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U.S.

## 'Operation Candyman'

FBI Expects More Arrests in Kiddie Porn Ring

By Ted Bridis

The Associated Press

**March 19** — The FBI says it expects to arrest at least 50 more people by week's end as it breaks up an Internet child-pornography ring that allegedly included two Catholic priests, six other members of the clergy, a school bus driver and a civilian law enforcement employee.

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The agency said Monday its "Operation Candyman" sweep already had resulted in criminal charges against more than 89 people in 26 states. The effort targeted members of three Internet discussion groups on Yahoo Inc.'s Web site, including one called "Candyman," apparently named after a song in the 1971 children's movie *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*.

The U.S. attorneys in New Orleans and Shreveport identified two Louisiana residents among those charged: Paul D. Kennedy, 52, of Houma, and Nelton W. Bourque, 34, of Lake Charles.

"I'd like to see one sweep a day," said Bruce J. Gebhardt, FBI executive assistant director for criminal investigations and cyber-crime. "We

want to keep the pressure up on all these people."

Internet Groups Stopped



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All three Internet groups have been shut down.

Investigators declined to identify the other two groups by name, saying it might interfere with efforts to trace suspects through their e-mail addresses. They said 7,000 people worldwide registered e-mail addresses with the Candyman group, and authorities were able to trace 1,400 people in the United States through those addresses.

"A new marketplace for child pornography has opened in the dark corners of cyberspace," Attorney General John Ashcroft said Monday in announcing the investigation. "There will be no free rides on the Internet for those who traffic in child pornography."

Gebhardt said Yahoo executives cooperated with FBI requests for information about the subscribers to the discussion groups. But Gebhardt declined to say whether he believed Yahoo should have monitored its discussion groups to prevent them from operating as open exchanges for child pornography.

Organizers of the Candyman group described it online as "for people who love kids. You can post any type of messages you like, too, or any type of pics and vids you like, too. P.S. If we all work together we will have the best group on the Net."

Mike Heimbach, head of the FBI's child crime unit, described the images exchanged on the Candyman group as "very explicit" and "hard-core."

FBI officials in Washington declined to identify by name any of those arrested or charged, except to list the occupations of some they described as "significant perpetrators" because they held jobs where they might spend time with children.

#### Some Surprising Arrests

The officials said those people included a Catholic priest in the St. Louis area; a school bus driver in Albany, N.Y.; a preschool teacher's aide in Las Vegas; a child photographer and an unspecified clergy member in Philadelphia; and a person the FBI described as a civilian law enforcement employee in West Virginia. That person has not been arrested, FBI Special Agent Bill Crowley

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said, declining to provide further details.

The FBI did not further identify the denominations of the non-Catholic clergy members implicated in the sweep.

In Las Vegas, authorities said Beckham Baker, 23, was indicted Feb. 6 on one charge of receiving child pornography and one charge of possession of child pornography. Baker, who worked in a southern Nevada day care center, is free pending his next court appearance.

FBI Special Agent Gayle Jacobs said authorities moved quickly to arrest Baker because of his job. "Obviously, he needed to be removed from working with children," she said.

Reached by telephone Monday at his Las Vegas apartment, Baker said he was seeking to hire a lawyer and declined to comment further.

The school bus driver in New York was identified as Shannon Timothy Macauley, 36, of Constable, N.Y. Macauley was charged by state police in November and December with sodomizing five boys. Another arrest in New York was of John J. Schmidt Jr., 51, of Dolgeville, N.Y. Schmidt, an elementary school teacher, was charged in November with receiving child pornography on his home computer from Internet sites.

Schmidt pleaded innocent. His attorney, Frank Policelli, said he couldn't comment on evidence he still hasn't seen.

"The government always comes forth before anybody can see what kind of case they have," Policelli said. "You can't form an opinion just because the government made charges. They can charge anybody."

In St. Louis, archdiocese officials disclosed earlier this month that a computer belonging to the Rev. John Hess, a priest at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Florissant, had been seized as part of a child pornography investigation. But authorities could not say late Monday whether that search was related to Monday's announcement in Washington. Hess has been removed from the parish.

FBI spokesman Pete Gulotta in Baltimore confirmed that

among those also charged was the Rev. Thomas A. Rydzewski, an associate pastor at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore. His arrest on Dec. 13 had been previously announced there by authorities, but there was no indication of a larger investigation until Monday's announcement. ■

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