

STATEMENT FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF GERALD R. FORD COUNCIL, BSA
Thursday, July 15, 2010

Our former Camp Director, Scott Herrick, has been accused of receiving, distributing and possession illegal images.

We are shocked and saddened by these allegations. In 10 years, Scott did not give us a reason not to trust him. There have not been serious complaints about him, and definitely nothing like this.

We take this matter seriously! The alleged actions do not represent the values and ideals of the Boy Scouts of America, this Council or its members. We are proud of and confident in our long-term track record of providing safe environments for our Scouts to grow in. **Our number one concern is and always will be our Scouts.**

Below is a list of questions and answers. If you have a question that is not answered below or wish to express any other concern, call the Center for Scouting at 616-785-2662 or 1-888-272-4732 and follow the prompts to extension 201, our Council Scout Executive.

Questions Related to the Case

1. What is the history of the case?

According to the FBI, on April 24, 2010, an FBI officer in Rochester, NY, infiltrated a private, online network with shared folders that contained illegal images. The FBI identified Scott as a member of the network by tracing his username through his Internet service provider. In its criminal complaint, the FBI alleges Scott visited these sites once in April and twice in June. When agents executed a search warrant at Scout Camp on July 2, 2010, the FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents recovered at least three illegal images from his personal computer. According to the FBI, Scott admitted to downloading, distributing and possessing illegal images.

2. How much access did Scott have to Scouts?

He was a member of our camp staff. As such, he had significant direct and indirect interaction with Scouts. Our policies **require that all Scout leaders** use **“Two deep leadership.”** This policy requires that two registered adult leaders be present at all Scouting activities. No one-on-one contact is permitted outside of view of other adults and youth. We have no reason, and have been given no reason, to believe Scott violated this policy at any time.

3. Were any of our Scouts or staff involved?

The FBI has repeatedly confirmed that there is no reason to believe any local Scouts or staff were involved. The criminal complaint filed by the FBI in this case accuses Scott of “receipt,

distribution and possession” of illegal images. **Nowhere is he accused of producing any illegal images, videos or other material.**

4. Were any of the illegal images created on Council property?

Investigators have not alleged that any illegal images originated on our property.

5. Do you have any reason to believe Scott sexually abused any Scouts?

We do not. We are working closely with federal authorities to fully investigate this incident. Providing the safest possible environment for youth is our number one concern.

6. Were there any prior issues with Scott that you know of?

No. Prior to these allegations we were unaware of any serious issues with this staff member. He has worked at our Scout Camp since 2001, starting as a U.S. Marine Corps-certified shooting sports director. Before these allegations, we had not received complaints about his behavior.

7. The news said there were Boy Scout pictures. Were there?

According to the criminal complaint filed in this case, a shared folder on one of the websites Scott allegedly visited contained “images of boys in Boy Scout uniforms.” The images were not characterized as being of pornographic nature. **One image depicted a boy in a uniform with his body exposed.** Authorities have not suggested this boy is from our Council, and the boy is not recognized as a local Scout. It is possible that he may not be a Scout at all. The FBI has not suggested ANY of these images were on Scott’s computer (despite erroneous media reports to the contrary).

Questions Related to Scouting and Camp

1. What type of criminal background checks do you conduct?

The BSA has some of the oldest and most respected youth protection measures of any youth-serving organization. Throughout the years we have taken a number of steps to improve our programs, including education, criminal background checks (CBC) and enhanced policies and procedures. Our vendor is LexisNexis. LexisNexis delivers comprehensive credentialing, background screening, authentication, direct marketing and public records services to businesses and nonprofit organizations.

2. How do you allow someone like this to be a camp staff member?

Unfortunately, **there is no common profile of a person who commits actions such as those** he is accused of committing. **There is no fail-safe system for screening pedophiles, child abusers or others who commit these types of actions.** The BSA provides extensive and continuing Youth Protection Training for professionals, leaders and Scouts. This training teaches them to recognize, resist and report suspected child abusers. The Council had not received previous

complaints about his involvement in Scouting. His annual criminal background check was clear of any criminal activity. And, just as a reminder, according to the laws of this nation, Scott remains innocent until proven guilty.

3. Are our Scouts safe?

Absolutely. The BSA will always continue to seek ways to improve our youth protection programs. We are proud and confident in our long-term track record of providing safe environments for our Scouts to grow in. **Our number one concern is and always will be our Scouts.** We constantly strive to educate and prevent incidents such as this and encourage parents to do so as well. Communication and knowing how to recognize, resist and report abuse are the best weapons we can provide our youth.

4. What safety precautions can be taken to prevent such incidents in the future?

The BSA is a recognized leader in the field of youth protection, and we will continue to provide extensive youth protection training to our professionals, adult leaders and youth participants. BSA recently improved its Youth Protection Training requirements to include all registered adults and has committed to regularly screening all registered adults every year. While there is **no common profile of a child abuser** – nor is there a fail-safe system for screening abusers – we encourage parents to discuss ways to recognize potential abusers, how to resist them and teach their children to report even questionable situations to them, a teacher or a trusted adult.

5. What impact will this have on Scout camp?

Scouts and leaders in camp right now have shared with us that they are having a great time. **A new Camp Director was hired immediately after the former director was removed.** All activities have continued without interruption. Every effort is being made to insure our long-standing traditions and safe and outstanding camp programs.

6. Have any campers left camp?

No campers have left camp due to this incident. We have a record number of campers participating again this summer, and we expect each one of them to experience a strong program of outdoor fun, learning and building Boy Scout values.

Questions Related to the Council's Response

1. When did you learn of this situation?

This matter was brought to the attention of the Council's leadership on June 30, 2010, and we immediately began cooperating with federal investigators. When the presence of illegal images on this individual's computer was confirmed, **we immediately removed him from camp property, revoked his membership and removed him from the Boy Scouts of America.**

2. Why didn't you say something sooner?

On July 1, the day federal agents appeared with a warrant at our Scout Camp, **we agreed**, as part of our effort to cooperate fully with federal investigators, **that we would not release any information related to their investigation until after they had formally charged him**. Scott turned himself in to authorities on Thursday, July 8. **After keeping our promise** to investigating authorities, we immediately began releasing statements to the media and our Council's Officers, Board of Directors, Camp Staff, leaders at camp and others so as to share as much information as could the FBI permitted us to. We continue to be completely transparent in this situation with federal agencies, the media, members and friends of the Council, and the public.

3. Why did we hear about this first in the media? Why didn't you contact us first?

Federal authorities asked us to not share any information in the case until they had completed their preliminary investigation. Because we thought it important to cooperate with the authorities, **we voluntarily complied with this request.** As soon as the FBI released information on the case, we released a statement to the media, Council Officers, Board of Directors, Camp Staff, leaders in camp and others. Feedback to the Council's Center for Scouting has been overwhelmingly supportive. **We will continue to be absolutely open to any questions or concerns.**

4. I have more questions. What should I do?

If you have questions that were not answered here, please e-mail them to our Scout Executive, Michael.Sulgrove@Scouting.org or call 616-785-2662 or 1-888-272-4732 and ask for (or dial) extension 201.

5. Additional Information, if there is any, will be posted to the "Breaking News" section of our website.

Additional information:

- A. Two school counselors are now a part of our camp staff (with at least two more on the way) to help our camp staff and others discuss the issue.**
- B. Both the Council President and Council Scout Executive are making frequent visits to camp to talk with staff, adult leaders, and others.**
- C. The Council continues to be in constant contact with federal investigators about this matter.**
- D. In addition to assisting in the federal investigation, our Council leadership is currently reviewing all of its policies and procedures on:**
 - a. Internet access at our properties.**
 - b. Our review of adult leadership in camp.**
 - c. Youth protection training next steps.**
- E. Council leadership has established a task for to complete the tasks described in item D above.**

- F. Some questions have arisen regarding refunds for camp if parents decide not to let their Scouts attend. It has been a long-standing policy of the Council to approve partial refunds for camp cancellations that are an individual's or family's choice. Choice has always been distinguished from forces beyond individual control such as a death in the family, loss of job, illness or an act of God.)**
- G. Internet service has been restricted at the camp property.**
- H. The FBI affidavit that was submitted as part of the criminal complaint in this case contains graphic language. It is important remember this document was written to generate public interest in this case and to persuade a grand jury to find probable cause to indict the defendant. If you see this document, remember: Not all findings in it relate directly to Scott Herrick.**