

# Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation



## HB693 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 2022

# Human Trafficking

The following is a summary of human trafficking cases investigated by the two Montana Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Human Trafficking Agents during fiscal years 2021 and 2022.

## Fiscal YR 2021 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021)

**Cases Initiated: 16**

**Prosecutions Requested: 5**

**Prosecutions Declined: 2**

**Prosecutions Generated: 3**

- Ashley Stella: Charged Federally with Transporting a Minor for Purposes of Prostitution; Plead Guilty; Not yet sentenced. Faces mandatory minimum 10 years to life in prison, a \$250,000 fine and 5 years to life of supervised release.
- An adult male charged federally with Conspiracy to Transport a Minor for the Purposes of Prostitution; Prosecution ongoing; Faces mandatory minimum 10 years to life in prison, a \$250,000 fine and 3 years of supervised release.
- Angelo Stackhouse: Charged Federally with Transportation of Person with Intent to Engage in Illegal Sexual Activity, Distribution of Cocaine to a Person Under the Age of 21, Distribution of Cocaine and Meth, Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine, Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Trafficking Offense, and two (2) counts of Kidnapping; In June of 2022, Stackhouse was found guilty of all seven (7) charges; Not yet sentenced. Faces a mandatory minimum of 27 years and a maximum of life imprisonment.
  - This case was initiated in 2020, charged in 2021, and trial was held in June of 2022.

**Other Notable Points:**

- Aaron Angell: Sentenced in March of 2021 on a 2020 case where he was charged with Sexual Abuse of Children; DCI Human Trafficking Unit worked undercover communicating with Angell, who thought he was paying to have sex with a 14 yr. old female; Sentenced to 15 years with 7 years suspended in Yellowstone County District Court.

## Fiscal YR 2022 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)

**Cases Initiated: 64**

**Prosecutions Requested: 3** (Cases are under review at Yellowstone County Attorney's Office)

**Prosecutions Generated: 0**

## Other Notable Points:

- Some cases are awaiting furtherance of forensic evidence by the DCI Computer Crime Unit before they can proceed.
- Numerous, large-scale investigations underway, which take a great deal of time to investigate.

## Internet Crimes Against Children

DCI oversees the statewide Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force in Montana. Two DCI Agents and one support staff position are assigned to ICAC. The program heavily relies on the 14 affiliate agencies to assist with investigations statewide.

A majority of the Montana ICAC related cybertips are submitted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) CyberTipline<sup>1</sup> which is the nationwide centralized reporting system for the online exploitation of children. Between July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022, Montana ICAC received 1,520 cybertips, investigated 1,465 cases, and had 82 arrests.

The following chart indicates additional disposition and case referral information for the ICAC task force<sup>2</sup>:

| <b>Montana Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force</b> |                          | <b>7/1/2020 to 6/30/2022</b> |             |             |               |     |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----|
| <b>Measures</b>  |                          | <b>2020</b>                  | <b>2021</b> | <b>2022</b> | <b>Totals</b> |     |
| Case Information   | Number of Investigations | 385                          | 676         | 404         | 1,465         |     |
|  | Arrests                  | 17                           | 40          | 25          | 82            |     |
|  | Cybertips Received       | 178                          | 762         | 620         | 1,560         |     |
|  | Case Dispositions        | Unfounded                    | 46          | 100         | 60            | 206 |
|  |                          | Suspended                    | 19          | 49          | 17            | 85  |
|  |                          | Plea                         | 5           | 1           | 3             | 9   |
|  |                          | Trial                        | 2           | 1           | 3             | 6   |
|  | Case Referrals           | Federal                      | 9           | 8           | 6             | 23  |
| State  |                          | 8                            | 20          | 10          | 38            |     |

## Record Expungements

DCI's Criminal Records and Identification Services Section completes the expungement<sup>3</sup> of criminal records in Montana. Since 05/14/2021, there were a total of 21 records expunged through treatment court. DCI does not have the ability to track specific conviction information since the information is completely deleted from the criminal history record information system.

<sup>1</sup> The public can submit a cybertip to NCMEC on suspected online enticement of children for sexual acts, child sexual molestation, child sexual abuse material, child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, unsolicited obscene materials sent to a child, misleading domain names, and misleading words or digital images on the internet.

<sup>2</sup> Not all ICAC affiliate agencies reported their case disposition and referral information to ICAC. DCI only has visibility on NCMEC cybertips and/or if a DCI Agent assists with the ICAC investigation.

<sup>3</sup> Montana Code Annotated 46-18-1103 - "expunge" or "expungement" means to permanently destroy, delete, or erase a record of an offense from the criminal history record information system maintained by the department of justice in a manner that is appropriate for the record's physical or electronic form.