

# Fox News' Bill O'Reilly critiques Nashville child porn case



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*(Photo: Fox News / Screengrab)*

Fox News personality Bill O'Reilly turned national attention to Nashville on his Tuesday show, criticizing a recent sentence handed down in a child pornography case as being too light.

O'Reilly devoted fewer than three minutes of "The O'Reilly Factor" to the case, in which a former Vanderbilt University medical student who had thousands of images of child pornography and child rape was sentenced to two years prison.

O'Reilly's attention prompted speculation on social media that the former student got off easy because of his education, but Nashville defense attorneys say the sentence is not unusual, especially given unique circumstances of the case.

The case, first reported in The Tennessean, involved Jeffrey Ewers, 29.

Earlier this month, Ewers pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted sexual exploitation of a minor involving more than 100 images. Criminal Court Judge Cheryl Blackburn sentenced Ewers, according to a plea agreement, to two years in prison and 10 years of probation. He must register as a sex offender and could face more time in prison if he does not comply with probation.



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## Former Vandy med student takes deal in child porn case

He faced up to 120 years in prison if he had gone to trial and been found guilty on 10 charges against him.

"It's the lowest, most depraved act on the planet," O'Reilly said on the show. "Two years, that's shoplifting, you know, third offense or something like that."

O'Reilly called on the public to call and email District Attorney Glenn Funk and Blackburn seeking an explanation for the sentence.

Assistant District Attorney Chad Butler, who handled the case, District Attorney Glenn Funk and office spokeswoman Dorinda Carter did not return calls from The Tennessean on Wednesday. A woman in Judge Blackburn's office said they could not comment.

Though O'Reilly and two analysts on the show may be questioning the sentence, Nashville defense attorneys say there are more factors than the crime itself to consider when determining the appropriate outcome of a case.

Peter Strianse, the attorney who represented Ewers, said Wednesday he had not heard about the show. He said there were several unique circumstances leading to the agreed-upon resolution.

Among those, he said, were two medical experts who would have testified at trial that Ewers had been misdiagnosed and over-prescribed medication. Strianse said Ewers was under the influence of Adderall, which is used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

David Raybin, a Nashville criminal defense attorney not affiliated with the case, said the sentence seemed appropriate.

"I have had cases all over the map," he said, adding that some cases involving similar charges ended in probation-only sentences and others got four-year prison terms after plea agreements.

He said cases prosecuted in federal courts and those in which someone is distributing child pornography can warrant longer sentences. He also said it would be rare for a judge not to accept a plea agreement worked out between the defense attorney and prosecutor.

"That sentence of two years, it is not so aberrant so as to be incredibly off the map," he said.

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