sexual activity with the minor, sent obscene videos and images to a minor, and possessed and transported child sexual abuse material. Joseph C. Murphy, Jr., United States Attorney, announced the conviction today.

According to information presented in court, beginning in 2018, Henley was the pastor at Holladay Church of Christ in Benton County. He also coached the Holladay Elementary School girls' basketball team. In April 2021, Henley took a position at a church in Evansville, Indiana. In June 2021, Henley drove back to Tennessee to pick up a female identified as "Minor C" and took her back to Indiana so she could help at his Vacation Bible School there. While in Indiana, Henley had sex with her. Minor C had just turned fifteen. Minor C later disclosed that Henley had been engaging in sexual activity with her since she was thirteen and asked her to take sexually explicit pictures and send them to him via a chat application.

While Henley was in Indiana with Minor C, another female, "Minor B," disclosed to a trusted adult that in 2020, Henley had asked her to create and send sexually explicit images too. Minor B was fifteen.

Henley was arrested on June 18, 2021, as he was driving Minor C back to Benton County. Investigators found a cell phone in his possession and obtained a warrant to search it and found sexually explicit images of Minor C and Minor B, as well as video of Henley having sexual intercourse with another female—Minor A. Metadata indicated the image was produced on November 6, 2020, just a few months after Minor A turned fourteen.

Henley has worked with young people in several other states, including Indiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Sentencing is set for August 23, 2022, before Chief United States District Judge S. Thomas Anderson in Jackson, Tennessee. Henley will be incarcerated for at least fifteen years and may be sentenced to a term of up to life in prison.

The case was investigated by the FBI's Crimes Against Children Task Force in partnership with the Benton County Sheriff's Department, the Evansville Police Department, and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's Technical Services Unit.

Assistant United States Attorney Debra Ireland is prosecuting this case on behalf of the United States.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Tennessee press release May 17, 2022

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