



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2012

NATIONAL PRESS OFFICE
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www.fbi.gov

Nearly 80 Juveniles Recovered In Nationwide Operation Targeting Underage Prostitution

Hundreds of FBI special agents partnered with thousands of local police officers, deputy sheriffs and state troopers and other law enforcement personnel throughout the United States this past week, arresting those responsible for exploiting underage children through prostitution. The sixth iteration of Operation Cross Country, a three-day law enforcement action, led to the recovery of 79 children. Additionally, 104 pimps were arrested by local and state law enforcement on a variety of prostitution related charges.

“Child prostitution remains a major threat to children across America,” said Kevin L. Perkins, acting executive assistant director of the FBI’s Criminal, Cyber, Response and Services Branch. “It is a violent and deplorable crime, and we are working with our partners to disrupt and put behind bars individuals and members of criminal enterprises who would sexually exploit children.”

Operation Cross Country is part of the Innocence Lost National Initiative that was created in 2003 by the FBI’s Criminal Investigative Division, in partnership with the Department of Justice and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), to address the growing problem of domestic child sex trafficking in the United States.

“Once again, thanks to decade-long FBI leadership, it is clear that child prostitution and sex trafficking do not just occur somewhere else on the other side of the world. These insidious crimes are occurring in American cities and the victims are American kids,” said Ernie Allen, president of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

To date, the 47 Innocence Lost Task Forces and Working Groups have recovered more than 2,200 children from the streets. The investigations and subsequent 1,017 convictions have resulted in lengthy sentences, including eight life terms and the seizure of more than \$3.1 million in assets.

Task Force operations usually begin as local enforcement actions, targeting such places as truck stops, casinos, street “tracks” and the Internet, based on intelligence gathered by officers working in their respective jurisdictions. Initial arrests are often violations of local and state laws relating to prostitution or solicitation. Information gleaned from those arrested often uncovers organized

efforts to prostitute women and children across many states. FBI agents further develop this information in partnership with U.S. Attorney's Offices and the U.S. Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section and file federal charges where appropriate.

The Innocence Lost National Initiative brings state and federal law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and social service providers from across the country to NCMEC, where the groups train together. In addition, DOJ has reinforced the training by assigning prosecutors to help bring cases in those cities where child prostitution occurs.

The FBI thanks the more than 8,500 local, state and federal law enforcement officers and agents representing 414 separate agencies who participated in Operation Cross Country and ongoing enforcement efforts.

The following list denotes **FBI Divisions**, not necessarily actual cities, where juveniles were recovered and pimps arrested.

FBI DIVISION	JUVENILE	PIMP
Albuquerque	0	0
Atlanta	3	5
Baltimore	0	1
Birmingham	0	0
Boston	1	3
Chicago	3	3
Cleveland	0	1
Dallas	6	0
Denver	2	3
Detroit	6	3
El Paso	1	1
Houston	0	1
Indianapolis	0	0
Knoxville	0	0
Las Vegas	4	4
Los Angeles	5	3
Miami	2	4
Milwaukee	6	0
Minneapolis	0	4
Newark	0	3
New Orleans	3	10
New York City	1	1
Oklahoma City	3	7
Omaha	0	2
Philadelphia	2	2
Phoenix	2	1
Portland	3	6
Richmond	0	2
Sacramento	6	6
St. Louis	2	2

San Antonio	0	2
San Diego	2	7
San Francisco	6	7
Seattle	6	7
Tampa	3	3
Washington Field Office	1	0
TOTALS	79	104

To learn more about Operation Cross Country and the Innocence Lost National Initiative, visit www.fbi.gov, www.justice.gov or www.ncmec.org.