



Department of Justice

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Western District of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRAND JURY RETURNS INDICTMENTS

MADISON, WIS. - A federal grand jury in the Western District of Wisconsin, sitting in Madison, returned the following indictments today. You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and a person named as defendant in an indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Beloit Man Charged With Possessing Child Pornography

Jody Behlke, 49, Beloit, Wisconsin, is charged with possessing child pornography. The indictment alleges that on May 24, 2023, Behlke possessed a Samsung Galaxy 8 Tab tablet containing visual depictions of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. The indictment further alleges that at least one of the depictions Behlke possessed involved a prepubescent minor or a minor who had not attained 12 years of age.

The penalties for possessing child pornography vary depending upon an individual's prior criminal history. If convicted, Behlke faces a minimum penalty of 10 years in prison and a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

The charge against Behlke is the result of an investigation by the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation and Homeland Security Investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorney Taylor L. Kraus is handling the case.

This investigation was a part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse. 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. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.justice.gov/psc.

La Crosse Man and Woman Charged with Possessing Methamphetamine and Fentanyl for Distribution

Stephan J. Johnston, 27 and Ashley L. Russell, 31, both of La Crosse, Wisconsin, are charged with possessing 500 grams or more of methamphetamine and 40 grams or

more of fentanyl, both drugs intended for distribution. The two are also charged with maintaining a drug involved premises. The indictment alleges that Johnston and Russell possessed the methamphetamine and fentanyl on February 14, 2024. The indictment further alleges that from January 28, 2024 to February 14, 2024, they maintained a drug involved premises for the purpose of distributing methamphetamine and fentanyl.

If convicted of possessing 500 grams or more of methamphetamine intended for distribution, Johnston and Russell each face a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison and a maximum penalty of life in prison. If convicted of possessing 40 grams or more of fentanyl intended for distribution, they each face a mandatory minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 40 years in prison. The charge of maintaining a drug involved premises carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

The charges against Johnston and Russell are the result of an investigation by the La Crosse County Sheriff's Office, La Crosse Police Department, Crawford County Sherriff's Office, and the Central Wisconsin Drug Task Force. Assistant U.S. Attorney Katheryn Ginsberg is handling the case.

Eau Claire Man Charged with Methamphetamine Trafficking

Xa Xiong, 31, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is charged with distributing 50 grams or more of methamphetamine and attempting to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine. The indictment alleges that Xiong distributed methamphetamine on July 26, 2024, and attempted to distribute methamphetamine on August 1, 2024.

If convicted of distributing 50 grams or more, Xiong faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years in prison and a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison. If convicted of attempting to distribute 500 grams or more, he faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years and a maximum penalty of life in prison.

The charges against Xiong were the result of an investigation conducted by the West Central Drug Task Force, Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Clark County Sheriff's Department. The case was also investigated by the ATF Madison Crime Gun Task Force consisting of federal agents from ATF and Task Force Officers (TFOs) from local agencies including the Dane County and Clark County Sheriff's Offices and the Fitchburg, Madison, Sun Prairie, and La Crosse Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney William Levins is handling the case.

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