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Rescuing a Minor from Her Violent Trafficker

MAY 2021

PROBLEM

VICTIMS OFTEN REMAIN UNIDENTIFIED BEFORE THEY ARE MOVED TO THEIR NEXT CITY

The Reno Police Department only had a few days to identify and save a child sexual exploitation victim before she left the city.
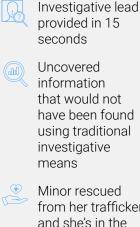
The Police Department's Human Exploitation and Traffic Unit monitors online prostitution ads to try to identify human trafficking victims. One ad in particular raised concern in the eyes of a police investigator since the individual appeared to be a minor yet had facial tattoos — an unusual combination.

The investigator wanted to recover the victim from her trafficker before she moved from Reno to other major cities, but had no way to identify her. Online ads do not use real names, and even the phone numbers are usually VoIP numbers that the police cannot associate with a known individual. Failure to rescue the victim while in Reno would expose the child to continued danger and possibly undermine established leads.

"She could have left town to the next city and we would not have been able to recover her."

AGENCY

BENEFITS

- Investigative lead provided in 15 seconds
- Uncovered information that would not have been found using traditional investigative means
- Minor rescued from her trafficker and she's in the trauma recovery process

SOLUTION

QUICKLY IDENTIFYING A VICTIM

An automated facial recognition solution based upon artificial intelligence can speed up identification time dramatically. Facial recognition compares an uploaded probe image against a database of images. Law enforcement agencies can use facial recognition results as investigative leads, and when supported by other evidence, they can accurately and rapidly identify suspects, persons of interest, and victims of crimes.

The technology Clearview AI provides is a post-event research tool, using over 3 billion photos derived from publicly available web sources, including social media posts, personal and professional websites, news articles, online mugshots and other criminal databases, public record sites and thousands of other open-source records. Clearview AI's law enforcement customers can use the results from this tool as investigative leads, which require confirmation and follow-up investigation from trained investigators.

"Clearview AI is phenomenal for human trafficking investigations. I use the platform almost every day."

THE RESULTS

CLEARVIEW AI IDENTIFIES THE CHILD VICTIM, ALLOWS HER TO BE RESCUED, AND BEGIN THE RECOVERY PROCESS

"Clearview AI was able to quickly help me identify a juvenile victim of sex trafficking and get her recovered within a day. This is incredibly faster than what it would have taken me before."

A Reno Police Department investigator needed to identify a child that was being sexually exploited before she left the city. While online prostitution ads do not always provide identifying information for the workers, the ads often have high quality pictures that are suitable for facial recognition searches.

The investigator submitted one of the facial images from the ads, and within 10 to 15 seconds Clearview AI provided a possible lead, including a link to the girl's Instagram page. By researching the contents of the public Instagram profile, including comments on posts and other identifying information, the investigator positively identified the victim within two hours of the Clearview AI search—and also confirmed that she was a 16 year old juvenile.

After booking an "appointment" for the next day, the investigator recovered the victim and apprehended her trafficker after a foot pursuit. Even after the police removed her from her trafficker and placed her in a safe location, the victim was apprehensive to provide information to law enforcement. Children that are sexually abused often live in fear of their handlers, and this particular trafficker had regularly beaten his victim. This child victim was forced to work in the sex trade since she was 13, only heightening her resistance to outsiders. However, as the Reno Police Department arranged for recovery services for the victim, she began to open up to the police, and within two days she was thanking them for rescuing her from her trafficker.

The victim had a long road ahead of her, including several months of treatment in an out-of-state care facility and follow-up services, but by her 18th birthday in May of 2021, she was in the trauma recovery process and is holding down a stable job.

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