

Multi-agency sting nabs four online predators

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Authorities arrested six men when they arrived at a decoy house in Clackamas County, expecting to meet for sexual purposes the "children" they had chatted with online. The children, however, were trained law enforcement officers or civilian volunteers, acting as part of "Operation Cyber Sting 2007".

Himanshu Upadhyaya, 28, of Mauritius, India, was arrested and charged with coercion and enticement of a minor for the purpose of sexual contact after he flew from Seattle to Portland to meet who he thought was a 13-year-old girl. Photo provided by CCSO.

Multiple federal and local agencies worked together over the past weekend targeting online predators. The mission was led by the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office and included partners from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Tigard Police Department (TPD), Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), the Oregon State Police (OSP), and Canby Police Department (CPD). Additionally, civilian volunteers assisted with the mission as decoys, along with law enforcement personnel from many other agencies. Over a three-day period from Feb. 1-3, trained online "chatters" from CCSO, MCSO, WCSO, ICE and TPD explored various chat rooms on the internet.

With current research showing that one of every five children between the ages of 10 and 17 are reporting being approached sexually/solicited online, it was no surprise to investigators that they were approached in this manner quickly and aggressively.

The first arrest was made only a couple hours after the operation began. 43-year old Allan Grabinski of Beaverton showed up at the decoy house expecting to meet a 13-year-old girl (who was actually MCSO Det. Paul Farnstrom). The chats didn't stop there, however, and the alleged sexual predators kept arriving at the decoy house. A total of six men were arrested during the course of the three-day operation.

James Andrew Schipper, 24, arrived at the house after driving from his home in Klamath Falls. Schipper had been chatting with MCSO Det. Sgt. Travis Gullberg since November 2006 when MCSO had conducted a similar interagency operation. One man, an Indian resident, even flew from Seattle to Portland to meet the "13-year-old girl" he had been chatting with. At around midnight in the last hour of the last day of the operation, one more potential predator struck up a conversation with Sgt. Gullberg. The chat became sexual very quickly, but the officer knew he didn't have the resources to continue the investigation and cut the chat short. The alleged predator was persistent, however, and continued to send messages over the rest of the weekend. Sgt. Gullberg even explained to the alleged predator that it was against the law for a 13-year-old girl

to have sex with an adult, but the alleged predator continued to "groom" whom he believed was a minor. Ultimately, the suspect told the sergeant that he was going to fly from Seattle to Portland on Wednesday to meet "her". An arrest team comprised of CCSO detectives, ICE agents, and others including the Port of Portland Police, waited at the Portland International Airport. The suspect's plane arrived, and Himanshu Upadhyaya, a 28-year old Indian resident, was taken into custody.

According to the National Crime Victimization survey, sexual assault rates for children ages 12-17 are 133% higher than for adults. Predators focus on trusting, naïve, curious, adventuresome, affection-seeking, and those who may have self esteem issues when "grooming" or luring children. As indicated in this case, they are willing to devote considerable time, money and energy in the process, and the internet provides a sense of perceived anonymity for the predator. The Sheriff's Office asks parents to speak to their children about this serious issue. Talk about what is -- and is not -- appropriate when chatting online, what to do if the child believes they are being solicited online, and the things they should never do (e.g. Agree to meet someone they don't know, give out personal information such as address). Parents who feel their child is or has been solicited online should contact their local law enforcement agency. Cooperative interagency operations of this kind are proving vital in the effort to deter these predators and protect our children. Officers released the names of four of the six suspects arrested during the sting. They include Allan Dennis Grabinski, 43, of Beaverton, who is charged with second-degree attempted rape, second-degree attempted sodomy, and second-degree attempted sexual abuse. James Andrew Schipper, 24, of Klamath Falls, faces charges of second-degree attempted rape, second-degree attempted sodomy, and first-degree attempted sexual abuse.

Kevin Lee Miller, 35, of Salisbury, North Carolina, was arrested for first-degree attempted rape and first-degree attempted sexual abuse.

Himanshu Upadhyaya, 28, of Mauritius, India, is charged with coercion and enticement of a minor for the purpose of sexual contact.

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