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THIS TYPE OF CHILD ABUSE HARD TO INVESTIGATE SEX TRAFFICKING A GROWING PROBLEM



BY ROY WENZL
The Wichita Eagle

Police and social workers have investigated four cases this year in which young teenage girls from Wichita have been forced into sexual slavery — and they suspect more are at risk.

Street gangs began to pursue sex trafficking in Wichita a few years ago, according to police.

They say sex trafficking of Wichita children, many of them runaways, is more extensive than they originally thought and that street gangs have expanded the scope and sophistication of the crime significantly here. Based on what they've seen, they believe that 300 to 400 Wichita-area children every year are significantly at risk to become vic-

tims of sexual exploitation.

Gangs trade and sell children like slaves, said Mike Nagy, an officer with the Wichita-Sedgewick County Exploited and Missing Child Unit.

But this type of crime is so hard to investigate that local authorities can't say how many are taken. It could be dozens or hundreds, police and social workers said.

They agree it's getting worse. They will join other social workers and law enforcement officers at a conference this week to coordinate a stronger and more coordinated response to the problem.

The gangs often target runaways and homeless children, luring them with food, money, shelter and promises of romance, police said.

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Detective Bill Riddle, left, is joined by EMCU Officer Mike Nagy, social worker Anne Lund, Officer Kent Bauman and Karen Countryman-Roswurm. They investigate and research the sex trafficking of children.

Dave Williams/
The Wichita Eagle



Photo illustration by Bo Rader/The Wichita Eagle

By the numbers MISSING CHILDREN

Each year, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children designates May 25 as National Missing Children's Day. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, hundreds of thousands of American children disappear every year.

800,000

Estimated number of children reported missing a year, an average of more than 2,000 a day

200,000

Are abducted by family members

58,000

Are abducted by non-family members (the primary motive for non-family abductions is sexual)

115

Are taken by non-family members and murdered, held for ransom, or taken with the intent to keep

Source: The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, www.missingkids.com

PARALLELS DRAWN TO BTK

Murder suspect a father, volunteer

BY TIM POTTER
The Wichita Eagle

The killing of Carol Mould in September 2004 drew extra attention.

Some people speculated it could be the latest grisly work of the BTK serial killer, who had preyed on Wichita-area residents since 1974. When BTK — Dennis Rader — was arrested months after Mould's death, the world learned that BTK was a husband, father, former Boy Scout parent volunteer and church leader.

Mould's killing would remain unsolved.

But last week, Butler County investigators made an arrest in the case: William "Bill" Wherry Moore — another husband and father who has been active in his community, including volunteering with the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts.

Mould's husband, Doug, said he wonders whether Moore could have known his wife through



Mould

KANSAS.COM

Attached to this story at Kansas.com, you'll find recent coverage, photos and a video from the case.

Please see **SUSPECT**, Page 4A

FOR CURRENT AND FORMER SOLDIERS

Courts offer veterans a chance to get help

BY JIM SUHR
Associated Press

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. — After a high-speed back-and-forth with another driver he says nearly ran him off the road, Army Lt. Andrew Myatt was arrested by police in Illinois and accused of waving a pistol.

But the 41-year-old soldier is getting help through a fledgling court program specifically for current or former members of the military who run afoul of the law.

The "veterans court," one of several popping up across the country, is aimed at getting nonviolent soldiers with otherwise clean records into treatment, sparing them a criminal conviction. Treatment can include psychological counseling or drug and alcohol rehab.

"I've been awed in that they take into account

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THE HEADRICK SEXTUPLETS AT 7 YEARS OLD

Mother of sextuplets content with non-reality-show life

BY SUZANNE PEREZ TOBIAS
The Wichita Eagle

She has watched "Jon & Kate Plus 8" a few times, Sondra Headrick said, mostly to compare notes. "I guess there was some curiosity there," she said of the reality show that chronicles the lives of Jon and Kate Gosselin and their eight children.

"They have sextuplets and we have sextuplets ... I guess I wanted to see how they handled things compared to us — to see if we're normal."

Headrick came away believing once

again that "normal" is relative, that raising kids is hard work, and that the Gosselins' life in the spotlight on their \$1.1 million estate may not be preferable to the Headricks' struggle in a two-bedroom house in Norwich.

As large families and multiple births dominated the news this year — from Ocotomom outrage to Jon and Kate's marital struggles to the Duggar family's "18 Kids and Counting" — Kansas' first sextuplets have kept going and growing. They turned 7 last month.

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PHOTO GALLERY AT KANSAS.COM

Attached to this story at Kansas.com, you can:

■ Watch the Headrick sextuplets grow up all over again in a gallery that features photos of the children since birth.

■ Watch a video in which Sondra Headrick describes each of her children — and what it's like to be their mom.



The Headrick sextuplets are 7 and in first grade. From left: Ethan, Melissa, Grant, Sean, Jaycie and Danielle. Their mom, Sondra, says she can really see their individual personalities developing.

Travis Heying/
The Wichita Eagle



ABUSE

From Page 1A

Detectives and other investigators with the Exploited and Missing Child Unit said gang members train their victims in sex acts, often using pornographic movies as "training films."

They then either force them into the sex trade locally or traffic them on the Internet or to larger cities — Dallas, Memphis, Las Vegas and elsewhere.

Karen Countryman-Roswurm, a social worker and Ph.D. candidate who has studied the problem and interviewed hundreds of these victims, says the pimps involved can make hundreds of thousands of dollars off one child.

'Hidden' abuse

The Wichita Children's Home and local police estimate that about 1,300 to 1,500 children as young as 12 are runaways in Sedgewick County every year.

About a quarter of those — 300 to 400 — could be at risk for sexual exploitation, police say.

They base their local numbers on several sources: Their own work, the work Countryman-Roswurm has done over the past decade, and the fact that her estimate and their estimate match what national child exploitation experts say would be found in a city with 1,300 or more runaways a year.

"It's the most hidden form of child abuse known to man," Countryman-Roswurm said.

Nationally, the FBI coordinates investigations with local police and also with organizations like the National Center for Exploited and Missing Children.

National investigators have the same problem evaluating the size of the problem as local agencies, said John Shehan, the director of the center's exploited children's division.

FBI estimates of how many children have been lured into this form of crime "range widely," Shehan said, from 100,000 to 1 million.

The cases are extremely difficult to investigate, local police

Now you know PREVENTION TIPS

A supportive community can help steer young people away from relationship violence and sexual exploitation. Here are some things you can do to help:

- **Set a tone of respect** for yourself and others. This could be as simple as saying "hello" when you walk past someone, sharing compliments that go beyond appearance, and not putting yourself or others down.
- **Learn and be aware of the warning signs** of abuse or sexual exploitation.
- **Speak up** when you suspect abuse. Members of the Sedgewick County Exploited and Missing Child Unit say they've seen instances in which relatives knew a child was being abused and failed to report it. Call the police.
- **Challenge behavior** that is sexist, racist or otherwise disrespectful.
- **Share your concern.** Let the victim know they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Let them know that, while you believe abuse is wrong, there is nothing wrong with them.
- **Spend quality time with young people.** Provide them with opportunities in which they can grow, develop, and recognize their own strengths, gifts, and talents.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

If you suspect a young person is being abused or sexually exploited, contact the following organizations:

- **Wichita-Sedgewick County Exploited and Missing Child Unit**, 130 South Market, 316-337-6552
- **Wichita Children's Home**, 810 N. Holyoke, 316-684-6581
- **The children's home** also has a 24-hour street-outreach program for runaway and at-risk youth with services such as counseling, shelter and runaway programs. Its 24-hour hotline is 316-262-HOME (4663).

- **Young people** also can get help through **Project Safe Place**, a children's home street-outreach program that encourages youth seeking help to wait at local QuikTrip stores, where staff are trained to make them comfortable until a counselor arrives.

Source: Social worker Karen Countryman-Roswurm

said, because witnesses won't talk.

Gangs threaten and brainwash the children involved, making it difficult to get anyone to testify. On average, Wichita police work on 15 to 20 cases a year, they said.

They're frustrated it's not more than that. They know that relatives have known about the exploitation in some of the cases they have worked, and those relatives didn't report it, said Kent Bauman, an EMCU officer.

Police also have seen "terrible things" happen to the children involved, said Bill Riddle,

an EMCU detective.

"They're all victims, many of them beaten and abused," Bauman added. "They need to know that we have no intention of arresting or prosecuting them. Our purpose when we work these cases is to go after the pimps and the gangs who are harming these children."

A call to action

Police and social workers are so concerned that they are meeting Tuesday for a conference called "Community Action to End Domestic Sexual Exploitation."

Countryman-Roswurm, who organized the conference, said the purpose is to get agencies that help children to agree on how to address the problem and help the victims.

Children caught in acts of prostitution are sometimes arrested, when they are in fact victims in need of all kinds of help, she and police said.

"My vision is to build a strong interdisciplinary team and to help as many at-risk children as possible," Countryman-Roswurm said.

She has high praise for investigators at the Exploited and Missing Child Unit. She hopes to strengthen their reach in the county by finding ways to improve not only how police units collaborate with each other and with social service agencies, but also how they talk about the problem.

For example, some people routinely refer to the children involved as "teen prostitutes." That word implies that the children want to work this way, she said. "They are children. They are victims."

A growing problem

Street gangs have learned that sex trafficking is much safer and more lucrative than trafficking in guns or drugs, EMCU's Bauman said.

Gangs have significantly increased their interstate sex trafficking business in recent years, and the FBI, local police and social workers have stepped up in response, Riddle said.

That has especially been the case since 2005, authorities said, when the FBI, the U.S. Justice Department and Wichita police broke up a sex trafficking ring run by a Wichita father and son, Bobby Prince Sr. and Bobby Prince Jr.

Wichita police in that case worked with the FBI in a year-long investigation that led to dozens of state and federal indictments in Oklahoma City. In February 2005, the Princes pleaded guilty to the sex trafficking of children and were sentenced to federal prison.

Police said Prince Jr. lured at least six girls ages 13 to 16 to Oklahoma for exploitation. Riddle and the EMCU officers said they knew that case was one of many in which chil-

dren have been exploited and abused.

Some of the girls were working in prostitution against their will, police said, sold to truck drivers, and threatened with guns and fists by the Princes.

Not only are children taken as slaves, Countryman-Roswurm said, but the adults involved make a lot of money from the porn industry.

The people who create the millions of dollars in demand for this, including the demand for child pornography, should be held accountable, she said.

"Every time they buy a pornographic film or pay for sex, they are helping create a demand for a crime where children are exploited," she said.

The victims are children from every race and social level, Countryman-Roswurm and the EMCU officers said.

"But the people who create the demand and provide the cash for the sex trade are mostly white, middle-aged, middle- or upper-income men," she said. "We have to stop arresting the victims and arrest instead the buyer and seller."

Shehan, with the National Center for Exploited and Missing Children, said his center gets 2,000 tips a week, most of them reporting instances of children being used in pornography.

Since the national center began keeping records, it has received 690,000 tips from the public about sex crimes against children; of these, 600,000 involved child porn and 7,000 involved child prostitution. The crimes go hand in hand, Shehan said.

Just last week, he said, the center received 24 tips it passed along to law enforcement.

Vulnerable prey

Nagy, from the EMCU, said most of the local victims are drawn from the runaways who "couch-surf" from house to house seeking shelter, or who live on Wichita streets. He said gang members learned long ago how to prey on them.

"A guy drives up beside you and asks you if you need a place to stay," Nagy said. "They offer money, they buy them food and clothes, and these kids are feeling hungry and

vulnerable."

They offer friendship; they offer romance.

"The girls involved think the guy wants to be her boyfriend," said Anne Lund, a social worker investigator with the EMCU.

The girls think they're in love, Lund said, but the pimps are running a business.

"It is really tough to talk some of these girls out of it," she said.

Many of the children also have been trained to run from or defy police. "They look on us as just another adult trying to interfere," Nagy said.

'A ruthless situation'

One reason few people have noticed how large the problem has become here is that many of these children are "off the grid," as Riddle described it.

"They've run away, or their parents lost themselves in drugs or alcohol or prison. They have been absent from school and other social organizations, sometimes for years, Riddle said.

Gang members drag them into "a ruthless situation."

Many are raped and beaten, police said, and gangs get some of them dependent on drugs.

Bauman, Riddle, Nagy and Lund said they've seen a wide range of backgrounds for these children.

"I've been surprised when sit-

ting in the homes of some of these parents, how normal the households appear to be," Riddle said.

The pimps involved have operated with such impunity that they hold national "pimp balls," Riddle said: affairs where they show up dressed in the exaggerated wide, colorful hats of pimp stereotypes and hand out awards like "pimp of the year."

The police said they have frequent contact with runaways who seem defiant about their parents but clueless about the dangers they will face on the streets.

"A lot of these runaway children know what they are running away from," Nagy said, "but most of them have no idea what they are running to."

Reach Roy Wenzel at 316-268-6219 or rwenzel@wichita-eagle.com.

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