

## St. Thomas Pastor Faces 10 Years to Life on Charges Including Minor Transport, Coercion and Unlawful Sexual Contact

Federal prosecutors say Lawrence Turnbull, 65, transported a minor from church to Lindquist Beach and from school to church for unlawful sexual contact, while facing coercion, child abuse charges and forfeiture of two vehicles allegedly used in the case.

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**Pastor Lawrence Turnbull.**

A St. Thomas pastor and youth leader is facing federal and local charges in a case alleging that he transported a minor to different locations for unlawful sexual contact over a period spanning from 2023 into 2025, according to a charging information that lays out

multiple alleged incidents, including trips from church to Lindquist Beach and from school to church.

United States Attorney Adam F. Sleeper announced that Lawrence Turnbull, 65, of Estate Mandahl, was arrested on April 1, 2026, on criminal charges related to his alleged transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity. The U.S. Attorney's Office said Turnbull was the minor's pastor and youth leader and, on multiple occasions, transported the minor to different locations and touched the minor inappropriately.

The information filed in District Court charges Turnbull with transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity, coercion and enticement, unlawful sexual contact, and child abuse.

According to Count One of the filing, between October 2023 and June 2024, Turnbull knowingly transported a minor within the Virgin Islands with the intent that the individual engage in sexual activity for which a person can be charged with a criminal offense, namely unlawful sexual contact in the first degree. The charging document says that conduct included transporting the individual from church to Lindquist Beach, kissing the individual on the lips, and touching the individual's breast.

Count Two alleges that in or about May 2024, Turnbull knowingly transported the minor from school to church with the intent that the individual engage in unlawful sexual contact in the first degree, specifically by hugging the individual tightly to restrict movement and touching the individual's buttocks.

Count Three charges Turnbull with coercion and enticement. According to the filing, between October 2023 and June 2024, he knowingly persuaded, induced, enticed, and coerced the minor to travel in a U.S. territory to engage in sexual activity for which a person can be charged with a criminal offense, or attempted to do so, by ignoring the individual's request to go home, transporting the individual to Lindquist Beach, touching the individual's breast, and kissing the individual on the lips.

The charging document also includes three counts of unlawful sexual contact in the first degree.

Count Four alleges that in or about October 2023, Turnbull engaged in sexual contact with the minor using force and coercion to accomplish the sexual act, specifically by kissing the minor on the lips when the minor did not want to be kissed, while being the minor's pastor and youth leader.

Count Five alleges that in or about May 2024, Turnbull engaged in sexual contact with the minor by kissing the minor on the lips while holding the minor's hands and preventing the minor from exiting the car.

Count Six alleges that in or about May 2024, Turnbull engaged in sexual contact by touching the minor's breast while holding the minor's hands and preventing the minor from exiting the car.

Count Seven charges Turnbull with child abuse. According to the information, between January 2023 and February 2025, he abused a child and knowingly and recklessly

caused a child to suffer physical, mental and emotional injury, and knowingly and recklessly caused a child to be placed in a situation where it was foreseeable that the child might suffer mental and emotional injury, specifically by frequently engaging in unlawful sexual contact with the minor victim while serving as a pastor and youth leader.

If convicted, Turnbull faces a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 10 years and a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The filing also includes a forfeiture allegation tied to Counts One through Three. According to prosecutors, upon conviction of any offense charged under those counts, Turnbull would forfeit any real or personal property used or intended to be used to commit or facilitate the offenses, or property traceable to such property. The filing specifically identifies two vehicles that may have been used to transport the victim in the charged offenses: a 2018 silver four-door Toyota Carolla, Vehicle Identification No. 5YFBURHE0JP737921, and a 2012 brown four-door Lincoln MKZ, Vehicle Identification No. 3LNHL2GC2CR812454.

The forfeiture section further states that if any such property cannot be located through due diligence, has been transferred or sold to a third party, has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court, has been substantially diminished in value, or has been commingled with other property that cannot be divided without difficulty, the United States would be entitled to seek substitute property.

Homeland Security Investigations and the V.I. Police Department are investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rhonda Williams-Henry is prosecuting it.

An information is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.