

100 MOMENTS

ANATOMY OF AN INVESTIGATION

By Ryan Kedley (2007-current)

On the morning of Wednesday, February 21, 2018, I was assigned as the case agent to what would turn out to arguably the largest and most impactful investigation of my career. Special Agent in Charge Richard Rahn contacted and directed me to respond to the Monticello Police Department. I was anticipating working on an investigation involving a prominent youth basketball coach, Greg Stephen, who was suspected of covertly video recording a number of his adolescent players, unaware and nude at the time they were being recorded. When the investigation began, Stephen was well-known throughout the state of Iowa's youth sports community as being the Co-Founder and Director of the Iowa Barnstormers Youth Basketball Organization of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU).

At the close of this case in May of 2019, Stephen was sentenced in United States Federal Court to 180 years imprisonment – the maximum possible sentence for the crimes he was ultimately convicted of.

Throughout the early stages of the investigation, strategic decisions were made by investigators relative to the seemingly routine and minute details, not uncommon in any case

worked by the DCI's Major Crime Unit. These decisions would later be challenged by Stephen's legal defense and scrutinized by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Strategic decisions relative to the handling of electronic evidence acquired by the Monticello Police Department, the specific wording used to establish probable cause in applications for search warrants for Stephens' residences and



INTERVIEW ASSSIGNMENTS FOR THE 16 PAIR OF INVESTIGATORS ASSIGNED TO LOCATE AND INTERVIEW POTENTIAL VICTIMS

electronic devices utilized by Stephen, as well as the approach to the interview of Stephen and how those interviewing Stephen might appeal to him in a way which might encourage Stephen to speak truthfully and candidly about his actions.

As the investigation progressed beyond the initial days, the scope of the victimization perpetrated by Stephen began to take shape. On May 22, 2018, a meeting took place at the Iowa State Patrol – Post 12 Headquarters in Stockton, attended by more than a dozen agents of the DCI, representatives of the United States Attorney’s Office – South District of Iowa, and Special Agent Tom Pearson of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The purpose of this meeting was to discuss evidence reviewed by Special Agent Pearson and myself indicating Stephen had for nearly 20 years been secretly amassing thousands of explicit videos and photos of his players and their friends. It was also determined Stephen had sexually assaulted at least 15 young men and victimized another 400, though the actual numbers were suspected to be much higher. The challenge going into this meeting was determining how to effectively and efficiently address over 400 potential victims, most of whom have been victimized by online sexual enticement at a time when they were minors, while others had been victims of hands-on sexual assault committed by Stephen. These victims of hands-on sexual assault committed by Stephen were juveniles on the occasions they’d been assaulted and in the care of Stephen while away from home on Barnstormer Basketball-related trips.

Over the next few months, DCI Agents working across the state conducted hundreds of interviews of youths, oftentimes in the presence of their parents, with the subject matter being the nature of sexual victimization experienced by those youths. A large majority

of these parents had entrusted the safety of their children to another adult and now they were learning for the first time that the same adult had sexually victimized their child.

On October 18, 2018, Stephen pleaded guilty to the seven federal charges he had been indicted on Five (5) counts - Sexual Exploitation of a Child, one (1) count – Possession of Child Pornography, one (1) count - Transporting of Child Pornography. On May 2, 2019, shortly after ordering Stephen to serve a prison sentence of 180 years, United States District Court Judge C.J. Williams described Stephen as “a hands-on sexual abuser of children” who “exploited, manipulated, and abused children for almost two decades.” According to Judge Williams, Stephen’s crime was “horrendous,” and the harm he caused his victims was “incalculable and profound.”

A collaborative effort in every sense, the influence of DCI personnel was all over this investigation, ranging from the support agents in the field felt from Director Kevin Winker and Assistant Director Mitch Mortvedt to intelligence support provided by Analyst Amy Veon and Melissa Stock to Special Agents in the field assigned to the Major Crime Unit, the Special Enforcement Operations Bureau (SEOB), and the Sex Offender Registry (SOR) who met with hundreds of victims and their families for the purpose of ensuring their voices could be heard.

Early on in my assignment of working within the Major Crime Unit, the overwhelming message I received from my colleagues - many who had spent years within the MCU - was there was no greater privilege or responsibility I would have in my career than to be tasked with the duty of conducting the investigations I would be assigned. That message has never been lost on me. The emotional burden which

came with this case was heavy at times for all those working it. However, the unspoken understanding among investigators was the cost we were enduring was well-worth putting an end to the victimization and bringing Stephen to justice.

In the early stages of this particular investigation, there was certainly a concern that the criminal conduct which had been discovered was only “the tip of the iceberg”. Unfortunately, that is exactly what turned out to be the case. As the investigation progressed, the focus became making sure any and all victims were identified and given the opportunity to have their respective voices heard. In these types of cases, there are truly no winners. There were, literally, hundreds upon hundreds of youths who were victimized, hundreds of families who were deeply and directly affected, not to mention the family of Stephen, who had had to experience their own form of grief and struggle during the process. If there was any gratification that came from the conclusion of this case it was the feeling we, as investigators, did our job effectively in helping give a voice to those victims.

RYAN KEDLEY – 2021

Ryan is currently a Special Agent assigned to the Major Crime Unit in Stockton. In addition to MCU, Ryan has also served the DCI as an agent assigned to the Special Enforcement Operations Bureau and the Voter Fraud Unit.