HIV Criminalization Trial of Missouri Wrestler Begins

May 11, 2015

The HIV criminalization trial of former college wrestler Michael Johnson begins today, May 11, the St. Louis American reports. Johnson was arrested in October 2013 and is being held in the St. Charles County Jail in Missouri.

Johnson, who was a wrestler at Lindenwood University when he was arrested, is charged with attempting to "recklessly infect another with HIV" and attempting to "recklessly risk infection of another with HIV."

Specifically, the St. Louis American reports that "Johnson was charged with two Class A felonies and four Class B felonies, based on statements by six witnesses, two of whom have tested positive for HIV. At least three of the six complaining witnesses are white and two are African-American. So far Johnson has refused to accept any plea bargain. Bail was set at $100,000 cash." In Missouri, Class A felonies can result in 10 to 30 years or life in prison.

The case has drawn media attention to the topics of HIV criminalization, disclosure and gay interracial relationships, and it has garnered support and dialogue among HIV advocates.

To read Steven Thrasher's BuzzFeed article "How College Wrestling Star 'Tiger Mandingo' Became an HIV Scapegoat," click here.

And to read the POZ.com crosspost of The Counter Narrative's open letter of support to Johnson, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/criminalization-trial-missouri-27219-2076