

U.S. Dept. of Justice: Former high school teacher sentenced to 20 years for producing & possessing child pornography

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MADISON, WIS. – Timothy M. O’Shea, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that McKenzie W. Johnson, 35, Ladysmith, Wisconsin, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge William M. Conley to 20 years in prison for producing and possessing child pornography. This term of imprisonment will be followed by 20 years of supervised release. Johnson pleaded guilty to these charges on January 13, 2022.

In March 2021, the mother of a 13-year-old girl in California called law enforcement, reporting that she discovered explicit messages between her daughter and a man later identified as Johnson. Law enforcement agents executed a search warrant at Johnson’s home in Ladysmith and found numerous images and videos he recorded of livestreams of the 13-year-old engaging in sexually explicit conduct. They also found a video the defendant recorded of a live stream of an 11-year-old, in which the defendant instructs her on how to insert a sharpie into her vagina and to adjust her hand so he can get a better view. At the time he committed these offenses, Johnson was a teacher at Ladysmith High School.

Judge Conley noted that Johnson led a dual life with his friends and family who had no idea that he was preying on young girls. Judge Conley also said that the defendant was bright, but manipulative, and willing to engage in horrendous behavior with young girls. Finally, Judge Conley was concerned that the defendant

left his job at a hospital to become a teacher of students the same age he was attracted to, saying that the defendant teaching children was like an alcoholic going to a bar.

The charges against Johnson were the result of an investigation conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation, Ladysmith Police Department, Rusk County Sheriff's Office, Clark County Sheriff's Office, the Ladysmith School District, and the Fontana, California Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Altman prosecuted this case.