



# Department of Justice

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## Former Bath County Deputy Sheriff Sentenced to 25 Years for Production of Child Pornography

**LEXINGTON, Ky.** — A Morehead, Ky., man, Joshua Preece, 40, was sentenced to 300 months in federal prison on Monday, by U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell, after pleading guilty to enticing a minor victim to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing child pornography. Preece is a former Bath County Deputy Sheriff.

According to Preece's plea agreement, on November 5, 2018, he admitted to answering a call about a minor victim who was acting out of control at her residence. After responding, he transported the victim to a remote area in Bath County. There, Preece sexually assaulted the victim, later asking for sexually explicit photos of the victim via Snapchat. When reviewing Preece's phone, law enforcement found multiple sexually explicit images.

Preece admitted to the conduct and pleaded guilty to the charge in October 2021.

Under federal law, Preece must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence. Upon his release from prison, he will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for life.

"The conduct in this case is simply disgraceful," said Carlton S. Shier, IV, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky. "The offense itself – a brazen act of child exploitation and abuse – is abhorrent, but the fact that he did it while he was a law enforcement officer makes it even more so. He abused a vulnerable victim, while also betraying a public trust and doing enduring disservice to the dedicated efforts of all law enforcement. I am grateful for hard work of our law enforcement partners, whose efforts made this prosecution possible."

United States Attorney Shier; Robert Holman, Special Agent in Charge, United States Secret Service; and Colonel Phillip Burnett, Commissioner of the Kentucky State Police, jointly announced the sentence.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Secret Service and KSP. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Marye.

This case was prosecuted 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 the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (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. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafefchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafefchildhood.gov)..

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