

7-Jan-2021

Women Who Rock with Success Investigates: Internet Sex Stings

Link to Broadcast: <https://youtu.be/JmRAII76rNQ>



WWRS
WOMEN WHO ROCK
WITH SUCCESS

Investigates

Internet Sex Stings

Thursday, January 7, 2021
10:00 am central standard
time. Join us on the show at
(516) 418-5796

**TOPICS OF
DISCUSSION**

What is online Sexting?
What is Entrapment?
Internet Sex Stings - Public
Perception versus Reality
Special Guest Star Dan Wright
and
**Special Victims Prosecutor
Kathryn Marsh**

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” – 1963, Martin Luther King

Dan's background (I am an engineer with a logical/analytical mind)

- **BSEE** from the University of Florida.
- **MBA** from George Fox University.
- Working in the High Tech Industry for 25+ years. Currently a Project Manager for a startup.

Dan's Criminal Justice Interests

- No real interest in the "criminal justice" system until about 4 years ago (2016) when our son was arrested in sex sting (Operation Net Nanny).
 - Fighting these stings has become a part time hobby: Doing research, reaching out to others and trying to help others arrested as part of these sting operations.
 - I plan to write a book about our experience and going through the whole process.
- Met wife through online dating. Met online (2003).
 - Used a dating website called friendfinder.com. Was using that website, match.com and yahoo.com for trying to find dates.

Fighting these Stings

- As a result of our son being arrested and going into prison I have spent numerous hours every week putting together statistics, reaching out to others (including prisoners), working on our sons case: trial, appeal, etc. I've easily spent over 2000 hours on this over the past 4 years.
 - I know more about these cases than most of the lawyers working on them.
- It wasn't until this year, 2020, when most of us had lost our appeals and fighting that we dug our heels in a little more and formed a group against this injustice. We call ourselves: "Citizens Against Government Entrapment" and we have meetings every week to discuss our plan, next steps, etc.
 - We now have a website: www.cage.fyi
 - We are reaching out beyond our sting state of Washington and know people in Texas, Arizona, Utah, Florida, California and others impacted by these stings.
 - In Washington we have connected with various state representatives and action groups (Faith Action Network and Washington Voices) in order to lobby for changing the laws and in hopes of getting our family members released.
 - We realize it is an uphill battle but if we stay silent and shamed NOTHING will happen. So, we must **rise up** and voice our dissatisfaction with how things are going and this injustice.
- Media Exposure:
 - Article (NY Times Magazine): <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/magazine/sex-offender-operation-net-nanny.html>
 - Video (Dr. Phil Show): <https://www.drphil.com/shows/my-son-was-caught-in-a-sex-sting/>
 - Podcast (Amanda Knox – Labyrinths, 11-Dec): <https://www.knoxrobinson.com/labyrinths.html>
 - Florida Action Committee (7-Jan): Monthly membership call discussion with to individuals on Dr. Phil show as well as a Sex Sting lawyer.

Provide a little background on these internet child sex stings?

- Our group C.A.G.E. does interface with others dealing with stings in other states so I know the basics about those situations. Most of these have very similar tactics and typically are looking to put away those arrested for around 5 years.
- Utilizes free & common adult dating websites and apps including: Craigslist, Badoo, Whisper, Tinder, OkCupid, MeetMe, Skout, Grindr and others.
- All of those arrested are seeking consensual adults for hookups, dates, etc. (18 and over dating sites). None are trolling for minors in chatrooms, facebook or other websites where minors might congregate.
- The dating / hookup scene is a numbers game – keep the connection going.
 - Example: One guy I talked to (took a plea for 13 months) posted 30+ ads a day. Our son responded to 9 ads in a single day. Only 2 replied back. The sting ad and one other at the end of the day.
 - Law enforcement is VERY quick to respond and continue conversation.
 - They RANDOMLY go after people, NOT TARGETING!
 - Easy to get pulled in, even with ages, conflicting evidence (photos).
 - Lots of deception, bait and switch (post says adult, conversation turns to children)
 - Pictures show older adults (24yroid vs 13yroid) or are disguised (16yroid with filter/mask claimed to be 11yroid)
 - They also work to trump up the charges: bring a gift = Comm Sex abuse, Talk to minor = immoral comm w/ minor, bring lube/condom = intent.
 - Meet in person, assess the situation.
 - This is the object of all those in the sting. Many do not trust. Many state “are you a cop?”
 - Some doubt, some good Samaritans, some perhaps don’t have good intentions
 - Son tried to meet 4-5 times before capitulating then another 4 times in neutral location to assess what is going on. All before showing up at the TRAP HOUSE.
- Show up = arrest and charge due to substantial step in State of Washington. Part of Attempt crime.
 - RCW 9A.28.020 Criminal Attempt: *(2) If the conduct in which a person engages otherwise constitutes an attempt to commit a crime, it is no defense to a prosecution of such attempt that the crime charged to have been attempted was, under the attendant circumstances, **factually or legally impossible of commission.***
 - Charges are all Felony A with substantial 5+ to LIFE years of prison time. AROC1, AROC2
 - Some never made it to TRAP HOUSE – just passing by. Some got there, then turned around. All arrested and prosecuted. Only a few cases end well (acquittal, dismissal, etc.).
- The stings are well planned and orchestrated with law enforcement AND prosecutors.
 - Often have standards (ICAC) but don’t seem to have to follow them (Section 8.6 of ICAC Operational Standards): *Target setting tone, pace, and subject matter.*
 - ICAC provides funding for these (must follow standards) as well as private funding. In WA state O.U.R. helped fund many of the stings. Lead investigator later left and joined O.U.R.
 - Quid Pro Quo

- The lead investigator of the stings eventually went to work for OUR, the NGO which donated to the stings which gained it publicity via press releases.
 - So yes, there is GRANT money and DONATIONS going to pay overtime for detectives for these arrest. Arrests are reported back up, help pad numbers, keep people employed. More ARREST = MORE MONEY. There is incentive to continue these “proactive” stings and prosecute!
 - Prosecutors exploit the “attempt” law in WA state allowing impossible crimes.
 - The WSP is running these stings in such a way to avoid the allowance of the “Entrapment” argument in court:
 - *The defense of entrapment is not established by a showing only that law enforcement officials merely afforded the actor an opportunity to commit a crime.*
 - <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=9A.16.070>
- The stings are essentially a Manufactured Crime (Fake Crimes, No victims).

Media Perception versus Reality?

- Whenever they do these stings, Press Release / Newspaper / TV broadcast is biased towards Law Enforcement. Let’s break down a WSP Press release from the sting:
 - Example – [Net Nanny #5 – 20-Sept-2016 WSP Press release.](#)
 - **Stated:** “Operation that **targeted** individuals who wanted to sexually exploit children.”
 - **Fact:** The WSP posted an ad on Craigslist Casual Encounter (18+ older website) or responded to an ad. **NO Individual** was going after any children. They were lured in by law enforcement who offered up children. **NO individual** was targeted, all were random people that happened to be on Craigslist that day.
 - **Stated:** “It’s vital we take these child predators off the streets and keep our children safe.”
 - **Fact:** We agree but they are NOT catching child predators, it is the WSP that are the predators seeking prey by posting on adult websites where there ARE men seeking SEX with consensual adults. If they could show any predisposition or prior history then maybe they can make a reasonable argument here but they are unable to do so.
 - **Stated:** “The operation generated hundreds of responses.”
 - **Fact:** This just shows there are A LOT of people on these websites seeking a hookup with adults. It is a NUMBERS GAME. If I’m trying to scam someone I need to reach hundreds to get a few gullible individuals. It just takes time. What Law Enforcement is doing is like shooting fish in a barrel. It is VERY EASY when you go to an Adult Dating or Hookup site where individuals are looking for sex! Who is going to think they will run into someone posing as a minor or trying to pimp out their children?
 - **Stated:** “The would-be perpetrators arrested agreed to travel to meet with undercover detectives posing as young girls or boys to engage in sexual activity with them.”
 - **Fact:** Actually they often conversed with the mother who was trying to pimp out their children. Those traveling were thinking they would hook up with the mother (an adult) and were very suspicious why the children were thrown in.

Perhaps there were some that would go along; convinced it is okay (we all know it is not).

- **Stated:** “We leave no stone unturned when it comes to removing these predators from our communities.”
 - **Fact:** They are not catching predators. All of these individuals got played/conned/lured.
 - **Stated:** “As a result of the operation, detectives were able to rescue four children who were at risk of being abused.”
 - **Fact:** We have never been able to substantiate this claim and believe it is dubious. Again, these individuals, ranged in age and family members. Some were husbands that did have children. We’ve talked to several of them and know their children were not in harms way.
- **News Article release:** <https://truecrimedaily.com/2016/09/21/police-arrest-21-adults-save-4-children-in-child-sex-sting/>
 - **Stated:** “We’re not enticing people to do something they don’t already have on their mind,” said Lt. Michael Eggleston with WSP. “We’re just taking advantage of their weakness.”
 - **Fact:** Exactly. They are preying on their weakness. They are on an ADULT dating site where men are after sex. What do they think is going to happen? Most individuals who are arrested were very suspicious as can be seen in the chatter.
 - **Bottom Line:**
 - All of the media is biased towards the STING OPERATION and Law enforcement. Little does the public know about the enticement, luring, and re-engagement that is going on by law enforcement.

Tell us a little bit about how you got involved, your son's story?

- Our son was 20 years old, in the Army and stationed at JBLM. (~1.5 years into his 4 year service).
- Trying to hook up with women for sex on Craigslist Casual encounters. He had just started using Craigslist perhaps 2-3 months prior and was just a beginner.
- He had \$150k bail, reduced to \$50k bail. Very restrictive conditions (no internet usage) – affected work and school.
- We went through 2 lawyers. \$10k retainer each.
- Unreasonable plea: 60 months, lifetime parole, indefinite SO registration, Felony A.
- Trial lasted 5 days, 3.5hr deliberation, Guilty of one charge: Attempt RC1.
 - Our son became a causality of the sting operation.
 - It didn't matter that he had no prior history, no CP, no predisposition.
 - It didn't matter that it was not possible, there was no victim.
- Sentenced to prison for **50 months** to LIFE (exceptional sentence due to youth mitigation). Otherwise 69.75 months. Prosecutor wanted **81 months**.
 - Overly harsh punishment compared with Oregon where it would be closer to 18 months max and likely 30 days in jail due to different laws on the books.
 - We know one case in Oregon (another 20 year old) who had sex with a 13 year old twice then was lured into a sex sting and received 35 months (had 11 charges against him and found guilty of 10 during a trial).
- Son has been in prison since Jan 2019 (24 months now). We LOST our Appeal hearing in November – decided in 6 days. We now have a petition pending with the Supreme Court of Washington to hear our argument. Most are denied so this is another long shot. This is the quickest path to reform and changes; winning before the Appeal/Supreme Court Judges to set precedence and help many of the others faced with these hefty criminal charges.

What are doing to try and help make a change?

- The public often talks about the “Criminal Justice System.” A good friend of ours told us “It is NOT a “JUSTICE” system it is a system of LAWS and if you want JUSTICE you need to change the LAWS.”
 - In these sting cases the police and prosecutors work together and exploit the laws!
- I and a few others have connected and reached out to other families.
 - I've written over two dozen prisoners to get their stories.
 - I've connected with around 10% of the families impacted by the sting. A small fraction. There has been a lot of shame from these including lost family members, divorces, etc.
 - I track **all the cases** (294 – I have 271 names) to know who wins, loses, and who dies!
- Our son and others will likely have to live with this handicap remainder of their lives.
- There is a group of us fighting to get legislature to change laws and hopefully commute or vacate sentence for our family members.
 - Long shot due to stigma. Everyone wants to protect children but the stings miss their mark.
- The NY Times Magazine article helped bring to light the injustice: Jace, our son, Kenneth (received 10 year sentence but got over turned in appeal and dismissed).
 - **Convicted of Sex Crimes, but With No Victims** (By Mike Winerip)

- **We want to make sure we are putting right people behind bars.** Not introverts, socially immature, mentally handicap or those making bad decisions.
 - Rehabilitate and Restore not punish (overly harsh).
 - Maybe there is porn addiction that needs dealt with.
 - Maybe there is potential for a real problem that needs resolved!
 - Let's be real about the sentences and work on rehabilitation, especially for FIRST offense. What the WSP has told us is 90% of these individuals have no prior felony and 90% don't have any child pornography. Are they going after the right people? We think not, especially when targeting on ADULT dating sites. Look, none of these men were trolling for children, they were drawn in by LAW ENFORCEMENT!

Who are the Laws really helping?

- We believe these stings are not doing much to help stop any criminal child abuse. We would like them stopped or at least more targeted (get a report and concentrate on that individual).
- We believe the police and prosecutors are abusing their privilege and the laws.
- Sending “innocent” men to prison is costing the state. In Washington it is close to \$42k per year (see my FACTSHEET). I know there are around 150 in prison so \$6.3M per year to house these “so called child predators.” We would be better served by counseling, programs to learn about sexual deviancy (a pervert class), and some 1-3 years of probation. Not lifetime community custody, not sex offender registration. Let these men be able to get jobs and integrate back into society.

Statistics on these Sex Stings in Washington State?

- Refer to the [Net Nanny Factsheet](#) for these details.

Contact:

Go to our website (Citizens Against Government Entrapment): www.cage.fyi

You can reach out to us at (I or someone else will follow-up with you): info@cage.fyi

From that website you will be able to find details about our fight against entrapment and these stings. We also have links to other websites: blogs, podcasts, videos, etc.

Other Sting related websites:

- <https://ladyjusticemyth.blog/>
- www.ssrepentance.com