

March 12, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL: ADDITIONAL CHARGES IN FAYETTE COUNTY CHILD PORNOGRAPHY RING

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced charges against a Fayette County couple for allegedly possessing and disseminating child pornography. The charges are the result of an investigation Raoul's office conducted into an alleged child pornography ring operating in Fayette County and are part of the Attorney General's ongoing focus on apprehending offenders who download and trade child pornography online.

Andrew Wehrle, 37, and Amber Wehrle, 36, of Vandalia, Illinois, were charged this week in Fayette County Circuit Court. Andrew Wehrle was charged with two counts of dissemination of child pornography, Class X felonies punishable by six to 30 years in prison. Amber Wehrle was charged with three counts of possession of child pornography: one Class 2 felony punishable by three to seven years in prison, and two Class 3 felonies, punishable by up to two to five years in prison. Andrew Wehrle's bond is set at \$250,000, and Amber Wehrle's bond is set at \$50,000.

"I would like to thank Fayette County State's Attorney Josh Morrison and the Vandalia Police Department for their cooperation, which was critical to our ability to stop these individuals from further victimizing children," Raoul said. "The partnerships between my office and local law enforcement are valuable tools in my ongoing commitment to holding accountable predators who download and share these reprehensible images."

Raoul's investigators, with the assistance of the Vandalia Police Department, conducted a search of a residence Wednesday, March 10, in the 600 block of North Fourth Street in Vandalia and arrested Andrew and Amber Wehrle after discovering evidence that they allegedly possessed child pornography. The search was conducted in connection to child pornography charges Raoul's office filed March 3 against another Vandalia man. Ferrell Mason Kissiar, 44, has been charged with three counts of disseminating child pornography, two counts of possessing child pornography and one count of reproducing child pornography. Kissiar's case is pending, and his bond is set at \$250,000.

The investigation is ongoing, and individuals who have additional information are encouraged to submit a tip to the Vandalia Police Department by calling 618-283-1986 or contacting the Fayette County Sheriff's office via Facebook. The Attorney General's office will prosecute the case with the Fayette County State's Attorney Joshua C. Morrison's office.

"These arrests are part of an ongoing investigation of child pornography," said Fayette County State's Attorney Joshua Morrison. "It has always been our goal of the Fayette County State's Attorney's office to aggressively prosecute this type of crime, and we will continue that priority into the future. Thanks to the Attorney General's office and our local law enforcement for all of the work on this arrest."

"Thank you to the Illinois Attorney General's office for the continued hard work they put into these cases," said Vandalia Police Chief Jeff Ray. "While we find it appalling that these types of crimes are going on in our communities, it is good to know that there are great people working these cases."

The public is reminded that the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The arrest is part of Attorney General Raoul's work to investigate and prosecute child pornographers in Illinois. Raoul's office, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, runs the [Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children \(ICAC\) Task Force](#) that investigates child exploitation crimes and trains law enforcement agencies. Since 2006, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has been involved in more than 1,760 arrests of sexual predators. The task force has also provided internet safety training and education to more than 951,600 parents, teachers and students and more than 22,900 law enforcement professionals.