

Attorney General Creates New Fugitive Unit That Targets Child Predators



As a parent, I can think of no other crimes worse than those committed against children. As a Texan, I want our communities to be safer.

As your Attorney General, I am taking action. I have formed and launched a new Fugitive Unit, with a focus on child sexual predators.

Our initial mission is to locate, arrest and send back to prison convicted predators who have violated the conditions of their parole. Just weeks into the program we're already making neighborhoods safer.

In recent weeks, my investigators with the Fugitive Unit have arrested 14 of these child sex offenders wanted for parole violations. Each of these men had convictions for sex crimes against children. One such felon was arrested while watching children play on a busy playground.

The Attorney General's Office is not targeting offenders who comply with the terms of their parole and abide by the law. In order to be a target of the Fugitive Unit, a person must be a child sex offender who has violated the terms of his or her parole.

The recent arrests continue a long

string of apprehensions of child predators by the Attorney General's Office. Our Cyber Crimes Unit, formerly the Internet Bureau, was already in existence before the formation of the Fugitives Unit. My investigators in that unit target child predators who hunt for victims in Internet chat rooms. So far, the Cyber Crimes Unit has successfully facilitated the arrest and indictment of fifteen men.

Each of the men used chat rooms to solicit sex with individuals whom they believed to be underage girls or boys. Unknowingly, the men were actually setting up meetings with Attorney General investigators. They were arrested when they showed up to meet the "children" in person.

One of the more recent arrests occurred in Bastrop County on September 5. Donald Lee Westbrook III, an employee at Selectron, an Austin high-tech company, was arrested at a restaurant along Texas Highway 71 as he arrived to meet a 13-year-old "girl" he had met in an Internet chat room. The Bastrop County Sheriff's Office assisted in this arrest. Westbrook has since been indicted.

Our record of success in arresting these individuals shows that the problem exists on a scale some parents may not realize. In fact, we may just

be scratching the surface.

That is why the Attorney General's office will continue to work side by side with local law enforcement officials and with parents to safeguard our children. We are confident that the number of these arrests made by the Fugitives Unit and Cyber Crimes Unit will continue to grow.

We are very pleased that our efforts to date have been successful, but we will not rest on our laurels in our quest to remove child predators from chat rooms and neighborhoods. We must all remain vigilant and united in the protection of our children.

POINTS TO REMEMBER FUGITIVE CHILD PREDATORS

To view fugitive paroled child sex offenders, visit the Criminal Justice Section of our Web site at:
www.oag.state.tx.us

These fugitives should be considered DANGEROUS!

NEVER attempt to apprehend a fugitive yourself.

If you have information on the location of any of these fugitives, contact TEXAS CRIME STOPPERS, 24 hours a day, at 1-800-252-TIPS (8477)

You DO NOT have to give your name, and your information could earn you a CASH REWARD.



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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Information on this and other topics is available on the Attorney General's Web site at www.oag.state.tx.us.