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theadvancenewsjournal.com



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Tue, 2015-08-18 21:05
BUT WHY DO SOME
MEN DO IT?

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McALLEN – In a report released last year by The Internet Watch Foundation – an

organization comprised of law enforcement agencies, state and federal government agencies and IT professionals – 80 percent of the abused children shown in photos and videos appear to be younger than 10 years old. And a large portion of the total child pornography is produced here in the U.S., according to the same report. To make matters worse, its distribution is on the upswing, thanks in large part to the internet.

This week, the U.S. federal government arrested one of its own for possession of child pornography – McAllen-based DEA Agent James Patrick Burke.

The local aspect of it hit home. On the website of KGBT-TV, www.ValleyCentral.com, one woman posted: “He’s my next door neighbor and I have a son. I feel sick.”

No doubt a lot of Valleyites have similar sentiments over the charges Burke is now facing. Especially, since according to the federal criminal complaint filed against him, the DEA agent admitted to FBI agents that he viewed and downloaded child porn images from various websites onto his laptop computer. The crime dates back to this past February when Burke told federal agents that he accessed a website that had a link tied to a set of child-porn images, which then led to a second site containing more disturbing images: prepubescent children engaged in sexual acts with adults.

According to the same criminal complaint, James Burke (it’s not yet clear if he’s married or single) admitted that the videos he viewed depicted children as young as 10 engaging in sexually explicit acts with adults.

The criminal complaint against Burke is dated Aug. 14, 2015.

During his initial appearance before a federal court magistrate in McAllen this Monday, DEA

Agent James Patrick Burke was remanded into custody, pending a detention hearing slated for this Thursday (Aug. 20).

In the meantime, he remains on administrative leave. Paid or unpaid – it isn't clear.

Burke, of course, isn't the first, and most assuredly won't be the last, federal employee to run afoul of the law with regard to child pornography.

SICK MINDS AT THE PENTAGON?

In 2010, according to a story published by Psychology Today, the Pentagon discovered that 250 civilian and military employees of the Defense Department – including some with the highest available security clearance – used their credit card or PayPal accounts to purchase images of child pornography.

Out of that investigation, only 52 suspects at the Pentagon were investigated, and only 10 ultimately charged with the crime.

A year later, a story published by The Boston Globe said the scandal was much larger than originally thought. In 2006, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) handed the Pentagon a list of 6,900 names of Defense Department employees (including contractors) who were suspected of viewing “kiddie porn,” as it's sometimes referred to in the vernacular.

The Pentagon employs approximately 23,000 military and civilian employees.

But the Pentagon, according to the Globe story, only checked out about two-thirds of those names on the list, which unearthed approximately 250 people suspected of the crime (52 were investigated; 10 ultimately charged).

The Pentagon's lapse in judgment later led to a big stink (scandal) in Congress, with Pentagon officials telling U.S. senators, who were asking for some explanation – why didn't you investigate further? – that when ICE presented those 6,900 names to them, they didn't consider child pornography to be a “high priority (Boston Globe).”

WHY DO THEY DO IT?

But what drives relatively sane men – men with good jobs, families -- to do such a thing – view such a heinous act: an adult sexually abusing a prepubescent child?

According to the 2010 Psychology Today story:

“To be sure, some percentages of those individuals viewing the images are pedophiles -- individuals who suffer from a sexual disorder that makes them attracted to prepubescent children. And some of those individuals will also sexually abuse children during the course of their life.

“Nevertheless, a great number of the individuals viewing child pornography are not in this category. These individuals are often engaged in compulsive sexual behavior or "sex addiction," viewing pornography for hours at a time, searching for more and more intense images in order to get the same addictive rush. They stumble upon child pornography and are often horrified when they see it for the first time. But then there is something so taboo and so charged about it that they find themselves returning for the "high"... even when the thought of children being sexually abused makes their skin crawl and they feel sickened by it when they think about what they are looking at.

“There is something about the Internet and its illusion of privacy and, even more importantly, its illusion of it being “unreal” that makes it the perfect venue for people to end up doing things that they would never consider doing otherwise -- be it having affairs, gambling, stealing, shopping, exposing their genitals, or looking at child pornography. Even for people working at the Pentagon.”

What drove DEA Agent James Patrick Burke to admittedly download and view such disturbing images? During his future sentencing in federal court, provided he doesn't recant his confession in the meantime (as laid out in the criminal complaint) and plead not guilty, perhaps he will fill the judge in on his motives, his compulsions, and the public as well.

If convicted, Burke faces up to approximately 20 years in prison.

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