



U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

On May 3, 2011, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced the results of Operation Constant Vigilance, a long-term, coordinated federal, state and local law enforcement effort in the State of Connecticut to investigate and prosecute individuals who sexually exploit children.

Approximately one year ago, I was sworn in as U.S. Attorney and quickly determined that the prosecution of child exploitation crimes would be a priority enforcement area for this Office. Since June of last year, our law enforcement partners have been involved in the investigation and prosecution of 46 defendants who have, or are alleged to have, exploited children in violation of federal law. A major part of this effort has involved the arrest of 27 defendants on federal child exploitation charges, primarily the possession and distribution of child pornography.

Operation Constant Vigilance includes several child exploitation crimes, including

- the possession, distribution and production of child pornography,
- sex trafficking of a minor,
- traveling to engage in sex with a minor,
- Internet enticement of a minor,
- "sex tourism" (traveling from the United States to other countries to abuse children),
- and violations of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act ("SORNA")

Law enforcement agencies participating in Operation Constant Vigilance include the Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations; the United States Secret Service; the United States Postal Inspection Service; the United States Marshals Service; the Connecticut State Police Computer Crimes Unit; and the Hamden, Hartford, Milford and New Haven Police Departments.

There are many disturbing aspects to child exploitation crimes. Images seized in child pornography prosecutions throughout the country include children as young as two or three-years-old being sexually brutalized. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) estimates that 10% of those depicted in commonly traded images are infants and toddlers, and 67% are prepubescent children. And in the area of Internet enticement of a minor, NCMEC research has revealed that one in seven youth have received an online sexual

solicitation or approach over the Internet, and 34% experienced unwanted exposure to sexual material.

Perhaps most disturbing is that many individuals convicted of these crimes, including several who have been charged during Operation Constant Vigilance, occupied positions of trust in connection with children, meaning they were employed in occupations, did volunteer work in areas, or engaged in relationships that give them easy and unquestioned access to children. Operation Constant Vigilance defendants include a doctor who was also a Boy Scout leader, a counselor at a summer sleep-away camp, a middle school technical assistant who also volunteered for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, a police captain who was the second in command of a local police department, and men who spent time with their girlfriends' children.

Even in prosecutions that do not involve physical abuse by the defendant, this is far from a victimless crime. Those who view and trade images of child pornography share a large responsibility for the actual abuse of the children in these images. Their victimization continues with every subsequent distribution, every subsequent possession, and every subsequent viewing of the image of their sexual abuse. And because of the infinite nature of the Internet, these images will exist forever, and the victims will continue to be victimized for the rest of their lives. One of the cases in Operation Constant Vigilance involves a minor who was victimized in Connecticut several years ago. Tragically, that minor continues to be victimized today throughout the world as the series of images that depict her, all produced by one of our defendants, is reported to be the second most viewed set of images in the world.

For those who are engaging in the production, distribution or possession of child pornography, they should know that we and our law enforcement partners are actively investigating these crimes, often in an undercover capacity. Agents and officers are patrolling the Internet every day. For those who think they're operating in a safe environment, they are mistaken. On the Internet, wherever they are, we are.

And it's important to note that when they are caught, they will be arrested and charged, taken before a judge in a public proceeding. If we can show that they are a danger to the community or a risk of flight, they will be detained without bail pretrial. If they are convicted, they face serious prison terms, often involving lengthy mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment, such as 10 or 15 years. In addition to and following any period of incarceration, they will face a minimum of 10 years of additional court supervision during which they will not be permitted any unsupervised contact with children, they will be subject to random searches of their homes and places of work, and they will have their computer and Internet use monitored. And they will be required to register as a sex offender, and likely remain on the registry for the rest of their life.

So, this word of warning to offenders, or would be offenders: Before an investigation leads us to your computer, and before we knock on your door, change your behavior.

For most, these crimes are impossible to comprehend. But for the children who have been sexually exploited, these crimes are all too real. And the physical and emotional scars that the defendants inflict on children are hard, if not impossible, to outgrow. Therefore, it is our duty to

act on behalf of these vulnerable victims, and the commitment of our federal, state and local partners reflects the seriousness with which we treat these heinous crimes.

For more information on Operation Constant Vigilance, please [click here](#)