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Sexual Deviance Behind the Badge

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ABSTRACT

The number of registered sex offenders is increasing at a dramatic rate. In fact, since the last survey conducted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2006, the number of registered sex offenders increased over 23 percent (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2012). Tracking nearly three-quarters of a million sex offenders is an added burden to the legal system. Law enforcement personnel come into contact routinely with these offenders, and often have to deal with the devastation they leave behind. Working with vulnerable populations leave many officers wondering how someone could hurt a child. Compounding the hurt is betrayal, when officers realize a fellow officer, partner, or friend has been arrested for a sex crime—especially when the crime is against a child. The crime is heinous enough, but officers and their agencies are also victims. They are victims to the lies and deception. Some officers know of indiscretions by fellow officers and will turn a blind eye. Many more question how a sex offender ended up on the force, considered one of them and no one was aware.

Sexual Deviance Behind the Badge

A sex offender is defined as an individual convicted of a sex offense (Cornell University Law School (n.d.). Sex offenses are further distinguished as either *forcible* or *non-forcible*. Forcible sex offenses include sexual offenses committed forcibly against one's will. Non-forcible sex offenses include offenses "... against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (or because of his/her youth)" (Medical College of Wisconsin, 2012, p. 1).

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) approximately 747,408 sex offenders were registered nationwide to date (2012). This is an increase from 2011, by 7,555 offenders (NCMEC, 2012). The last survey conducted by NCMEC was 2006 and since that survey, over 140,000 more individuals were added to the list. The current number of registered sex offenders in the United States (including the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas) topping nearly three-quarters of a million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In addition, numbers as high as 100,000 and as low as 25,000 have been thrown around regarding to the number of "non-compliant" sex offenders in the US (Harris & Levenson, 2011; NCMEC, 2012).

According to the Illinois State Police, a sex offender is deemed "non-compliant" when they fail to 1.) "Register with the local law enforcement agency within 3 days of notification by the Illinois Department of Corrections or the Court; or 2.) Register annually; or 3.) Register quarterly (if applicable); or 4.) Provide complete and accurate information to law enforcement personnel during registration; or 5.) Change his or her address or other information without notifying law enforcement personnel" (2012). As one can imagine, keeping up with the ever-increasing number of sexual offenders and their ability to relocate have become a full-time job for those in the legal system.

Much time, energy, and money is spent on housing individuals sent to prison for sex-related crimes, state and federal sex offender registries, compliance officers (e.g., parole, probation, and

law enforcement officers), and monitoring systems for at-risk offenders. A huge disadvantage with these types of offenders is in the inability to develop a clear composite or profile of the “typical” sex offender. However, a similarity found in the majority of sex offenders is that they are male. An accurate composite remains unavailable due to the numerous variations found in each offender.

Regardless of the unique qualities of each offender, certain information should be considered when working with this population (e.g., family environment, mental health concerns, existing emotional issues, relationships between offender and victim, and rates of recidivism for some offenders). Sex offenders exist within all demographics of society. And though we as a society want to believe we can pick out these monsters, the truth remains, we cannot. Those who are able to reoffend know how to conceal their behaviors and they know how to stay below the radar.

Occupations receiving a majority of media attention regarding sexual crimes and deviance include those in the clergy and teachers. Other positions, which receive attention, include coaches and scout leaders (Neddermeyer, 2012). These individuals are trusted to care for and protect our children. They are supposed to set the example for good behavior and doing what is morally, ethically, and spiritually right. However, are these really the worst offenders, or does the media make it appear that way? Is this a fair and accurate assessment? According to Bassler (2011) police officers account for a higher percentage of sex offenses than do teachers or clergy members.

Most officers would probably agree that one of the most despised crimes they encounter are sex crimes against children. Crimes involving children are difficult to deal with for many because they, too, have children and children are considered a vulnerable population. Most cops take crimes against children personally. The thought of an officer’s own child being abused in these ways is beyond comprehensible.

How can the number of police officers arrested and charged with sex crimes be explained? (see APPENDIX A). Appendix A is not a complete list of law enforcement personnel charged with sex offenses, however, the list shows that there is enough of an issue to deem it worthy to address. As with many child sex offenders, the process of grooming makes this more understandable. Grooming involves gaining the trust of parents and guardians. This can be easily accomplished if one is a police officer, as society places a great deal of trust in them. Take the

case of former officer Dan Hiers. Hiers befriended a young, single mother in a local karate class. Hiers initially seemed like the perfect role model for the young girl, who desperately needed a male figure in her life. This could not have been any further from the truth. After gaining the mother's trust, Hiers groomed the young girl and eventually molested her. Hier is a fugitive on the run, not only for molesting this young girl, but also for the murder of his wife. Neddermeyer (2012) explained:

“As a society we vehemently condemn stranger child sex offenders, but when someone we know is suspected or accused, many people take sides often refusing to believe that ‘a pillar of the community’ could commit this type of a crime.” (p. 2)

According to the National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project (3rd Quarter Report) “police officers were accused of sexual assault at a rate of 79 per 100,000 law enforcement personnel. That is well over two times the rate in the general public (28.7 per 100,000)” (as cited in Carter, 2011). Again, we see cases of officers who are supposed to serve and protect acting like criminal offenders. When a police officer is accused or charged with a sex offense, many are stunned.

In another case, a former Modesto, California officer was indicted by a grand jury for felony sex acts with an adult female. This officer was acting in the capacity of his duties and on-duty at the time of the incident. The Modesto Police Chief explained his disappointment and disgust with the former officer's actions, further stating that this officer's actions were abhorrent and not representative of the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to serve the community” (CBS Modesto, 2012). Officers who commit crimes, hoping to be shielded by the badge are not an honest reflection of the force as a whole. The difficulty lies in the fact that the police are seen collectively, rather than individually. Cops by nature turn to dark humor and often have senses of humor, which can be outside the norm. A sex offender can virtually hide behind the badge, gaining almost immediate trust with parents. The grooming process may or may not be much easier for someone given a great degree of public trust. Sex offenders are chameleons. They will do what it takes to get what they want. These master manipulators do not just fool innocent children and families, but fellow officers.

About the Author: Dr. Olivia Johnson holds a master's in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri, St. Louis and a doctorate in Organizational Leadership Management from the University of Phoenix – School of Advanced Studies. As Founder of Blue Wall of Silence and the Blue Wall Institute®, she is dedicated to providing assistance to those behind the badge. During her research regarding officer wellness issues, it was discovered the leading cause of officer death was not accidents nor homicide, but rather suicide. Perseverance in raising awareness to officer wellness issues resulted in her being named the Illinois State Representative for the National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation.

Dr. Johnson was invited by the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit to speak on her research at the 2010 - Beyond Survival Toward Officer Wellness (BeSTOW) Symposium. In October 2011, she spoke on Police Suicide Awareness at the International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference (IACP). In 2012, she presented: "Police Suicide: You don't have the Right to Remain Silent" at the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association (ILEETA) Conference.

Dr. Johnson is a veteran of the United States Air Force, a former police officer, and author. She collaborates with the Journal of Law Enforcement, the Journal of Global Health Care Systems, and the Journal of Military Science and Research as an author/lead editor. She also writes for Law Enforcement Today as the expert in Police Leadership. Her services were also contracted out to facilitate Critical Incident Peer Support (CIPS) to military personnel worldwide. As an active member of the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association (ILEETA), she presented on Police Suicide at the April 2012 Conference and Expo in Chicago, Illinois.

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APPENDIX A: SEX CRIMES PERPETRATED BY POLICE OFFICERS

2012

- Four Russian police charged over fatal rape scandal
- Ex-WSU cop convicted of criminal sexual assault sent to prison
- Ex-Montreal officer, convicted sex offender, given 2nd chance with release
- 10 Argentine cops charged in gang rape of teen boy
- FBI arrests ex-cop in connection with human trafficking case
- Correction officer & nurse accused of watching children undress
- Hillsborough Co. detention deputy Juan Ortega arrested for sexual abuse of a teen
- Former Bullard officer trial continued, charged with sexual assault of a child
- Former CHP officer's lawyer to remain on sexual victimization case
- Former VA officer arrested for child porn
- Former cop pleads not guilty: Mathew Mole accused of having sex with 14-year-old boy

- Student accuses officer of sexual battery (on-duty and in uniform)*
- Witness describes sex assault by ex-cop ordered to trial for rape
- Ex-LA Trooper asks for delay in child porn case sentencing
- Second agency investigating deputy over molestation allegation (8 year-old autistic girl)
- Local Killeen officer accused of sexually assaulting teenage explorer scout
- Memphis cop accused of raping his 14-year old cousin
- Minor raping cop shot dead during attempted arrest
- Woman raped by the cop who came after her 911 call
- Pittsburg cop accused of demanding sex for favors
- Santa Clara officer arrested, accused of sex crimes
- Pierce County sheriff's deputy accused of sex crime against a child
- Former officer pleads guilty to child porn
- New accusation against former cop accused of having sex with teen
- Former deputy sentenced to 6 years for sex crimes against a relative*
- Former Isle of Wight deputy indicted on child porn charges
- Sex claims against ex-Louisiana trooper aired in Alexandria courtroom
- Child sex abuse charges expected in Reads town Police Chief case
- Former cop gets prison in child porn case (over 26,000 images)
- Former Minnesota officer pleads guilty to lesser sex crime charges
- Former Columbia Co. Deputy sentenced to over 6 years for sex crimes against his own child
- Lawsuit filed against former Bedford Co. deputy over alleged sexual relation with student*
- Redding CHP officer investigated on child porn case
- Harris Co. Deputy accused of sexually assaulting a child

- Box Elder Co. Deputy charged for illegal strip search
- Jones faces arraignment on sex crime charges*
- Pemberton Twp. Cop charged with sexual assault of a juvenile
- Former New Hanover Deputy charged with sexually abusing his children
- Aurora (CO) DARE officer's sexual exploitation trial pushed back to June
- Former prison guard indicted on charges of aggravated sexual assault involving child
- Former Henderson deputy guilty of child porn charges
- Ex-Los Angeles police officer gets 17 years for child porn
- Ex-Harrodsburg officer pleads guilty to more than 140 sex-related charges
- Atlanta officer accused of molestation, denies all charges
- Ex-La Porte Co. cop now charged with child molestation
- Ex-Waterville Twp. Officer pleads guilty to viewing child porn on work computer
- Former law man jailed for molestation
- Jury finds correction officer guilty of sex abuse
- LPSO: Deputy accused of molesting juvenile
- Highland Co. Deputy faces new child porn charges
- McHenry Co. sheriff's officer charged with sexual assault
- Denver deputy arrested, suspected of sexually assaulting a girl in Arvada
- Former Bexar Co. detention officer gets life sentence for sexual assaults
- Former Norwich officer had sex with 14-year-old girl
- Negron pleads guilty to sex abuse of minor
- Former Miami-Dade cop takes plea in fondling case
- Former Gautier police officer indicted on sex-crime charges

- Ex-Harrison Co. officer faces more sex charges (3rd arrest)
- Detention center officer arrested for sexual misconduct with juvenile inmate
- Raleigh officer charged with promoting prostitution of a minor
- Virginia State Police Trooper arrested for juvenile sex charges (Shop with a Cop)
- Galveston deputy jailed on child sex charge
- Ex-NJ cop loses pension for seeking nude photos
- Former OK officer arrested for lewd molestation
- Conn. Ex-cop gets 10 years for child porn*
- Former APD officer accused of child molestation granted bail
- Former cop pleads guilty in texting case
- Former officer charged with child sex exploitation
- NY Kung Fu master and former cop guilty in sex abuse case
- Former Bradford Co. deputy charged with sex crimes on a child*
- Ex-Bakersfield cop accused of child porn seeks new lawyer*
- Ex-cop sentenced for sexting teen girl
- NYPD auxiliary cop busted for child porn
- Judge decides one trial for ex-cop involved in child sexual exploitation case
- Ex-Nebraska police officer convicted of child porn
- MN deputy investigated for child porn case
- Ex-Galesburg police captain arrested on sex abuse charges
- Ex-state trooper sentenced for molesting foster child
- Former Richmond officer indicted on federal child porn charges
- Portland Cop Charged with Sex Crimes against a Minor
- Baltimore County Cop Accused of Sexually Assaulting Female Officer
- Old Forge Police Officer Charged with Sex Crimes

2011

- Ex-Glendale cop who is also a convicted sex offender is arrested on parole violation
- Ex-San Diego cop convicted of sex crimes charge
- NYPD cop arrested for raping woman at gun point in Inwood
- Philly police officer charged with rape on-duty in squad car
- Bail set for former cop (Ryan Graichen) accused of sex crimes
- Boulder deputy, allegedly used squad car computer to chat up underage girls
- Ex-Portland cop: Stress led to sex crimes
- Former Warsaw officer facing child molestation charges
- TX State Trooper charged with sex abuse
- Fired SCSO officer given more time to hire attorney in child porn case
- Former trooper gets probation for nude video
- VA Beach officer charged with sexual assault of a child
- VCU Police officer arrested on child porn charge
- Ex-Casselberry deputy accused of sexually abusing teen*
- Former UHP trooper arrested in child sex abuse case
- WA Airport Authority officer arrested for solicitation of a minor
- Riverside: Ex-cop denies possession of child porn
- Jury convicts ex-cop, Hall sentenced to 20 years
- January trial set for Collier ex-deputy accused of boy's sexual assault in mall bathroom
- Former APD & ASU officer arrested for child molestation
- William Fox sentenced to 35 years for sexual abuse of two adopted sons
- Retired cop held in 1957 killing had troubling history
- Former police officer pleads guilty to child porn charges

- Ex-jail counselor sentenced for sharing child porn
- Former Tacoma officer sentenced to prison in molestation case
- Ex-DeKalb officer admits sex with minors
- Former Slaton officer sentenced to 70 months in prison
- San Bernadino Sheriff's deputy arrested for sex with 16 year old female
- Former Paulding deputy indicted
- Dakota Co. jail officer charged with sexual abuse
- Ex-Pike Co. deputy indicted on child rape, kidnapping charges
- Former Grainger Co. deputy sentenced to 10 years in prison in federal enticement case
- Former Jefferson Co. deputy indicted for sexual assault of a child – bonds out of jail
- KY area constable charged with ex crimes
- Sexual assault victim sues former sheriff's deputy*
- Polk Co. FL deputy accused of molesting 14 year old
- Ex-state police captain guilty of sexual abuse
- Ex-Bunn officer indicted on indecent liberties charge
- Former Carabassett Valley officer gets 10 years for sexual abuse
- Nogales police officer arrested on sexual conduct with a minor charges
- Former sheriff's deputy sent to 2 years in state prison
- Former Lafourche deputy guilty of raping child
- Former probation officer sentenced for having sex with underage relative
- ICE officer indicted on child rape charge
- Iberia Parrish deputy arrested on child porn charge
- Kansas cop arrested after raping and murdering several women
- Tuscola deputy lets a female prison escape in exchange for sex
- NYPD cop trade crack for sex and plant drugs on innocent people

- Police officer caught with a 17 year old prostitute
- NYC cops used drunk and helpless women
- Female sheriff sexually abused two young girls
- Maine officer sexually assaulted a young girl for several years
- NO cop raped 13-year old girl several times
- Officer tried to have oral intercourse with 12-year-old orphaned boy
- 2 Chicago police officers accused of sexual assault/rape
- Midland police officer charged with sex crimes could cop a plea

2010

- Ex-Ocean Springs' officer Steve Frutal arrested on child porn
- Stevens CO. deputy charged with sex crimes
- Ex-FL trooper, sentenced to 18 months in prison for sexting teen girl
- Stearns Co. deputy accused of abusing three teens
- IL police sergeant had secret life as serial rapist
- Ex-cop who opened ice cream shop accused of molesting boy
- Kennett Square cop charged with hundreds of sex offenses and rape

2009

- Police officer arrested on child pornography charges
- Police officer released easily after sexual acts with children
- Police deputy sentenced for molesting 11 year old girl
- NY police officer charged for sodomizing a 13 year old boy
- Police officer tried to buy two children to use then as sex slaves
- Police officer molests three minor girls and cow
- S. African police sergeant raped 16 year old girl in her cell
- Police officer molests two 4-year old girls

- Female officer worked as a prostitute
- Former Woodbridge cop gets 12 years in prison for sexually assaulting a teen boy
- Duke University cop charged with rape and sodomy
- Philly cop charged with repeatedly raping girl
- Santa Barbara police officer accused of indecent exposure

2008

- Former Norwalk officer sentenced for sex crimes

2006

- Former Vidor officer gets probation
- State patrol major arrested for alleged sex crimes

2005

- Ex-Charleston cop still wanted for wives murder and allegations of lewd acts on a child under 16