

Reality TV Star Convicted of Child Porn Possession

Former reality TV star Josh Duggar was immediately taken into custody Thursday after a federal jury convicted him of downloading and possessing child pornography.

The jury in Fayetteville, about 140 miles (225 kilometers) northwest of Little Rock, found the 33-year-old Duggar guilty on one count each of receiving and possessing child pornography. He faces up to 20 years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 for each count when he's sentenced.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Brooks said sentencing will happen in about four months, Fayetteville TV station KNWA reported.

Duggar and his large Arkansas family starred on TLC's *19 Kids and Counting* until the network canceled the show in 2015 following revelations that he had molested four of his sisters and a babysitter. Authorities began investigating the abuse in 2006 after receiving a tip from a family friend but concluded that the statute of limitations on any possible charges had expired.

Duggar's parents said he had confessed to the fondling and apologized. At the time, Duggar apologized publicly for unspecified behavior and resigned as a lobbyist for the Family Research Council, a conservative Christian group.

Duggar later apologized for a pornography addiction and for cheating on his wife, calling himself "the biggest hypocrite ever."

The judge in the child porn case ruled that jurors could hear testimony about how in 2003, Duggar admitted to molesting four girls. A family friend testified that Duggar told her about the abuse.

Federal authorities said they began investigating after a Little Rock police detective found child porn files were being shared by a computer traced to Duggar. A federal agent testified in May that images depicting the sexual abuse of children, including toddlers, were downloaded in 2019 onto a computer at a car dealership Duggar owned.

Duggar's attorney argued that someone else downloaded or uploaded the images onto Duggar's computer. But the jury wasn't swayed.

Duggar's father Jim Bob Duggar, who also starred on the reality show, is running in a special election for a vacant state Senate seat in northwestern Arkansas. He previously served in the Arkansas House. {eo}

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