



JASON SMITH
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

State of North Carolina
General Court of Justice
Sixth Prosecutorial District
Wilmington, NC 28402

POST OFFICE BOX 352
PHONE: (910) 772-6610
FAX: (910) 772-6611

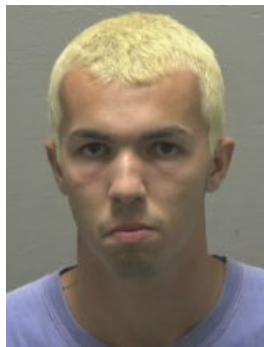
For Immediate Release
November 17, 2025
Contact: Samantha Dooies, Public Information Officer
Samantha.Dooies@ncourts.org
(910) 772-6934

Babysitter Pleads Guilty to Indecent Liberties, Generating Child Sexual Assault Material

Elijah Donato, age 23 of Wilmington, pled guilty on November 13, 2025 in New Hanover County Superior Court to two counts of Indecent Liberties with a Child and two counts of First Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor. Senior Resident Superior Court Judge R. Kent Harrell sentenced the defendant to 144 – 294 months active prison time in the NC Division of Adult Correction. Upon his release from prison the defendant will be required to register as a sex offender for 30 years.

An investigation by the Carolina Beach Police Department revealed that in 2023, while babysitting for a family, Donato encouraged the minor children in the home to take photographs of their genitals using the defendant's phone. Donato's criminal activity was captured on the family's interior security cameras, which were recovered by the Carolina Beach Police Department. A digital forensic analysis of the defendant's phone found photographs consistent with these acts in a hidden folder on his phone titled "my eyes only."

"This defendant preyed on young children for his own gratification," remarked District Attorney Jason W. Smith. "We are grateful that the parents trusted their instincts and promptly alerted this abuse to authorities as soon as they became aware of it. Their swift action and the sound investigation by the Carolina Beach Police Department undoubtedly prevented the abuse of other children in our community."



Elijah Donato