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Los Angeles, California
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Good afternoon, Chairman Telage and members of the Child Protection Act Commission. I am Supervisory Special Agent Randy Aden of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Los Angeles, California. I am assigned as the supervisor of the Los Angeles Filed Offices Crimes Against Children Squad and the Southern California Regional Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement Team, the SAFE Team. With me today are FBI Special Agent Bruce Applin and Detective Daryk Rowland of the Huntington Beach California Police Department. Both Special Agent Applin and Detective Rowland investigate on-line child pornography and child sexual exploitation and have trained other federal, State, and local law enforcement personnel in on-line investigation techniques. Detective Rowland is a part time participant with the SAFE Team.

In July 1995, the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California spearheaded the formation of the SAFE Team, a Crimes Against Children task force. The task force was created with initial funding for computer equipment provided by the United States Department of Justice, Executive Office for the United States Attorneys. The impetus for the SAFE Team was the increasing use of personal computers, the Internet and peripheral technologies, by those individuals seeking to sexually exploit children. The Internet, by its very nature, has at once intrastate, interstate, and international characteristics. The use of the internet to produce, distribute, or receive child pornography and to seek out and sexually molest children violates, at the same time, both state and federal statutes. It was recognized by all agencies involved that by joining forces across geographical and judicial boundaries, resources could be targeted toward a common goal of identifying, apprehending, and prosecuting those who would prey on children.

The FBI's Los Angeles Field Office assumed administrative responsibility for the SAFE Team in January, 1996. It became one of the first of the FBI's multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary crimes against children against children resource teams and the nucleus of the Los Angeles Field Offices Crimes Against Children Squad. The Task Force is comprised of full-time investigative personnel from the California Bureau of Investigation, the California department of Corrections, Parole, Community Service Division, the FBI, the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, and the Orange County Sheriffs Department. The SAFE Team has established liaison with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the United States Customs Service and the United States Postal Inspection Service. Participation by local law enforcement agencies ensures access to child protection agencies and the local District Attorneys Offices.

The mission of the SAFE Team is to investigate violations of federal law as they relate to crimes against children, and to prosecute violations utilizing the most appropriate venue, in federal and state court. Priority is placed on investigations of child abductions, sexual offenders, and child pornography and sexual exploitation. In addition to criminal investigations, the task force assists other agencies with personnel and resources, provides consultation and expertise and conducts crimes against children training.

In September 1997, the SAFE Team was granted the first franchised undercover operation of the FBI's Innocent Images National Initiative, targeting online child pornography and child sexual exploitation. Innocent Images Los Angeles has initiated 355 historical or undercover investigations. Investigations have included 137 traveler cases in which individuals have used the internet to entice minors to engage in sexual acts. The remaining investigations have involved the distribution or possession of child pornography. The SAFE Team has executed fifty-one search warrants and has conducted twenty-two consent searches. Additionally, the SAFE Team has made sixty-six arrests and has secured twenty-eight Federal indictments or informations. These efforts have resulted in sixty-two state or federal convictions. Investigative priority is given to individuals who use the Internet to target and then lure or meet, or otherwise exploit children for sexual gratification. In addition to sexual investigations generated by the

Innocent Images Los Angeles undercover operation, the SAFE Team is receiving an increasing number of referrals from parents or from local law enforcement agencies wherein a child has been targeted online, or had met with and been sexually molested by an offender. These investigations include those instances where both the victim and offender reside in California or whether either resides outside of California.

The majority of local law enforcement agencies within the central District of California do not have the technical resources, expertise, or personnel to address online child pornography and child sexual exploitation investigations. Even the larger agencies are quick to refer investigative matters to the SAFE Team where the victim or offender are outside of their immediate jurisdiction or outside of the state. Local Law enforcement administrators, although recognizing the impact of online child pornography and child exploitation violations to their communities, view this burgeoning crime problem as a federal enforcement issue.

Online child pornography and child sexual exploitation has not supplanted more traditional child abuse, neglect, and molestation investigations that are solely the jurisdiction of local law enforcement. The technology has added to the potential for a child to be sexually exploited by non-traditional means. The majority of local law enforcement agencies support cooperation with the FBI. However, they must continue to address traditional child abuse, neglect, and molestation investigations and are not funded for additional personnel to commit to crimes against children task forces.

The Los Angeles Field Office receives a significant number of complaints regarding child pornography or the advertising of child pornography on the Internet. The complaints are generated out of Internet Relay Chat Rooms, News Groups and Websites. During April, 1998, early in the Innocent Images Los Angeles undercover operation, Det. Rowland identified approximately 70 Fservers, or File Servers, throughout the country, trading in child pornography. His efforts generated 39 FBI investigations. Recently, an FBI Agent targeted similar Fservers within the central District of California, found in Internet Relay Channels entitled “#0!!!!!!!!!!!!preteen101” and “#0!!!!!!!!!!!!12yroidsexx.” Of the six subjects identified through these sites, one was an adult and the remainder were minors, aged 16 to 17.

Last year a web host based in Southern California area notified the Los Angeles Field Offices of the discovery of a web site containing several child pornographic directories. Individuals could access the directories after paying a \$29.95, 30-day fee through an adult verification service. The web sites' access logs, captured over a period of approximately 70 days, revealed thousands of Internet Protocol addresses of individuals accessing the site. The logs revealed the date and time, the directories that were accessed, as well as the images viewed. In an attempt to manage the data, we narrowed our focus to the 3,818 Internet Protocol addresses of those who viewed 500 or more images.

In June of this year, a 39-year old Nevada father of four, emailed the Los Angeles field office, complaining that while online with his 12 year old daughter, he utilized a search engine to find information on the United States Federal Government, for a school report. They were directed to a commercial, or ".com" web site that by its domain name indicated it contained information about the United States Government. The site gave detailed information about every federal government agency. However, on the home page and every page accessed were website banners advertising adult pornographic sites. Included was a link to a web site that posted child pornographic images and provided additional links to other child and teen pornographic web sites.

Given our finite number of analytical and investigative personnel, the advances in computer technologies and the dynamics of the Internet, we are overwhelmed with potential child pornography and child sexual exploitation violations of federal and state statutes. As such, SAFE Team investigations of adult pornography is limited to those situations in which it is used by offenders in the seduction or grooming of children in an effort to lower the child's inhibition to sexual acts.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to address the commission this afternoon.