

REMARKS  
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

MATT M. DUMMERMUTH  
PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ON CHILD EXPLOITATION

ON

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019  
ATLANTA, GA

Good morning. It's my great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 2019 National Law Enforcement Training on Child Exploitation. I'm Matt Dummermuth, the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General who oversees the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice.

It's a privilege to be here in Atlanta for this important, and valuable, training conference. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our speakers – Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General Ed O'Callaghan, Associate Deputy Attorney General Stacie Harris and Director Vic Reynolds of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Our Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has proudly supported this event for over a decade. I remember taking part in one of the first trainings, in Columbus, Ohio, back in 2008, when I was serving as U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa. I'm very pleased to see that the audience has grown. We have more than 1,700 people registered to attend this year's training. That's great news, because it means that more investigators are honing their skills, and, by extension, even more child exploitation cases can be pursued – and the quality of investigations can improve, as well.

I want to recognize my colleague Caren Harp, the Administrator of OJJDP, for her support of this event, and for her strong commitment to the issues we'll be discussing here. And from her team, I want to single out Jeff Gersh. Jeff is our agency's lead for this training and the point person on our work with law enforcement to combat child exploitation. Thank you, Caren and Jeff. Thanks, also, to Fox Valley Technical College for all their hard work with attendees, the hotel and the rest of the logistical support.

I want to thank everyone for being here. I can assure you it will be time very well spent. This is the Department's premiere training conference on combating child exploitation. We've got a great line-up of speakers and presenters, including, as you'll hear in just a moment, top officials from the Department of Justice. Experts from around the country will be on hand to share their knowledge and experience. We've got a robust agenda over the next three days, with over 100 workshops and 45 hands-on computer labs that will demonstrate the latest tools and technology for investigating these crimes. And maybe most importantly, you'll have plenty of opportunities to network with and learn from your counterparts in other federal, state and local agencies.

Before we go any further, I'd like to take a moment to recognize one of our participants. Three weeks ago, my Justice Department colleagues and I had the privilege of honoring several law enforcement officers at our National Missing Children's Day ceremony in Washington. These are men and women who went above and beyond to investigate cases of missing and exploited children and to bring child predators to justice.

One group of honorees was a team of federal, state and local officers who tracked down a child abductor across several states and safely recovered two young girls. One vital member of that team wasn't part of the ceremony, but he's here today, and we'd like to take a moment to show him our appreciation.

Darian Dasko was a deputy with the Las Animas County, Colorado, Sheriff's Department on New Year's Eve, 2017, when officers in Round Rock, Texas, reported the abduction of two sisters, ages 7 and 14, after their mother had been found murdered. The girls were reported to have been seen in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, and an AMBER Alert went out to all three states. After extensive processing of digital evidence, cell phone records, interviews, surveillance images and tips from the public, investigators discovered the suspect's location. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, an alert Deputy Dasko spotted the man's car, pulled him over and arrested him – 700 miles from the site of the abduction. The girls were unharmed.

The suspect had a long criminal history, ranging from child pornography to attempted rape and murder. He was extradited to Texas where he was eventually convicted on several federal charges, and on the day before our Missing Children's Day ceremony, he was sentenced to life in federal prison.

Officer Dasko now serves with the Aurora, Colorado, Police Department, where he no doubt continues to serve his community with distinction. Officer Dasko, would you please come forward to accept your award?

It's professionals like Officer Dasko who form the backbone of our response to child endangerment. One of the lessons I took away from my time as U.S. Attorney was that state and local law enforcement are utterly essential to finding a larger number of exploited children and prosecuting more perpetrators. There simply aren't enough federal resources to handle the volume of cases. During my three years of service, we charged and prosecuted record numbers of child exploitation cases. In just a single five-year timeframe, we prosecuted child exploitation cases in half of my district's 52 counties. We could never have been successful without the support and hard work of state and local investigators. And I can assure you that other U.S. Attorneys share that view.

At the Department of Justice, we understand how critical your work is. That's why, last year, our Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awarded more than \$42 million to help state, local and tribal agencies find missing children and combat child exploitation. A big part of that funding is our investment in the 61 Internet Crimes Against Children task forces. OJJDP launched the ICAC Task Force Program in 1998 to help federal, state and local law enforcement agencies enhance their investigative responses to offenders who use the Internet, online communication systems or computer technology to exploit children. To date, ICAC task forces have reviewed more than 922,000 complaints of child exploitation, and those complaints have resulted in the arrest of more than 95,500 individuals. In addition, since the ICAC program's inception, more than 708,500 law enforcement officers, prosecutors and other professionals have been trained on techniques to investigate and prosecute ICAC-related cases.

We're ramping up our investments this year, putting more money into our ICAC program and an even greater focus on developing the technological capacity of task force agencies. And in my role as National AMBER Alert Coordinator, I'm directing resources to strengthening the AMBER network, particularly in Indian country and on our southern

and northern borders. This funding – and the training and technical assistance that go with it – reflect OJP’s and the Department’s commitment to giving you the tools you need to pursue these often difficult and heartbreaking cases, to bring child predators to justice and to remove kids from further harm, as quickly as possible.

We’re tremendously grateful for the indispensable work you’re all doing. I encourage you to keep it up and to let me know during this conference what more we can do to support you in this work.

It’s now my privilege to introduce our next speaker.

Vic Reynolds was appointed Director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation by Governor Brian Kemp in February. He leads an agency of more than 900 dedicated employees, and he brings extensive experience in criminal justice, including a term as Chief Magistrate of Cobb County and two terms as the county’s District Attorney.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation is the lead agency for the Georgia ICAC task force, so Director Reynolds oversees the state’s critical work to combat child exploitation. He’s also our host for this training. We’re very grateful for his hospitality, for his officers’ and agents’ support to ensure a smooth and secure conference, and for his commitment to bringing perpetrators of these crimes to justice.

Please join me in welcoming to the stage, Director Vic Reynolds.

###