



March 19, 2002

- [HOMEPAGE](#)
- [NEWS SUMMARY](#)
- [US](#)
- [INTERNATIONAL](#)
- [MONEYScope](#)
- [WEATHER](#)
- [LOCAL NEWS](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [ESPN SPORTS](#)
- [SCI/TECH](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [HEALTH](#)
- [TRAVEL](#)
- [VIDEO & AUDIO](#)

U.S.



Attorney General John Ashcroft stands next to a map showing where investigations into child pornography took place during "Operation Candyman."  
(Kenneth Lambert/AP Photo)

New Face for Pornography  
Authority Figures Caught in 'Candyman'  
Internet Porn Ring

By Bryan Robinson  
abc NEWS.com

March 19 — Monday's arrests in "Operation Candyman" revealed a growing marketplace for child pornography and a different kind of pornographer: the seemingly upstanding citizen who could be anyone, including a parish priest or a school bus driver.

MORE ON THIS STORY

Experts say that child pornographers are often perceived as social outcasts with prior criminal records or a history of sexual assault who peddle their materials in dark basements. But according to federal law enforcement officials, many of those arrested in the government's year-long sting operation on a Internet child porn ring set up by an e-mail group called "Candyman" included members of the clergy, teachers, law enforcement officers and others entrusted with caring for children.

The arrests in "Operation Candyman," experts say, show that child pornographers — especially those who use the Internet — do not necessarily fit particular profiles or stereotypes.

"They could be almost anyone," said Julie Posey, a Colorado-based private investigator who runs Pedowatch, an organization dedicated to preventing online child sex abuse. "I've seen everyone from your semi-homeless person to teachers to people who live highly luxurious lifestyles involved in these crimes. They come from all walks of life, all religions, all races."

Men, Posey said, are more likely to use the Internet for child pornography but she stressed that women and teenagers have also been arrested.

The Allure of Anonymity and Opportunity

"Operation Candyman" is not the first to snag respected members of a community. Authority figures charged with child pornography offenses over the past year have included:

- Calif. Judge Ronald Kline, who faces seven charges of child porn possession

Missed Peter?  
watch him now

WORLD NEWS TONIGHT  
WITH PETER JENNINGS

Click Here for FREE 14-Day Trial



SUMMARY

A downfall of a cyber-based porn ring illustrates a new kind of child pornographer who does not fit any criminal profile.

1/2 the cost of AOL

SIGN UP NOW!

INTERACT

[VIDEO & AUDIO](#)

[WEBCASTS](#)

[BOARDS](#)

[CHAT](#)

[NEWS ALERTS](#)

[CONTACT ABC](#)

SPECIAL OFFERS FROM

abc NEWS.com

stemming from photos of naked boys allegedly found on his computers. He also faces charges of molesting a 12-year-old boy.

- Rabbi Jerrold Levy of Boca Raton, Fla., who pleaded guilty last August to two counts of soliciting sex through the Internet and two counts of child pornography. He was sentenced to six years and six months in prison.
- Fort Lauderdale Detective Byron Matthai faced federal charges of enticing a child for sex over the Internet. He died last December before the case could be brought to trial.

Experts say child pornographers are drawn to the Internet because they believe it can provide them with more anonymity. The Internet gives them a way of exchanging photos without seemingly attracting attention to themselves.

"The Net is a way of sending and exchanging more contraband, whether it be drugs or child pornography," said Eugene Volokh, professor of law at the University of California in Los Angeles. "It's an easier, quicker, relatively inexpensive way to send things, you don't have to meet anyone face-to-face out in the open."

Some pornographers — especially those outside the United States — may use the Internet because they believe they would not be extradited to face charges if they are caught. But Volokh said, while pornographers believe cyberspace gives them more anonymity and more access for exchanging porn or attracting child victims, they also put themselves at risk. Their transactions leave virtual footprints.

"It is possible to keep logs of all kinds of transactions made over the Internet," said Volokh. "Purchases, transactions have been easily tracked. For all the advantages some pornographers believe they have with the Net, there are also some minuses."

‘Just a Drop in the Bucket’

That ability to monitor the activity and purchases of suspected child pornography fueled the success of "Operation Candyman," experts said.

The sting, which began in January 2001, focused on those who set up the "Candyman" e-mail child porn group and its subscribers. All 56 national field offices of the FBI participated in the investigation. When Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the operation, 86 people had been arrested for child pornography and 27 members of the Candyman e-mail group had admitted to child molestation.

Part of the problem with traditional and Internet child pornographers, experts say, is that they attract other pornographers who not only envision their fantasies, but act them out.

"These individuals are collectors. They live within the fantasy. And that's ... enough," said Reuben Rodriguez, director of the Exploited Children Unit at The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. "But unfortunately, it also fuels the fire of other individuals who want to prey on children. They look for the gratification of these images to build that fantasy. And then the photographs are not enough. And they have to go out and actually do the real thing."

To help combat the problem, Posey said parents should closely monitor what their

children are exposed to while surfing the Internet so that they are not lured by suspected pornographers. In addition, she said, Internet Service providers and law enforcement officials have to find ways to face the challenge of tracking suspected porn groups.

In addition to the Candyman e-group, the FBI has investigated other alleged child porn cyberspace groups and expects to make more arrests in the ongoing sting. Federal officials estimate that there were more than 7,000 members of the Candyman e-group, with 2,400 subscribers in foreign countries.

While gratified with the announcement of the arrests, experts say the child porn rings on the Internet remains a much larger and growing problem.

"It is such a huge problem," said Posey. "I'm happy to hear about the 80 or so arrests, but that's just a drop in the bucket. ... It's very easy for these people to get together over the Internet and set up a group. All it takes is five minutes." ■

*ABCNEWS' Pierre Thomas contributed to this report.*

---

 [PRINT THIS PAGE](#) |  [SEND THIS TO A FRIEND](#) | [VIEW MOST EMAILED](#)

---

Copyright © 2002 ABCNEWS Internet Ventures.

Click here for: [HELP](#) [ADVERTISER INFO](#) [CONTACT ABC](#) [TOOLS](#) [PR](#) [TERMS OF USE](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#)

ABCNEWS.com family of sites:

[ABC.com](#)  
[Mail](#)

[ESPN.com](#)  
[Movies.com](#)

[Disney.com](#)

[Family.com](#)

[GO](#)