



## South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

P.O. Box 21398  
Columbia, South Carolina  
29221-1398

*Henry D. McMaster, Governor*

*Mark A. Keel, Chief*

*Tel: (803) 737-9000*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
May 11, 2022

Contact: Renée Wunderlich  
(803) 260-3020  
rwunderlich@sled.sc.gov

### **SLED CHARGES FORMER FLORENCE COUNTY DEPUTY WITH THREE COUNTS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A MINOR 2<sup>ND</sup> DEGREE**

Agents from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) charged Jonathon Christopher Bessenger, 24, of Florence, S.C. with three counts of Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, 2nd Degree. Details of the investigation are in the warrants attached.

SLED was requested to investigate by Florence County Sheriff T.J. Joye.

Bessenger was booked at the Florence County Detention Center.

The case will be prosecuted by the 12<sup>th</sup> Circuit Solicitor's Office.

A copy of this news release is also on SLED's website: [www.sled.sc.gov](http://www.sled.sc.gov)

###



*An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency*



ARREST WARRANT

2022A2110100428

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

County/  Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE

33-22-0046

against

Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

Address

Florence, SC 29501-7523

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex: M Race: W Height: 5 9 Weight: 185

DL State: SC DL #: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: 1997 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Sterling C Poston - S01134

Offense: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

Offense Code: 0380

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-15-0405(A)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the  
 County/  Municipality of

The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN

A copy of this arrest warrant was delivered to defendant Jonathon C. Bessenger on 3/11/22

G. Hernandez  
Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

General Sessions Court  
181 North Irby Street, Suite 1100  
Florence, SC 29501

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )

County/  Municipality of )

Florence )

AFFIDAVIT

ORIGINAL

Form Approved by  
S.C. Attorney General  
April 21, 2003  
SCCA 518

Personally appeared before me the affiant Sterling C Poston who

being duly sworn deposes and says that defendant Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

did within this county and state on or about 12/15/2021 violate the criminal laws of the

State of South Carolina (or ordinance of  County/  Municipality of Florence)  
in the following particulars:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On December 15, 2021, one Jonathon Christopher Bessenger, did sexually exploit an unknown minor, to wit: Utilizing the Snapchat mobile phone app, Bessenger actively participated in a "chat" where he received and distributed obscene photographs and videos. On this date, Bessenger received an obscene video depicting a minor child engaged in sexual activity. On May 10, 2022, Bessenger admitted to SLED Agents that he possessed an obscene video of a minor engaged in sexual activity, and provided physical access to search his mobile phone. This violation taking place in Florence County, South Carolina. This being in violation of South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 16-15-405.

Signature of Affiant

Sterling C. Poston

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )

County/  Municipality of )

Florence )

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398

Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone (803)896-7000

ARREST WARRANT

TO ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THIS STATE OR MUNICIPALITY OR ANY CONSTABLE OF THIS COUNTY:

It appearing from the above affidavit that there are reasonable grounds to believe that

on or about 12/15/2021 defendant Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

did violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of

County/  Municipality of Florence) as set forth below:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

Having found probable cause and the above affiant having sworn before me, you are empowered and directed to arrest the said defendant and bring him or her before me forthwith to be dealt with according to law. A copy of this Arrest Warrant shall be delivered to the defendant at the time of its execution, or as soon thereafter as is practicable

Sworn to and subscribed before me )

on 5/11/2022 )

Peter E Becker (L.S.) )

Signature of Issuing Officer )

Peter E Becker )

Judge Code: 7282 )

Judge's Address 180 North Irby Street (MSC-W)

Florence, SC 29501-

Judge's Telephone (843)665-0031

Issuing Court:  Magistrate  Municipal  Circuit

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ARREST WARRANT

2022A2110100429

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE

33-22-0046

against

Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

Address: [REDACTED]

Florence, SC 29501-7523

Phone: [REDACTED] SSN [REDACTED]  
Sex: M Race: W Height: 5 9 Weight: 185

DL State: SC DL #: [REDACTED]

DOB: [REDACTED] 1997 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Sterling C Poston - S01134

Offense: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

Offense Code: 0380

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-15-0405(A)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the [ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN

A copy of this arrest warrant was delivered to defendant Jonathon C. Bessenger on 5/11/22

[Signature] Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

General Sessions Court  
181 North Irby Street, Suite 1100  
Florence, SC 29501

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

Personally appeared before me the affiant Sterling C Poston

being duly sworn deposes and says that defendant Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

did within this county and state on or about 7/17/2020

State of South Carolina (or ordinance of [X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Florence) violate the criminal laws of the

in the following particulars:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On July 17, 2020, one Jonathon Christopher Bessenger, did sexually exploit unknown minors, to wit: Utilizing the Snapchat mobile phone app, Bessenger actively participated in a group "chat" where he received and distributed obscene photographs and/or videos. On this date, Bessenger received obscene videos depicting minor children engaged in sexual activity. On May 10, 2022, Bessenger admitted to SLED Agents that he possessed an obscene video of a minor engaged in sexual activity, and provided physical access to search his mobile phone. This violation taking place in Florence County, South Carolina. This being in violation of South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 16-15-405.

Signature of Affiant

[Signature: Sterling C. Poston]

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398  
Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone (803)896-7000

ARREST WARRANT

TO ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THIS STATE OR MUNICIPALITY OR ANY CONSTABLE OF THIS COUNTY:

It appearing from the above affidavit that there are reasonable grounds to believe that

on or about 7/17/2020 defendant Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

did violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Florence) as set forth below:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

Having found probable cause and the above affiant having sworn before me, you are empowered and directed to arrest the said defendant and bring him or her before me forthwith to be dealt with according to law. A copy of this Arrest Warrant shall be delivered to the defendant at the time of its execution, or as soon thereafter as is practicable

Sworn to and subscribed before me

on 5/11/2022 (L.S.)

[Signature] Signature of Issuing Judge

Peter E Becker

Judge Code: 7282

Judge's Address 180 North Irby Street (MSC-W)

Florence, SC 29501-

Judge's Telephone (843)665-0031

Issuing Court: [X] Magistrate [ ] Municipal [ ] Circuit

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Form Approved by  
S.C. Attorney General  
April 21, 2003  
SCCA 518

AFFIDAVIT

ARREST WARRANT

2022A2110100430

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE

33-22-0046

against

Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

Address:

Florence, SC 29501-7523

Phone: [ ] SSN [ ] Sex: M Race: W Height: 5 9 Weight: 185

DL State: SC DL #: [ ]

DOB: [ ] 1997 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Sterling C Poston - S01134

Offense: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor. Second degree

Offense Code: 0380

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-15-0405(A)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the [ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

A copy of this arrest warrant was delivered to defendant Jonathon C. Bessenger on 5/11/22

[Signature] Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

General Sessions Court 181 North Irby Street, Suite 1100 Florence, SC 29501

ORIGINAL

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

Personally appeared before me the affiant Sterling C Poston

being duly sworn deposes and says that defendant Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

did within this county and state on or about 7/18/2020 violate the criminal laws of the

State of South Carolina (or ordinance of [X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Florence)

in the following particulars:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor. Second degree

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On July 18, 2020, one Jonathon Christopher Bessenger, did sexually exploit unknown minors, to wit: Utilizing the Snapchat mobile phone app. Bessenger actively participated in a group "chat" where he received and distributed obscene photographs and/or videos. On this date, Bessenger received obscene videos depicting minor children engaged in sexual activity. On May 10, 2022, Bessenger admitted to SLED Agents that he possessed an obscene video of a minor engaged in sexual activity, and provided physical access to search his mobile phone. This violation taking place in Florence County, South Carolina. This being in violation of South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 16-15-405.

Signature of Affiant

[Signature: Sterling C. Poston]

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398

Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone (803)896-7000

ARREST WARRANT

TO ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THIS STATE OR MUNICIPALITY OR ANY CONSTABLE OF THIS COUNTY:

It appearing from the above affidavit that there are reasonable grounds to believe that

on or about 7/18/2020 defendant Jonathon Christopher Bessenger

did violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Florence ) as set forth below:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Sex / Sexual exploitation of a minor, Second degree

Having found probable cause and the above affiant having sworn before me, you are empowered and directed to arrest the said defendant and bring him or her before me forthwith to be dealt with according to law. A copy of this Arrest Warrant shall be delivered to the defendant at the time of its execution, or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

Sworn to and subscribed before me on 5/11/2022

[Signature] (L.S.) Peter E Becker

Judge Code: 7282

Judge's Address 180 North Irby Street (MSC-W)

Florence, SC 29501-

Judge's Telephone (843)665-0031

Issuing Court: [X] Magistrate [ ] Municipal [ ] Circuit

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Form approved by S.C. Attorney General April 21, 2003 SCCA 518