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New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez Announces Arrests of Suspected Online Predators Following "Operation MetaPhile"

May 8, 2024



Three Suspected Child Predators Arrested After Targeted Children for Sex

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Raúl Torrez announced the arrests and arraignment of three suspected online predators following "**Operation MetaPhile**," a months-long undercover investigation of child predators operating through Meta's platforms. The suspects contacted and solicited sex with underage decoy accounts created by the New Mexico Department of Justice.

"I'm proud of the undercover investigators in our office who worked meticulously to arrest three suspected child predators who used Meta's platforms to find and victimize children," **said Attorney General Torrez**. "The decoy accounts with which these suspects engaged mirror the experience children can and are having on these platforms. Operation MetaPhile uncovered how older men seek out these minors and solicit conversations that quickly turn into graphic, sexual conversations with children they know are underage.

"This operation conclusively demonstrates that using Meta's social media platforms not only endangers children in the virtual world but, more importantly, they are spaces that sexual predators actively use to hunt, groom and victimize children in the real world. Rest assured that our agents and prosecutors will continue to use every available



resource to apprehend and prosecute these monsters in our midst, but ultimately only Mark Zuckerberg and his executive team have the power to make these products safe

(<https://nmdoj.gov>)

In December, the New Mexico Department of Justice filed a historic lawsuit (<https://nmdoj.gov/press-release/attorney-general-raul-torrez-files-lawsuit-against-meta-platforms-and-mark-zuckerberg-to-protect-children-from-sexual-abuse-and-human-trafficking/>) against Meta, Mark Zuckerberg, and the company's wholly-owned subsidiaries — including Instagram and Facebook — concerning the protection of children from sexual abuse and human trafficking. The New Mexico DOJ's complaint (<https://nmdoj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023-12-05-NM-v.-Meta-et-al.-COMPLAINT-REDACTED.pdf>) details how Meta's platforms, through their lax policies and recommendation algorithms, enable child predators and traffickers to hunt for, solicit, and sell sex or sexual images with children at an unprecedented scale.

Operation MetaPhile resulted in the arrests of the following suspected child predators:

- **Fernando Clyde**

- Count 1: Child Solicitation by Electronic Communication Device (Child Under 13)
- 2nd Degree Felony; 0-9 years in prison
- Count 2: Attempted Criminal Sexual Penetration of a Minor
- 2nd Degree Felony; 0-9 years in prison

- On February 16, 2024, Fernando Clyde had befriended, and reached out to initiate contact with our undercover persona numerous times. Throughout the conversation Fernando sent pictures of his genitals and spoke to her about having sex. Fernando stated he wanted to rape the child, make her cry, and get her pregnant. A search warrant and arrest warrant were drafted and approved, and apprehension took place in a motel in Gallup, New Mexico on May 7, 2024, where Clyde showed up to have illegal, sexual relations with a minor.

- **Marlon Kellywood**

- Count 1: Child Solicitation by Electronic Communication Device (Child Under 13)
- 2nd Degree Felony; 0-9 years in prison
- Count 2: Attempted Criminal Sexual Penetration of a Minor
- 2nd Degree Felony; 0-9 years in prison

- Marlon Kellywood friended and began a chat, unsolicited, to our undercover persona. Kellywood initiated conversation via Facebook Messenger at approximately 11:09 AM on December 14, 2023. The chat concluded on Tuesday, May 7, 2024. Throughout the interactions Mr. Kellywood spoke with the persona



about having sex with her, along with sending her a picture of what is believed to be his genitals. On May 3, 2024, a search warrant for any mobile devices located on Marlon's person was approved. On May 7, 2024, the undercover persona told Kellywood which motel and room number she was staying at in Gallup, New Mexico as he had been asking to meet with the persona for illegal, sexual intercourse. Kellywood showed up to the motel at the scheduled time on May 7, 2024, where he was apprehended.

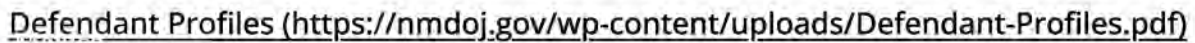
- **Christopher Reynolds**

- Count 1: Child Solicitation by Electronic Communication Device (Child Under 13)
- 3rd Degree Felony; 0-3 years in prison
- Christopher Reynolds was contacting a real 11-year-old whose mother noticed the inappropriate chats between her underage daughter and Reynolds. The mother contacted the local police department at which point our office was made aware of the child solicitation by electronic communication device. Our undercover persona friended the 11-year-old and Christopher Reynolds. Reynolds then began messaging our persona, unsolicited, at approximately 15:45 on April 11, 2024. The chat concluded on Tuesday, April 22, 2024. Throughout the interactions Mr. Reynolds spoke with our persona about vaginally penetrating her, along with sending her a picture of his genitals. An arrest warrant was approved by Chaves County District Court Judge Hudson for Child Solicitation by Electronic Communication Device (Child under 13) (No Meet) (Third Degree Felony). With the assistance of the Chaves County Sheriff's Office and the Chaves Police Department, Christopher Reynolds was located and arrested.

The New Mexico Department of Justice's lawsuit against Meta and Mark Zuckerberg is ongoing. In that litigation, the Department has already uncovered internal documents in which Meta employees estimate approximately 100,000 children every day are subjected to sexual harassment on Meta's platforms, such as pictures of adult genitalia. In another document, a Meta executive warns the head of Instagram that Meta's platforms are "basically massive 'victim discovery services.'"

Parents and children who have grappled with sexual exploitation enabled by social media platforms, as well as those who have experienced addiction, depression, eating disorders or other self-harm or mental health issues because of their use of social media, are encouraged to share their experiences with the New Mexico Department of Justice. Resources for getting help can be found [here \(https://nmdoj.gov/get-help/internet-protection-safety/\)](https://nmdoj.gov/get-help/internet-protection-safety/).

Operation MetaPhile Slide Deck (<https://nmdoj.gov/wp-content/uploads/Operation-MetaPhile-Slide-Deck.pdf>)



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