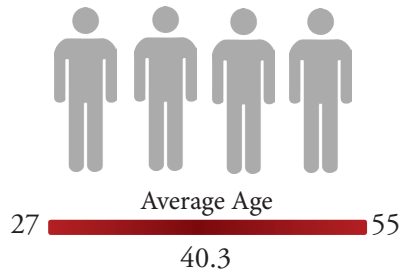


WORKING WITH VICTIMS IN LAKEWOOD

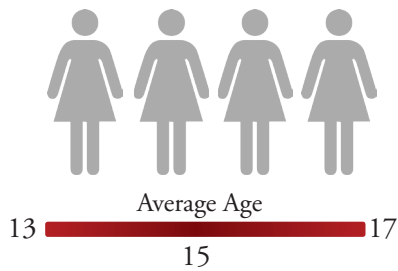


Quick Facts

Suspected Buyers



Minor Victims



Criminal Cases

How the Investigations Proceeded

In two instances, the police officers involved were members of the Innocence Lost Task Force and were able to apply their understanding of domestic minor sex trafficking to identify the victims and elicit important information for the investigation. In State v. “A” the police were dispatched for a civil issue concerning retained property and residents of the apartment building informed the police that the girls were being kicked out because they were “prostituting and starting fights.” In State v. “B” the mother of a victim brought her daughter to the police station because she believed she was involved in prostitution. In State v. “C” the police took an active role by posing as buyers on backpage.com in order to recover the victim and then worked with her to develop leads on a buyer who had been commercially sexually exploiting her and a friend of hers.

Evidence Gathering Process

The police utilized various methods to secure evidence. All minors were asked to identify their perpetrators and willingly gave statements. Other people involved, such as parents and neighbors also presented oral or written statements. One victim consented to have her phone contents downloaded while two others allowed the police to utilize their phones to pose as the victim and contact the suspects. In two instances, the police with consent recorded the staged conversations that the minors had with their buyers. The buyers were all arrested with probable cause, and their vehicles and residences were subjected to searches with items seized as evidence.

Case Summary

The following comparison of three cases in Lakewood, Washington demonstrates the investigational technique of working from tips provided by recovered victims of child sex trafficking to identify and build evidence against buyers of sex with minors. In two cases, the defendants expressly knew the age of the victims and in another instance, the victim believed that the defendant was aware that she was a minor based on how he acted towards her. Two of the victims encountered buyers through personal introductions, another was solicited through an advertisement on Backpage.com, and a fourth was solicited by the defendant from a vehicle as he drove by. When interviewed by law enforcement, each of the victims had been acquainted with the defendant buyers for at least two weeks with relationships known to last up to six months. The suspected buyers were investigated, arrested and prosecuted in Pierce County Superior Court under a variety of charges with “Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor and “Rape of a Child in Third Degree” being the most commonly employed. With the exception of a defendant who fled over the Canadian border and another who passed away during the proceeding, all suspects were arrested and prosecuted. One case was dismissed and transferred to federal court for prosecution, while the defendants in the other two cases pled guilty and received fines for lesser charges.

Criminal Consequences

In State v. “A”, there were no criminal consequences as one defendant passed away before sentencing while the other suspect fled to Canada. In two cases, the defendants pled guilty and received lesser sentences, respectively, voyeurism or communication with a minor for immoral purposes, with a fine ranging from \$1,200-1,800. In State v. “C”, all counts were dismissed as the case was picked up by the federal court. Sentencing in the federal case was held on June 11, 2013 and the defendant entered a guilty plea to one count of the “Use of a Community Facility to Promote Prostitution.” He was sentenced to imprisonment (Time Served), two years of supervised release, and a fine of \$100 Special Assessment which was waived.

Arrest & Prosecution

	State v. “A1”	State v. “A2”	State v. “B”	State v. “C”
Date of Arrest	None: fled over to Canada Bench warrant issued on March 17, 2011	March 17, 2011	April 06, 2011	February 23, 2012
Arrest Charges	Bench warrant charges: Prostitution— Solicitor	Commercial sexual abuse of a minor; Rape of a Child in Third Degree	Rape of a Child Third Degree; Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor two counts, Distribute Child Pornography	Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor; TASCOS – Unlawful Manufacture of a Controlled Substance
Maximum Penalty for Arrest Charges		Imprisonment for 21 months to 10 years, a possible fine up to \$20,000, or both imprisonment and a fine; Imprisonment for 12–14 months, a possible fine up to \$10,000, or both	Imprisonment for 12–14 months, a possible fine up to \$10,000, or both; Imprisonment for 21 months to 10 years, a possible fine up to \$20,000, or both imprisonment and a fine; Imprisonment for 6–60 months, a fine up to \$10,000, or both imprisonment and a fine	Imprisonment for 21 months to 10 years, a possible fine up to \$20,000, or both imprisonment and a fine
Date Prosecution Commenced	None: fled over to Canada	March 18, 2011	April 07, 2011	February 24, 2012
Date of Sentencing	None: fled over to Canada	None: defendant deceased	March 23, 2012	None

Final Charges	None	None	Voyeurism Commercial sexual Abuse of a Minor (three counts- dismissed)	All counts dismissed on December 3, 2012. Case was picked up by federal prosecutor.
Sentence	Suspect never arrested- fled to Canada (Police found out on March 16, 2011)	Dismissed on June 14, 2011- Defendant deceased on 06 June 2011	Sentenced on March 23, 2012; plead guilty to lesser charge of Voyeurism Sentenced to 90 days imprisonment, one year community supervision, fined \$1,800, registered sex offender, orders prohibiting contact sentencing with both victims for five years	Sentencing pending in federal court.

State v. "A1"/State v. "A2" Investigation

Officers encountered two juvenile females after responding to a civil disturbance call. They had been recently kicked out of a shelter they had been living in for the past few months, and were complaining that they were not being allowed to recover their belongings. These girls were not listed as runaways, and they were still in contact with a parent despite living in the shelter. Neither girl was currently attending school. Upon investigation, officers discovered that the girls were kicked out of the shelter because one was involved in prostitution and the other was starting too many fights. The officer, through questioning residents of the shelter, was able to receive further confirmation of the victim's prostitution activity. Residents reported that they had seen a man identified as Defendant "A1" pick up the victim from the shelter in his car on several occasions and had seen text messages she received from him talking about sex. The victim's friend also admitted to her knowledge of the victim having sex with Defendant "A1" for money. When the investigating officer explained the Innocence Lost Task Force, the victim agreed to assist in the investigation.

“Residents reported that they had seen a man ... pick up the victim from the shelter in his car on several occasions and had seen text messages she received from him talking about sex.”

When interviewed, the victim stated that she first became involved in prostitution when she engaged in commercial sex acts with Defendant "A1" who she described as a 39-year-old tall white male claiming to be a law enforcement official. She reported that their first sexual encounter occurred when he paid her \$40 for sex acts knowing that she was only 14 years of age. The victim also described an instance in 2011 when she agreed to have sex with Defendant "A1" twice and spend the night with him in exchange for a \$700-\$800 television. She said that Defendant "A1" picked her up and they had sex in his car, then he later texted her his credit card number so she could buy the television. The victim reported that the last time they had sex was about 2 weeks prior to the interview when they hooked up in his car and he bought her a Kathy purse as repayment. The victim stated that they always had sex in Defendant "A1"'s car, never in his home or a motel.

When asked if Defendant "A1" was her only buyer, the victim admitted to having another buyer identified as Defendant

“A2”, who she described as a 55-year-old white male. She reported that she first met Defendant “A2” when he pulled over next to her and asked if she needed a ride. She told him that she was 16 years old but later admitted to him that she was 14. He proceeded to rent a hotel room for the night and paid the victim \$150 to perform oral sex on him. Since that incident, the victim said the pair had intercourse 8-9 times in return for marijuana, shoes, a laptop, and more than \$600.

“ She told him she was 16 years old but later admitted to him that she was 14. He proceeded to rent a hotel room for the night and paid the victim \$150 to perform oral sex on him.”

The investigating officer received two separate court orders giving him permission to intercept and record communications between the victim and both Defendant “A1” and Defendant “A2”. Two phone calls were made to each suspect by the victim. Defendant “A1” did not answer, while Defendant “A2” admitted to having “lots” of marijuana at his residence. Police conducted a warranted search of Defendant “A2”’s apartment and found the marijuana, then placed him into custody and brought him into the station. Once at the station, Defendant “A2” agreed to conduct a recorded interview. In the interview, Defendant “A2” admitted that he has been paying various “prostitutes” for sex for the last 8 years. He told officers that the victim initially told him that she was 18 years old, but then learned that she was 13 after a phone conversation with her mother. He admitted to having sex with her 3 more times after he learned of her true age, and also admitted to smoking marijuana with her. It was later found that Defendant “A1” fled the country.

1 Victim Recovered  **2 Buyers Identified**  

State v. “B” Investigation

A 14-year-old girl was brought into the police department by her mother because she suspected her daughter had engaged in commercial sex. In the interview, law enforcement learned that an adult male paid the victim to take a topless photo and offered to pay her in exchange for sex. The mother provided law enforcement the victim’s phone, which contained several messages from a male identified only by his first name and included offers of money for sex and references to oral sex. The victim denied ever getting paid for sex, but admitted the man offered her money for sex and oral sex numerous times, and that she sees him fairly often. She said recently she and a 16-year-old friend were picked up by Defendant “B” and driven to his apartment where he offered them each \$50-\$100 for sex. When they both declined, he offered them an increased sum, asked about oral sex, then finally settled on taking a topless picture of the girls with his phone in exchange for \$20 each (which the girls agreed to). Following the reported incident the victim received a picture message with an image of money and seeking sex. The victim admitted she planned on setting up a meeting with Defendant “B” to perform oral sex in exchange for money until her parents caught her and took her phone. When asked how old Defendant “B” was, the victim replied that he was 27 and that she told him she was 16. Using the suspect’s phone number and the internet site Accurint, the male was identified as Defendant “B”, 42, and the victim identified his photograph as the man she knew.

“ the victim received a picture message with an image of money and seeking sex. ”

“After exchanging texts, the officer was able to set up a meeting with Defendant “B” in which he would pay “ victim” \$120 in exchange for sex and oral sex.”

The investigating officer followed up this report by interviewing the victim’s 16-year-old friend. She indicated that she met Defendant “B” through another man who gave Defendant “B” her cellular number, and he proceeded to contact her wanting to hook up. Her account of the incident at Defendant “B”’s apartment matched the initial report exactly. She also said that the following day Defendant “B” picked her up at a shopping center (this time she was alone), and they engaged in vaginal and oral sex at his apartment for \$100. Since then Defendant “B” has continued to solicit her, but she has been busy. The victim said that she told Defendant “B” she was 16, and he told her that he was 27. She identified a photograph of Defendant “B” and also allowed the investigating officer to download numerous text messages she received from Defendant “B.”

The investigating officer kept possession of the one of the victims' cellphones so that he could make contact with Defendant "B" by assuming the victim's identity. After exchanging texts, the officer was able to set up a meeting with Defendant "B" in which he would pay "the victim" \$120 in exchange for sex and oral sex. Upon arriving at the meeting location in the same vehicle that he picked up the victims in previously, Defendant "B" was arrested.

2 Victims Recovered  1 Buyer Arrested 

State v. "C" Investigation

This investigation took place as part of the FBI's Innocence Lost Task Force, whose goal is to recover child victims forced into prostitution and build cases against those involved in their prostitution. On February 2, 2012, the child victim was found and identified in the Erotic Services section of "Backpage.com" through the use of an undercover capacity. Upon recovery, the victim agreed to provide information about her exploitation. The victim stated that she had met a "Trick"—a slang term for a sex buyer—who responded to an advertisement on Backpage.com and she identified the buyer as Defendant "C". She stated that she had sex in exchange for money with Defendant "C" around

"The victim stated that she had met a "Trick"—a slang term for a sex buyer—who responded to an advertisement on Backpage.com... She stated that she had sex in exchange for money with Defendant "C" around 20-25 times."

20-25 times. When asked if Defendant "C" ever inquired her about her age, the victim said no but indicated that Defendant "C" was likely to know based on the way he acted towards her. When the victim found herself homeless, she reported that Defendant "C" offered to rent out one of his homes to her for \$400 per month instead of the standard \$900 as long as she agreed to have sex with him weekly for a few hours at a time. Due to difficulties paying the rent, the victim added that she was forced to spend extra time at the

man's home. On February 23, 2012, the investigating officer was granted authorization to record a phone call between Defendant "C" and the victim. Through the phone conversation, law enforcement was able to record Defendant "C" acknowledging that he and the victim indeed engaged in sex in exchange for money while the victim was still 17 years of age. The victim also set up a meeting for sex with Defendant "C" at a Western Inn hotel location. Upon his arrival to the meeting location, Defendant "C" was taken into custody. After the arrest, the victim's boyfriend was interviewed and he confirmed that Defendant "C" had rented out his home to the victim in exchange for reduced rent and weekly sex, and estimated that Defendant "C" had intercourse with the victim around 10 times before she was 18 years of age.

1 Victim Recovered  1 Buyer Arrested 