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Show: *My Son Was Caught in a Sex Sting*

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[INTRODUCTION]

Unknown Male Speaker - 0:00

Today on an all new Dr. Phil.

Unknown Male Speaker - 0:02

Young men caught in a police sex sting.

Lieutenant Purcell - 0:03

....in which Task Force numbers pose as children online to identify sexual predators.

Kathleen - 0:10

My son went to prison.

Dr. Phil

You say let's get a hotel tonight. He knows she's 13. And you know that's wrong, and you know that's wrong.

Aracely - 0:18

He was tricked into what happened.

Lieutenant Purcell - 0:21

Just because the act didn't take place, does not mean that that's not their intention.

Dr. Phil - 0:27

Let's do it.

Unknown Female Speaker

Have a good show everybody. Here we go.

Dr. Phil

This is a safe place to talk about hard things.

Unknown Female Speaker

Stand by. [UI]

Dr. Phil

Today's gonna be a changing day in your life.

Unknown Female Speaker

Five, four...

Dr. Phil

I am not giving up on you.

Audience

[Cheering and clapping and chanting Dr. Phil, Robin blowing kisses]

[PART 1: Sebastian & Aracely]

Dr. Phil

Today we are talking about a real controversy. And this is involving multi agency police stings around the country that have taken down hundreds of pedophiles. But behind the mug shots are men who claim they are the victims of overzealous police. Now, Sebastian was arrested in an online sex sting involving an undercover officer posing as a 13 year old girl looking for a hookup. Now, Sebastian and his mom are adamant that this was all a big setup.

Sebastian - 1:44

It all started one night when I was on Craigslist.

Aracely -1:46

Sebastian had not had a lot of experience with girls or with sex.

Sebastian - 1:50

I was feeling a little bit desperate. I was on the casual encounters page on Craigslist. There was three different ads with the same phone number. I sent them a text message,"I saw your Craigslist ad. Are you busy today?" They respond, "Oh, I'm worried I'm too young for you." I respond, "Age doesn't bother me. Unless you're like 60." "I guess I'm almost 14 but look a lot older." "I don't think Craigslist is where you want to find your dates at your age. But again, I don't mind if you don't mind." I felt like they were looking for sex. I told her things like we would meet up, go to a hotel and then we do it there have a shower together. And then we do it there again. However, my intention wasn't to have sex with this minor. My intention was to have a conversation and persuade them to get off of Craigslist.

Aracely - 2:35

So he showed up at a business place where he was told to meet the girl.

Sebastian - 2:41

And when I arrived, I texted the person saying that I was there at the meetup point. At that point, I was ambushed by the police. They rammed their car [Police siren] on the back side of my car.

Aracely - 2:52

He was surrounded by police officers who were pointing their guns at him shouting out, "Get out of the car, and get on the ground."

Sebastian - 3:01

And then they put their knee on my back, to make sure that I was in their custody. After that they tie my hands with a zip tie, and they put me in the back of their car. I had thoughts of Oh my God, I'm in real trouble.

Dr. Phil - 3:16

Aracely says she's desperate to clear Sebastian's name, and prove he was entrapped by the police.

Sebastian - 3:23

The first two officers interviewed me, and they asked me the questions of what was going on through my head. I can't remember. I felt like... I felt like she was egging me on. And then I just started to initiate.

Officer Olivera - 3:35

When you initiated that you wanted sex with her, did you know she was 13 at the time?

Sebastian - 3:44

Yes, cause I wanted to tell her that, "You need to get off Craigslist and avoid this life. Avoid this path before something bad happens. When I took the polygraph test. That's what I learned that they were trying to get me to confess to things that I've done that I have not done before.

Officer

Now, you went out there for what purpose? For real. Don't... don't minimize here, please.

Sebastian - 4:05

Originally, it was about sex. They were asking me questions about how I view minors.

Officer - 4:13

Alright, you said you never solicited nobody... no minor before?

Sebastian - 4:15

No. Thoughts of what I'd like to do to minors.

Officer - 4:18

Did you have any type of sexual contact with a minor?

Sebastian - 4:22

No. They were very relentless with their questions.

Officer - 4:28

Have you ever solicited a minor for sex?

Sebastian

No

Officer

Are you sure?

Sebastian - 4:31

Yes. They wanted something that would give them the credibility of me being a child molester. Even though I am not a child molester.

Officer - 4:38

Have you ever downloaded any child porn?

Sebastian - 4:43

No. They told me numerous times I failed the lie detector test, but they never provided results for the lie detector test.

Polygraph Officer - 4:48

You didn't pass the test, is what I'm saying. I want to give you another one. Now, I'm not saying you raped somebody. You understand that, right?

Sebastian

Right

Polygraph Officer

Okay, I'm not saying that raped--you're a pedophile. I'm just saying you didn't tell me something you held back on.

Sebastian - 5:02

I can't think of what it could be. What it could possibly be, because I'm trying to be truthful here.

Aracely - 5:07

It was very disturbing to watch. The officer who was conducting the polygraph was very upset when Sebastian was not saying the things he wanted to hear. Sebastian did not understand why the police didn't believe him. He thought maybe they had them confused with somebody else.

Sebastian - 5:24

My mother bailed me out with \$50,000. The charge was an online solicitation of a minor. The plea deal was five years prison. And I said no. So we ended up going to trial. But in the end, they gave me the guilty verdict. The sentence was 10 years' probation, and for 10 years, I have to register as sex offender.

Aracely - 5:43

A couple of weeks after Sebastian was arrested, then it was put out in the media that it was a big sex sting operation.

Media video - 5:51

A multi-agency sting helps bring down more than 60 people.

Man in media video

The people in the state of Texas, we've heard you. We've stepped up efforts to combat human trafficking. Stop preying on our children, because we're tired of it. And it's a matter of time before you come knocking on our door, or we come knocking on yours.

Sebastian - 6:08

I'm not a sex offender. I'm not a child predator, and I'm not a pedophile.

Dr. Phil - 6:14

You're here because you want to clear your son's name. And you want your name cleared.

Aracely

Yes, sir.

Sebastian

That's right.

Dr. Phil

Okay. So Sebastian, let's be, let's be clear here. Uhm, you're not highly experienced in the dating world, right?

Sebastian - 6:28

None whatsoever, or very little. I'd say.

Dr. Phil - 6:31

Very, little, okay. And so you went to a Craigslist. There's a section on there for casual conversations, or casual relationships or whatever. And it's 18 and over. So you didn't go into a children's chat room or something like that. Trying to find an underage girl that you could prey upon? That's your point. Correct?

Sebastian - 6:56

I've never done anything like that.

Dr. Phil - 6:58

Ever before. You don't have any criminal record, or you don't have any history of doing anything like that. They've never run you off from the school yard, hanging around looking at little girls or anything of that sort. You have no history of anything like that.

Sebastian - 7:14

I don't drink. I don't do drugs. I don't smoke. Uhm, I don't hit on minors. I don't do any of that.

Aracely - 7:19

You don't hit on anybody.

Dr. Phil - 7:20

All right. So you started talking to someone and right up front, they said, "I'm 13."

Aracely - 7:28

They said almost 14. He understood 14, but...

Dr. Phil - 7:31

Right.

Aracely

...they....

Dr. Phil

Okay, well, let's look at the text messages. Sebastian, "What did you want to do tonight?" Then she says, "Well, I am 13. So I don't want no kids laugh out loud." And you say, "I've only actually done it once. So I'd love to get more experienced with someone new too." The girl says, "Would you wear protection? I don't want to get prego." You say, "Of course, I know how you said you don't want to have kids." Okay, mom, there was no predisposition. He didn't go there looking for an underage girl, **BUT HE FOUND ONE**, in his mind. Do you know the difference between right and wrong?

Sebastian - 8:20

I want to believe that I do.

Dr. Phil - 8:22

Okay, so he knows the difference between right and wrong. He even says, "You shouldn't be on this site."

Aracely

Mhm [nods]

Dr. Phil

"But since you are and you're showing me acceptance, which I don't often get,"

Aracely

Mhm

Dr. Phil

...let's hook up." Now, how do you make that okay?

Aracely - 8:46

Well, because he was... before any of that part of the conversation happened, he was talking about other things. He was not talking about sex. They kept directing him towards sex. So it...

Dr. Phil - 8:57

No, I have a whole conversation. He knows the difference between right and wrong. He knows she's 13, and he doesn't disengage at that point. Now that's wrong. And you know, that's wrong. And you know, that's wrong. Now, that part of this is wrong. You agree with that? Correct.

Aracely - 9:14

I agree with that. But his intention was to talk to her.

Dr. Phil - 9:18

Well, let's look further because here's the text where you're planning with the underage girl. You say, "Let's get a hotel tonight." And, "Okay, I'm going to get ready, so I can pick you up. Send me the address." "You want sex? Right?" Girl, "Do you?" Sebastian, "Yes, I do, but I'm also offering dinner in a movie before we hop right into it. I'm just being polite."

Aracely - 9:49

So he was trying to meet her at a public place. He was giving her the attention she wanted.

Dr. Phil - 9:56

Well, coming up, Sebastian told police that he was actually trying to protect the underage girl. We'll look at his police interrogation tapes next.

[COMING UP – Details about what is next]

Aracely - 10:12

In his mind, he thought, I'm a safe person. She's, uh, she's better off hanging out with me.

Dr. Phil - 10:19

Well, you don't know what was in this why Mom. You weren't there.

Aracely

Okay

Dr. Phil

You weren't in his head that night.

Aracely - 10:26

Am I in denial?

[LATER – Details on what is later in the show]

Dr. Phil - 10:29

And later,

Kathleen - 10:30

My son went to prison. He is the victim, in this case. Putting my son in prison, and saying you're keeping the public safe, is--you're undermining public safety. You're telling the world that you have found one. You haven't. There's really somebody out there who's doing this. You're wasting our time.

[RETURN FROM COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Sebastian - 10:54

Being labeled a child predator has definitely ruined my life. The police in my community created criminals where there are no criminals. I've had my friends turn their backs on me. My goal is to get my name cleared, so people will not doubt me.

Dr. Phil - 11:09

Sebastian says he's ready to put his arrest in an online sex sting behind him. His mom, Aracely, says her son was taken advantage of because he's naive, and law enforcement is finding the weak and preying on them. Sebastian said the police intimidated him during the interrogation. Let's take a look.

Sebastian - 11:31

I just had an urge, and I thought this girl was my one and only chance because I've been on Craigslist for a while. I thought maybe I could be somebody that could help her. Steer her in the right direction, once I got my thoughts under control. Because I realized what I was doing was wrong. But I thought, since I've already got myself into this mess, maybe I can clear the problem. I wanted to tell her that, "You need to get off of Craigslist and avoid this life. Avoid this path before something bad happens."

Officer Olivera - 12:00

When you initiated that you wanted sex with her, did you know she was 13 at the time?

Sebastian - 12:07

Yes.

Dr. Phil - 12:11

Okay, now, you're telling this police officer that when you knew she was 13, your intention was to have sex with her. Why are you telling him that?

Sebastian - 12:26

It was all... It was all just a cover up for what I really want to do and what I really want to tell this person, because I had a motive, uhm, behind the reasoning why I want to tell... why I told her that I wanted to have sex with her that night.

Dr. Phil - 12:40

Now, you had a friend that... a girl, that had gone to meet up with an adult male. And she wound up being killed, correct?

Sebastian

That's correct.

Dr. Phil

And you're saying that is one of the things that sensitized you to wanting to get this girl off of a path she didn't need to be on?

Sebastian

Correct.

Dr. Phil

Uh huh. And you understand that this looks really bad, right?

Aracely

Yes.

Sebastian

This is probably the worst thing that's ever happened to me.

Dr. Phil

Now, Sebastian said he wanted to take a polygraph to clear his name, uh, with the police. Let's take a look at this.

Sebastian - 13:24

I saw an ad on Craigslist, but essentially, she told me that she was 14. But at the time, I was driven by lust and desire to have a companionship and feel whole with somebody, regardless of who they were.

Polygraph Officer

Now, you went out here for what purpose? For real. And don't... Don't minimize here, please.

Sebastian

Originally, it was about sex.

Polygraph Officer - 13:55

You're not a pedophile. In other words, you're not a monster. You don't want to hurt nobody. Is that what you're telling me?

Sebastian

Yes

Polygraph Officer

You were telling the truth about the case questions? Which one was the hardest one?

Sebastian - 13:57

I would say ummm... What was it? Not soliciting a minor, not downloading porn, child porn.

Polygraph Officer - 14:06

You didn't pass the test, that's all I'm saying. I want to give you another one, but I didn't know kind of like, you didn't, because whatever you did, you just tell me. Now, I'm not saying raped somebody. You understand that, right?

Sebastian - 14:16

Right

Dr. Phil

You're saying, "Yes, I knew she was 14, but kind of lust took over. And so I wanted that companionship no matter what."

Sebastian

Right

Aracely - 14:31

In his mind, he thought, "I'm a safe person. She's, uh, better off hanging out with me than someone else..."

Dr. Phil - 14:39

Well, you don't know what was in his mind, Mom. You weren't there.

Aracely

Okay

Dr. Phil

You weren't in his head that night. You have a law enforcement officer sitting there, and somebody saying, "You knew she was 14." And he said, "I know, but lust took over so I didn't really care."

Aracely - 14:54

He was telling them basically what he's supposed to say. What he--they want him to say.

Dr. Phil - 15:03

Yeah, right. But he said it.

Aracely - 15:08

Okay. Am I in denial?

Dr. Phil - 15:09

Well, I think what he said is very incriminating here.

Aracely - 15:14

Okay.

Dr. Phil - 15:15

Are you saying that had you shown up, and a, a very attractive young girl had shown up, with a willing spirit to have sex with you, you would have said, No, no, no, no, no, no, I'm just here to put you on the right path. Would you have resisted the temptation? If you would shown up and she was there?

Sebastian - 15:43

Yes. Girls who push themselves actually too far onto me are a bit overwhelming, honestly. And the fact that I knew that she was for 14 says, uhm, it's just... It probably would have been too much for me to bear, bear.

Dr. Phil - 16:03

Uh huh. Uh, we have to take a break. When we come back, we're gonna hear from another young man caught in an online sex sting. He was speaking to a person in an 18 and over chat room and thought the girl was just roleplaying. We're gonna add him to the conversation, and talk about that next.

[COMING UP SEQUENCE]

Jace - 16:26

This ad was young Gamer Girl at home, and they said that they were 13. I didn't believe it. I asked if it was a typo and they meant 23.

[RETURN FROM COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Aracely - 16:42

Sebastian was trapped in a sex sting operation. He was on an adult site, and he's been labeled a child predator because of this. And I do not think that is fair because he is not a child predator. He was not looking for a child or a minor. He was on an adult site, and he was tricked into what happened.

[PART 2: Jace and Kathleen]

Dr. Phil - 17:06

Aracely and Sebastian are not the only mother and son team fighting against what they say is a corrupt criminal justice system. Now Kathleen says her son Jace is one of the hundreds of men arrested by police in a crime with no real victim.

Jace - 17:24

Three years ago, I went on Craigslist. I was looking to hook up with a woman.

Kathleen - 17:28

He met someone who claimed to be a "gamer." And so obviously, this is a huge draw for Jace.

Jace - 17:34

When you log on to Craigslist, you had to confirm that you were 18 years old, and this ad was a young Gamer Girl at home. And I started off with I didn't want sex. I just wanna game. They said that they were 13. I didn't believe it. I asked her if it was a typo and they meant 23. I was like, "Do you have a picture?" And the picture that I was sent was that of a 24 year old woman, and in my head it clicked that I was dealing with an adult that just enjoyed role playing as younger person.

Kathleen - 18:05

It's an adult, and it looks like an adult.

Jace - 18:07

They mentioned two or three times when they were 13. And they were asking what type of things I was into. Bondage, BDSM, that kind of stuff. Honestly, she was really the one pushing the conversation more towards sex. She suggested that I pick up condoms on the way over. I was expecting video games and a sexual encounter with an adult, when I got there. When I arrived at the house, an adult woman opened the door. Said hi. Asked me to come inside and take off my shoes. And while I was doing that, a number of cops came around the corner and said that I was under arrest.

Kathleen - 18:42

He gets arrested for attempted rape of a child in the second degree, which is a class A Felony. He did not have any intention of committing a crime.

Jace - 18:51

I was accused of a victimless crime, and I should never have been charged as a felony. The judge found me guilty, and I was sentenced to 18 months prison time. I am not a child predator, yet I'm treated like one. Having to register as a sex offender, for a crime I didn't commit, made me lose faith in my country.

Kathleen - 19:12

My son was convicted of these crimes, but is not a pedophile. It is my opinion that the police are running these proactive stings and ruining innocent people's lives for the monetary gain. And I think it's outrageous.

Dr. Phil - 19:29

Well, Kathleen and Jace join us now virtually. Uh, Kathleen, Jace, uh, hello.

Kathleen - 19:34

Hi.

Jace

Hello

Dr. Phil - 19:35

Jace, let me start with you. You feel like you were set up in this thing? Uh, and have really done absolutely nothing wrong, correct?

Jace - 19:48

Uh, correct. Yes.

Dr. Phil - 19:49

And there was an ad placed that you responded to, and the ad said, "Just Gamer Girl sitting home on sunny day. Tired of all the rain. Sun is good, but this girl is gaming today. You wanna to chat?" So, you responded. And what kind of response did you make?

Jace - 20:12

Well, my first response was, "Forget sex. Let's talk about video games."

Dr. Phil - 20:17

This is your conversation. The other person, Julie says, "I'm 13. And this alien is blanking tearing me up." And you say, what?

Jace - 20:35

I said something along the lines of like, "This was a typo. I mean, you mean 23, right?"

Dr. Phil - 20:40

Uh huh. So Julie says, "What you thinking?" (Smiley face) And you say, "I don't know, I personally love...," and you describe a sex act, pretty graphically. But I want to meet you first and talk to you. Because I think this could be more if you wanted it to be. (smiley face) And she says, "Wow, you sure you're cool with this?" And you say, "Well, why wouldn't I be? She says, "Because I'm 13. Plus, I can't drive." And you say, "Haha... Well, if you want, we can do this in the car. I honestly thought you were joking about being 13." And she says, "I'm not. So we still cool?" And you say, "You won't call the cops, will you?" And she says, "blank NO." She's clearly saying, "I am 13. I don't drive. I don't have a car. Are you sure you're cool with me being 13 years of age?"

Jace - 21:45

Uh, she is, but in my mind, I'm still dealing with someone that's pretending to be this age, that they're not actually 13. Roleplay is a very common thing.

Dr. Phil - 21:57

And so when she sent the picture, you thought the picture was a roleplay.

Jace - 22:01

I thought the picture was her, a real... an adult woman. The 13 was the roleplay. It's something called age play, where you pretend to be an age that you are not. And you see it often, probably most often in, uh, women dressing up in like cheerleading uniforms, or schoolgirl outfits.

Dr. Phil

Mhm

Kathleen - 22:24

And while you say you can't tell the age, I can see lines on her forehead. I can see perfectly groomed eyebrows. I can see makeup that was professionally or an adult put on. That's not a child.

Dr. Phil - 22:38

We're going to take a break. When we come back, we're going to meet the commander of an online Task Force looking to protect children and hear what he has to say about these stings. We'll be right back.

[COMING UP]

Lieutenant Purcell - 22:59

When you send a harmful matter to a child, you have committed a crime.

Kathleen

The word... No, [II]....

Lieutenant Purcell

Let me finish. Let me finish.

Kathleen

Sure.

Lieutenant Purcell

So, I understand from a mother's standpoint, they don't want to believe that this has taken place, and that their sons have done this. And she's saying that we can't tell their intentions. You're right, we can't. They're... They have told us. They have sent us messages, telling us exactly what they intend on doing to a child.

[RETURN FROM COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Jace - 23:25

I do believe that I was entrapped and falsely accused by the Washington State Police. After I got out of prison. I had to register as a sex offender and meet up with my parole officer. These stings that the police are running is ruining people's lives, and it needs to stop.

Dr. Phil - 23:47

Now, Jace says that he was on an adult website, was set an adult photo, and thought a woman chatting with him was into roleplay. Now, his mom Kathleen says these undercover sex stings are a wanton misspending of funds and resources. Now Lieutenant Brandon Purcell, the commander of the central California Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, says, "Nobody's being tricked here."

[PART 3: Lieutenant Brandon Purcell – CA ICAC Commander]

Lieutenant Purcell - 24:17

This task force conducts operations that are undercover operations, in which task force members pose as children online to identify sexual predators that are trying to entice our children. It is very clear when they're arrested what they're doing. They have arrived to meet a child to have sex. We have definitively told them, from the beginning, this is an eight year old. This is a 12 year old. This is a 14 year old that you're speaking with. There is nobody that's going to be able to sit in there and truthfully say, "I had no idea I was meeting a child." People who say that we've set them up and we're trapping them are liars, plain and simple. They know that they're meeting with a child. The last thing that we want to do is take someone's freedom from them, but when these men are doing that, we are gonna come after them. It pisses me off to say that this is a victimless crime. These men are showing up to rape a child. These men are predators. Our children are the most innocent members of our society. So to say that a child is not a victim is absolutely ludicrous. This is not something where if we make 100 extra arrests that we get twice as much money. We're not out here for the money. The arrests that we make are to protect children. If you're actively trying to seek out children, our detectives are good. They're going to find you. They are going to catch you. Just stop doing it.

Dr. Phil - 25:35

Well, Lieutenant Brandon Purcell joins us now. Lieutenant Purcell, thank you for being here.

Lieutenant Purcell

Thank you for having me.

Dr. Phil

These folks have a serious problem with this proactive effort to take predators off of the street. They say that's a setup. That's entrapment. What do you say?

Lieutenant Purcell - 25:58

It's pretty simple that it's not entrapment. They were told that these girls are 13. Period. If you go online, and you're trying to have a casual encounter or a hookup or anything, and someone says they're 13, that's the end, stop.

[Clapping]

Dr. Phil - 26:15

Well now, Jace and Sebastian would both argue... If I can speak for you for a second. He never met with a child. Jace never met with a child. Sebastian, Jace never touched a child. Never had any inappropriate interaction with a child, but yet, are both listed on the other sex registry, Jace for life. What do you say about that?

Lieutenant Purcell - 26:46

Just because the act didn't take place does not mean that that's not their intention. Now, the fact that law enforcement was fortunate enough to prevent it, thank God! Because it is very common that in these stings, when we arrest these predators, we go and backtrack, and we've found additional victims.

Kathleen - 27:02

You're expressing to me that you're trying to find people who are looking for children. How is it that you know what somebody's thinking? This is a thought crime only, and it's not victimless; my son went to prison. He is the victim, in this case. Putting my son in prison and saying you're keeping the public safe, is--you're undermining public safety. You're telling the world that you have found one. You haven't! There's really somebody out there who's doing this. You're wasting our time.

Lieutenant Purcell

I'd like to respond to that.

Dr. Phil - 27:37

Ok, go ahead.

Lieutenant Purcell - 27:38

So, it is a crime to solicit a known child online. So,

Kathleen

Right

Lieutenant Purcell

...we're not a pre Crimes Unit. They have committed that crime. When you send a harmful matter to a child, you have to have committed that crime.

Kathleen

The word--No. How [UI]...

Lieutenant Purcell

Let me finish.

Kathleen

Sure.

Dr. Phil

So, I understand from a mother standpoint, they don't want to believe that this is taking place, and that their sons have done this. And she's saying that we can't tell their intentions. You're right, we can't. They're... They have told us. They have sent us messages telling us exactly what they intend on doing to a child.

Jace

I have some questions [UI].

Lieutenant Purcell

That's black and white evidence.

Jace - 28:12

I waved all of my rights, to an attorney. I let you guys search my car, my phone. You found nothing. And you... While I was being interviewed, they forced words into my mouth. If you were looking for sexual predators for minors, why was I then sent the picture of an adult woman?

Lieutenant Purcell -28:32

It doesn't matter. You were told that she's 13. Walk away, the end.

Dr. Phil - 28:36

Alright, we have to take a break. When we come back, a surgeon says he was at a low point in his life when he started chatting with an undercover officer, posing as a 15 year old, and now he's lost everything. We're going to add him to this conversation next.

[COMING UP]

Dr. Phil - 28:57

You're trained in critical thinking and, uh, highly skilled in decision making, and this was not your finest hour in navigating the maze of life here.

Joseph - 29:09

Oh, it was a person that just kept pushing and pushing and pushing for me to meet her. And honestly, I've had a lot of history of being easily manipulated by people.

[RETURN FROM COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Kathleen - 29:25

The police run these proactive sex things across the nation. There is no oversight as to what they can and cannot do. Nobody's holding them accountable. You feel like you're safe because they're putting these people away, but the predators are still out there. And nobody's looking for them.

Dr. Phil - 29:46

Well, Kathleen and her son Jace, along with Aracely and her son Sebastian, say online sex stings, proactive sex stings, are not targeting the real predators. Joseph, a surgeon agrees. He says he was groomed by police and preyed on during a vulnerable period in his life, when he started chatting online with a girl who said she was 15. But he says her photo looks like a 26 year old. He joins us now on the phone because he wants to remain anonymous. So Joseph, thank you for joining us.

[PART 4: Joseph's Story]

Joseph

Thank you, Dr. Phil.

Dr. Phil

Now, Joseph, you've been charged with online solicitation of a minor, and the impact on your life has been profound, uh, in terms of, of what you've lost at this point. Correct?

Joseph - 30:38

Right now, I really can't practice, you know, and do, do what I love doing. Uhm, I think that a lot of things of what.... Uh, it's kind of different I guess, in my case, because this, this, uh... I conversed with her off and on for over the course of, oh, I guess it was like, four or five months or so. And it was basically like I... At one point, I stopped talking to her, and it was three months later that she re-contacted me.

Dr. Phil - 31:09

Uh huh. Now, when, when you were first talking to her, I want to look at these text. The girl says, "So how old are you?" And you say, "35, you?" "She says 15." You say, "Oh, I see." And she says, "Yeah, so what's up? You say, "Are you into older guys" God, yes. I wish I could have sex with you." The girl, "Why?" "Well, you are young and sexy." The girl, "Ah, thanks. So have you ever had sex with a girl my age?" "No, but I've fantasized about it. Wanna fulfill my fantasy?" So at that point, she says she's 15. And you say, "Yeah, that sounds good. Let's go. Let's Let's do this."

Joseph - 31:58

She was basically giving me positive feedback, in a time that I was just feeling down, by...

Dr. Phil - 32:04

And how, how were you arrested? Where were you arrested?

Joseph - 32:07

Well, I, uh... We had the basically after four times of not meeting her, we finally... she finally convinced me to meet her. And then I just basically sat in my car and had the... uh, had the engine running. And basically, there were no people there. No, no, no one so... you know, no girl that's supposed to be her, etc. And police just swarmed me.

Dr. Phil - 32:31

You said you were at a vulnerable time in your life, but I also know that you're trained in critical thinking and are highly skilled in decision making and problem solving. And this was not your finest hour in navigating the maze of life here.

Joseph - 32:51

No, of course it wasn't. Uh, but I think was this was, is basically, you know, it was a person that just kept pushing and pushing and pushing for me to meet her. And honestly, I have had a lot of history of being easily manipulated by people.

Dr. Phil - 33:05

We have to take a break. Coming up, we've got a defense lawyer here, and I think he has some things to say that all three of these people will want to hear. We'll be right back.

[COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Dr. Phil - 33:24

Well, defense attorney Peter Aiken says there is a fine line in the sex sting operations with entrapment. Now, he joins us now virtually. Uh, what is this fine line, Peter?

[PART 5: Peter Aiken – Defense Lawyer]

Peter Aiken - 33:36

The truth is somewhere in the middle on this. The stings are legitimate in that they provide a deterrent. In other words, they keep people from going on the internet and searching for children. So in that respect, they are valuable. But the truth is that the real predators rarely fall for it. Half of my cases have been young man between 19 and 24 years old, half. Uh, the profile on them is their shy, introverted, uh, socially inept. Uh, sadly, I have represented a couple young men that have been high functioning autistic. Uhm, and the truth is, in my experience, and I've done 55 of these in 14 different jurisdictions, most of the time, they're not getting the real predators. What they're getting is weak young men who then go on to commit a crime. So what the better answer is, in those types of cases, is to reach a compromise, where they are allowed to plead to a lesser crime. They don't become a registered sex offender for life, and they can then get on with their lives. But I know for the ones that I've represented, the particularly autistic ones, to put somebody like that or to put a 19 year old kid in state prison, where he will become a real victim of real sexual violence, that's just wrong.

What they need is balance. I listened to the young men and their and their statements. Uhm, the defense that I was going there to warn somebody, that's not believable defense. That's not going to work. Uh, I've listened to the other

explanations, and I feel bad for the moms in these cases. And I do sympathize with the young men's positions. And the answer there is compromise, and let them plead to a lesser crime, that more befits it.

Dr. Phil - 35:18

You want the punishment to fit the crime, and Jace is on lifelong probation, and a lifelong registered sex offender. Having never touched a child. Now, I'm not saying that he should get a pass for what he did, but I don't think also their lives should be ruined. I think they should learn a lesson. And what is their likelihood of reoffending? It seems in these two cases to be very low. I can tell you from a psychological standpoint, that the chance of these two reoffending is probably lower than the general population because they've been burned in a big way.

[FINAL COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Dr. Phil - 36:07

You know, we always caution parents to talk to their children about being careful online, because there are predators online. And I've had so many tragic stories where young girls are lured out of their home to meet a predator who abducts them, rapes them, kills them, uh, at--to very tragic outcomes. But parents also need to talk to their sons, and realize if they are talking to an underage girl on the other end, that is going to come to a very bad outcome. If it is a real underage girl, and they're telling you what you want to hear, and so you're feeling like a big guy and all of that, you need to disengage because that young girl has parents, and they're going to hold you to account, my friend. They're going to find you, and they're going to hold you to account. And an underage girl does not have the capacity to give consent, and that is rape. And her parents are going to track your happy ass down and prosecute you to the full extent of the law.

[CLAPPING]

So, you parents need to tell your sons not to be talking to underage girls on the internet. And if somebody on the other side turns out to be under age, they need to hit the delete, escape, get out and get away. Avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

And as I've said, if you think that you have not done anything wrong, shut your mouth and get an attorney! Do not try to explain it. Do not try to justify it. Don't say a word! So, we have to be responsible for our choices because there are consequences online. When you open your mouth, when you start those keys moving, there are consequences, and we just need to be aware of that. Look, we're out of time today. So, thanks to all of my guests today. Uh, there's so much important information that couldn't all fit into one hour. So, go to our YouTube channel, and you're going to see more of what we talked about today. So, if it didn't make it here, it will make it there. Uh, you can also join me on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, wherever, and don't forget to subscribe to Robin's podcast, I've got a secret. Uh, we'll see you next time. So long.

[END OF SHOW with Dr. Phil and Robin walking off stage.]

Unknown Speaker - 38:54

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