

KEOKUK COUNTY ATTORNEY

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PRESS RELEASE

Summary of Notable Court Proceedings – March & April 2022
May 2, 2022

Keokuk County, Iowa

Phillip Pugliese, 36, of Wayland, Iowa, was fined \$1,880 and sentenced to seven years in prison after pleading guilty to Willful Injury, a Class D Felony, and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon, an Aggravated Misdemeanor. These charges were filed after deputies with the Keokuk County Sheriff's Office were called to a home in Richland on December 9, 2021 after the Defendant aggressively drove his vehicle off the roadway and into a yard hitting another person with his vehicle causing injuries to the victim. The investigation revealed an ongoing dispute between the defendant and victim.

Willis Smith, 55, of Sigourney, was fined \$2,025 and sentenced to ten years in prison after pleading guilty to Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Deliver, Second or Subsequent Offense, a Class C Felony, and Possession of Controlled Substance (Marijuana), Third or Subsequent Offense, a Class D Felony. These charges were filed after deputies with the Keokuk County Sheriff's Department discovered marijuana and large quantities of methamphetamine during a traffic stop. At the time of the offense, Smith was out of prison on parole for a Mahaska County conviction of Possession of a Firearm as a Felon – Habitual Offender.

CJ Luers, 21, of Keota, entered guilty pleas and was granted deferred judgments on five counts of Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, Aggravated Misdemeanors. These charges were filed by the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation as the result of an investigation of cyber tips of illegal internet activity sent by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to the Iowa DCI Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) in which Luers was found to be in possession of multiple digital photographs of minor children engaged in or simulating sexual acts. Luers was ordered to pay a \$625 civil penalty on each count, placed on supervised probation to the Iowa Department of Corrections for two years, ordered to complete a sex offender treatment program, and placed on the Iowa Sex Offender Registry for ten years.

Cullen Smith, 20, of Webster, was sentenced to two years in prison with all time suspended contingent upon his successful probation to the Iowa Department of Corrections and fined \$855 after pleading guilty to Assault with Intent to Inflict Serious Injury, an Aggravated Misdemeanor, arising from charges filed by the Keokuk County Sheriff's Department accusing Smith of kicking another person in the face at a party at 20775 200th Avenue, Sigourney, during the early morning hours of July 5, 2021.

Kevin Pilcher, 32, of Ottumwa, was sentenced to five years in prison with all but 30 days suspended contingent upon his successful probation to the Iowa Department of Corrections and fined \$3,125 after pleading guilty to Operating While Intoxicated, third offense, a Class D Felony, and Driving While Revoked, a Serious Misdemeanor, arising from charges filed by the Sigourney Police Department after a concerned citizen reported a possible drunk driver.

Robert Lothridge, 46, of What Cheer, was fined a total of \$3,590 and sentenced to five years in prison after pleading guilty to Second Degree Theft, a Class D Felony, Possession of Methamphetamine – Second Offense, an Aggravated Misdemeanor, and two counts of Driving While Barred, Aggravated Misdemeanors. Lothridge was charged by the Keokuk County Sheriff's Department with three separate counts of Driving While Barred being found by deputies to be driving in the late hours of the night while his driver's license was barred. The third Driving While Barred charge was dismissed pursuant to plea agreement. Lothridge's Theft and Possession of Methamphetamine charges were filed in Keokuk County by the Iowa County Sheriff's Department after a joint investigation with the Keokuk County Sheriff's Department where Lothridge was found to be in possession of items stolen from a rural Iowa County machine shed.

Convictions were also entered on eighteen other misdemeanor offenses including two Operating While Intoxicated Offenses, four Possession of Marijuana offenses, two Possession of Methamphetamine offenses, Driving While Revoked, Carrying Weapons, two Domestic Abuse Assault offenses, two Simple Assault offenses, two Possession of Drug Paraphernalia offenses, Public Intoxication, Violation of No Contact Order, and three Driving While Suspended offenses.