



# *Investigating Cases of Long-Term Missing Children*

**Robert Lowery, Jr.**

*Executive Director*

*Missing Children's Division*

*National Center for Missing & Exploited Children*

*www.missingkids.com*



In Memoriam  
Adam Walsh

1974-1981

"If his song is to continue, we must do the singing."

# National Center for Missing & Exploited Children



- Established in 1984 by a Congressional Mandate as the National Clearinghouse for Missing Children
- Non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization
- NCMEC has assembled a remarkable team of professionals with vast law enforcement experience providing free services and resources  
(per 42 U.S.C. and 22 C.F.R §94.6)
- Headquarters located in Alexandria, VA
- 327 Employees

# NCMEC Today

- **Serves as a resource center in providing assistance to parents, children, law enforcement, schools, and the community in searching for and recovering missing children and raising public awareness about ways to help prevent child abductions, molestation, and sexual exploitation**
- **Works with clearinghouses established in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Canada, Puerto Rico, and the Netherlands**
- **Branches established in CA, FL, TX, and NY**
- **7 federal law enforcement agencies assigned**



# **NCMEC Mission**

**To help find missing  
children and prevent  
the sexual exploitation  
of children**

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*Long-Term Missing Children*

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# Classifications

**Endangered Runaways**

**Family Abduction**

**Non-Family Abduction**

**Lost, Injured or Otherwise Missing  
(LIM)**

# Missing Children and Child Abductions

- An estimated 1.3 million children go missing every year. Only 797,500 of those are typically reported to law enforcement agencies
- Non-family abductions
  - 58,200 non-family abductions per year
  - 1/2 are sexually assaulted (approx. 30,000 children)
  - 1/3 are physically assaulted (approx. 20,000 children)
- Family abductions
  - 203,900 per year



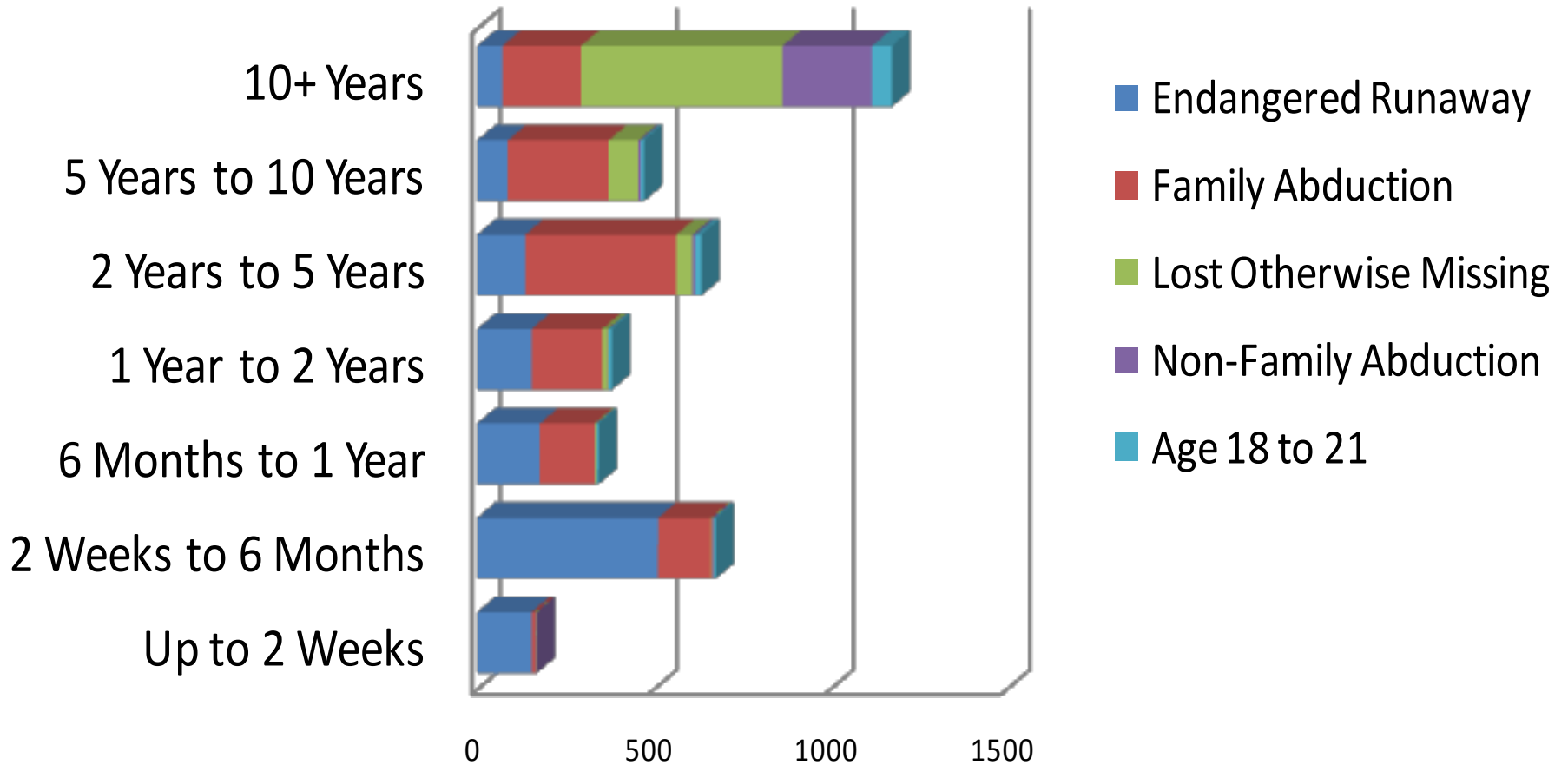
# **Child Abduction Homicides**

**60-150 children are abducted and murdered each year based on official records**

**Over 2600 children reported missing to NCMEC as of April 2011 were missing over a year putting them at high risk for victimization**

# Duration of Open NCMEC Cases

*As of April 2011*



# Child Abduction Homicide Victims

- **Average victim is an 11 year old girl**
- **Described as low-risk, “normal” kid**
- **Good family relationship**
- **Has initial contact with an abductor in public areas**
- **Child is chosen because they are available and unguarded**



# Nature of the Call in Child Abduction Homicides

- **60% Missing Person Report**
- **20% Body Recovery**
- **10% Abduction**
- **9% Runaway Report**

# How Long Do They Live?

- **44% die within the first hour**
- **74% in the first three**
- **1% survive more than a day**
- **40% were dead before they were reported missing**





*Images*

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# Age Progression

- 1 out of every 6 children are recovered as a result of distribution of their image
- Because of physical and bone structure changes images of missing children are “age progressed” every two years until the age of 18
- After 18 years of age, the images are “age progressed” every five years as the child matures



# *Using Public Records Database Searches to Find Missing Children*

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# Working Together to Keep Our Children Safe



# What Can We Find?

- Addresses, landline and cellular phone numbers
- Alias names, DOB's, Social Security numbers
- Relatives and associates
- Businesses, employment, tax liens and judgments
- Vehicles, property, licenses and voter registration
- NCIC Offline results, arrest records, warrant information
- Sex offender registration
- Social Networking site information





# Social Networking Sites



- **How can they help?**
  - To gain information on child or CSAW such as location, friends, activities family members may not be aware of, etc.
  - In ERU cases SNS are especially helpful in identifying possible prostitution/gang related activities
- **The more we know about the child the better we can tailor our searches**
  - There are social networking sites for sexual orientation, religion, race, and various social groups (i.e. Gothic, Hippie, Anime)
- **What we can and cannot search...**
  - **We have the ability to search dozens of different sites, but use the most popular in general searches - MySpace, Xanga, Bebo, Hi5**
  - We can search public profiles, pictures, blogs, comments, etc
  - We *cannot* sign in to the child's personal site with their user name and password

# NCIC/Nlets Searches

- Check hot files in NCIC to confirm that children and/or abductors are entered into NCIC
- Modify a missing child entry by adding a NCMEC interest flag.
- Search via Nlets for vehicle registration and driver's license information
- Send administrative messages through Nlets with offer of NCMEC assistance or confirmation of credentials
- III Criminal History checks on a limited basis for internal use (non-disseminating agency )

**\*NCMEC is 1 of 2 non-law enforcement agencies who have access to NCIC**

# Attempted Abductions

- Case Analysis Unit analysts track attempted abductions nationwide
- Incidents include attempted abductions & kidnappings, as well as related “suspicious activity or events”
- All incidents confirmed with law enforcement
- Identify/analyze regional trends and patterns
- Summary of confirmed activity

# Weekly Bulletin

Any request contact  
**attempts@ncmec.org**

or


**1-800- THE LOST**

**MISSING EXPLORE** **Attemped Abductions and Other Abductions not Reported to NCMC**  
Report Period: 06/17/2006 To 06/24/2006  
Information has been confirmed by indicated law enforcement agency

NCMEC Case Number: 1021226  
CaseType: Attempted Abduction  
Event Date/Time: 06/13/2006 10:00:00 AM  
City: Syracuse  
State: NY

Victim Age: 10  
Victim Sex: Female  
Victim Race: Black

**Suspect**



Race: White  
Sex: Male  
Age:  
Height:  
Weight:  
Scars/marks/Tats:  
Vehicle Description: Dodge Spirit  
Red NY CSH349


**Description of Incident**

\*\*\*UPDATE: JAMES GILKESON WAS FOUND GUILTY OF A FELONY COUNT OF ATTEMPTED SECOND-DEGREE KIDNAPPING AND A MISDEMEANOR CHARGE OF ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF A CHILD. HE WAS SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS FOR ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPING AND ONE YEAR FOR ENDANGERING A CHILD, FOLLOWED BY 5 YEARS OF POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION.

\*\*\*SUSPECT ARRESTED

The suspect followed the child into the Big Apple Market on Castle and South Salina Street around 10 am on 6/12/06. After talking to the child inside the store, the suspect then got into his car and waited for her to exit the store. He followed her in his car as she walked down South Salina street. The suspect opened his car door and asked the child if she needed a ride, when she said no, he grew more insistent, until she finally got in. Two adult witnesses noticed the incident, and after questioning the suspect they blocked the car in with their own cars, holding the suspect there while they waited for LE. The suspect was then arrested.

The investigation is ongoing, and LE is looking into whether or not he is connected to other similar cases across the state. If you have similar incidents or would like more information regarding this case please contact Det.Sgt. Bryan Lendy at (314) 435-3016.



If you have additional information or similar incidents please contact:  
Syracuse (NY) PD  
Det.Sgt. Bryan Lendy 3144353016

Prepared by: Dawn Nelson, Attempted Abduction Analyst and Marion Hughes, Staff Analyst CASO, NCMC  
If you have any questions about these incidents please contact the Law Enforcement Office shown or you may contact  
Dawn Nelson at dnelson@ncmec.org, phone: 703-821-4500

# Sex Offender Searches

- Given a name, we can search to identify if that individual is a registered sex offender
- Given a location, we can search to identify registered sex offenders within a specified radius
  - We can provide this information in an Xcel spreadsheet and on a map in relation to where the child went missing
  - Specifically helpful for NFAs (with an unknown CSAW) and LIMs

# Forensic Services Unit

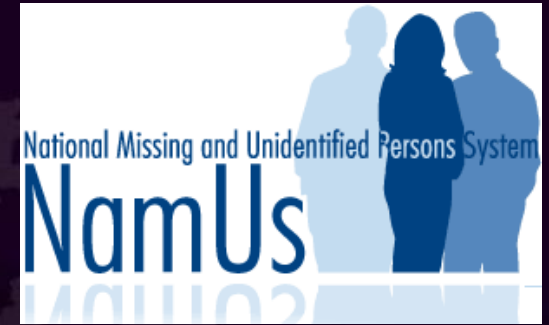
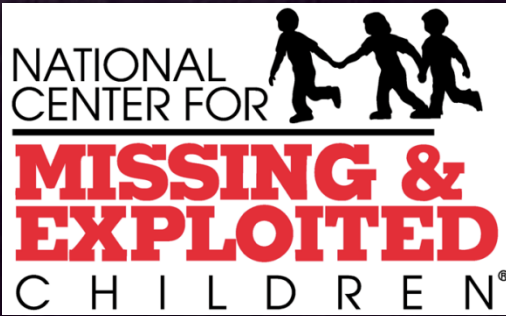
- **Cold Case Support**

- Public record searches for missing children, suspects and persons of interest
- Timelines and case comparisons
- Participate in Cold Case Reviews

- **Deceased and Unidentified Child Cases**

- NCIC Offline submissions for unidentified children
- Locate family members of missing or deceased children for DNA submissions





*Long-Term Missing Children and  
the NCMEC – NCIC/NamUs  
Partnership*

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**Why?**

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# NCMEC – NCIC

For the past 27 years NCMEC has partnered with NCIC to help find missing children

NCMEC has the unique distinction of being one of the very few non-profits with NCIC access

NCMEC does not act as a law enforcement agency, and does not enter or modify information about missing children

NCMEC does receive critically missing child notifications from NCIC – Child Abductions and Amber ALERTS

# NCMEC/NamUs Partnership

- In January 2010 NCMEC began entering cases of long-term missing children into NamUs. To Date:
  - 2,563 Total Missing Children Cases
  - 802 Resolved
- Currently (*as of October 7, 2011*)
  - 1,614 Missing Children “Published”
  - 147 Not Yet Published
  - 372 Dental Records
  - 693 DNA Profiles
  - 25 Fingerprints

# Managing NamUs Cases of Long-Term Missing Children

- *All active LIM's and NFA's will be entered into the NamUs database after 60 days (DLC)*
- *ERU's after 6 months (DLC)*
- *Active FA's will be entered on a case-by case basis after consideration of potential "risk factors."*



# Matching Records – Generally

*Positive (conclusive) matches of missing children to unidentified remains cases largely depends on the profile strength of the NamUs records and requires verification by medical/forensic science professionals of proper authority and jurisdiction.*





# Project ALERT – FSU Support

- Case responsibility
- PA Deployment –responsiveness/coordination
- Coordination with law enforcement and families
- Re-examining solvability factors
- NamUs entry/modifications
- Role of CMS



## *Continued.....*

- Packing the record
- Additional searchable fields
  - *NamUs vs. NCIC*
- Goal - *all cases 5 stars*
- *NCMEC Internal Status*
  - “NamUs Pending”
  - “NamUs Completed”



# Primary Identifiers

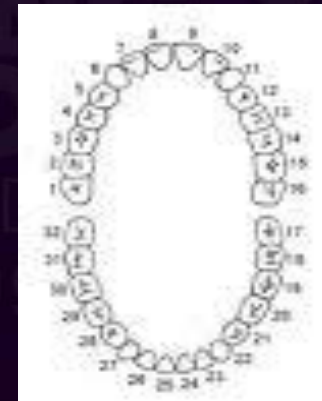
## Biometric Data

- Fingerprints
  - *generally rare in missing children cases*
- DNA
  - Known/direct samples – hair brushes, toothbrushes – *\*Caution*
- Family reference samples
  - parents, siblings – mtDNA/STR

# *Primary Identifiers continued.....*

## Dentals

- Most up-to-date records and x-rays/radiographs
- **NOTE:** Treatment notes are critical! X-rays are prior to restoration.
- Characteristics (coding) vs. Dental records
- Forensic Odontologist



# *Continued.....*

- Missing Teeth/Gaps/Alignment
  - Condition
- Unique dental work
- Bridges, caps or fillings
- Braces (full/partial/color)
- Retainers
- Implants

# *Secondary Identifiers*

- Hair color
- Eyes
- Height
- Weight
- Clothing – shoes, eyewear
- Accessories – hair accessories, belts, purses

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# *Continued.....*

- Distinctive Body Features
- Scars, Marks and Tattoos
- Piercings
- Location?
- Photos available?
- Facial and Body Hair



# Other Considerations

Location of remains in comparison to known locations, suspected locations, or sightings of missing child.

Timeline – DLC vs. Recovery date of remains and/or estimated date of death.

Circumstances – comparison of facts of missing to recovery of remains.



# *More Factors Effecting Matches*

## *Unidentified Persons*

- Full Body Recoveries –
  - Fresh
  - Decomposition Stages
- Partial Body Recoveries
  - Body Parts
- No body cases (*bloody towels case*)



# *Continued.....*

- Determining Sex – *partial remains*
- Estimating Height and Weight
- Long Bones
- Estimating Age
- Approximating Time of Death

# Levels of Exclusion/Inclusion

- There are no known standards for including or excluding matches
- Each case must be judged on its own merits – final determination of a positive match only by medical/forensic professionals
- Generally, all potential matches, regardless of profile strength, will be forwarded to law enforcement and medical examiners/ coroners



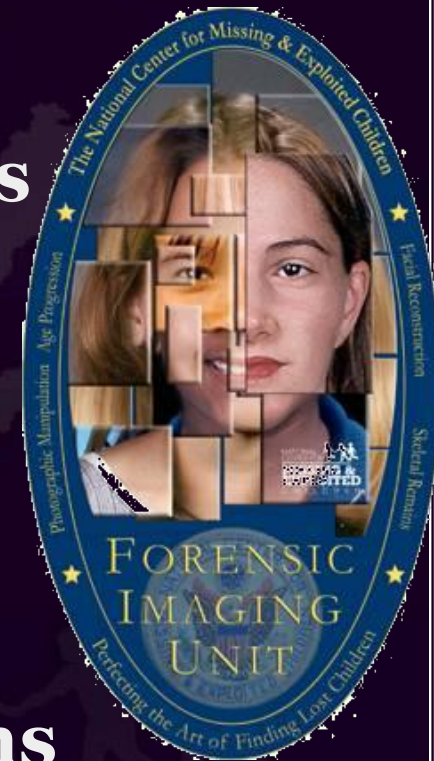
*Missing and Unidentified  
Comparisons*

NCMEC Resources

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# The Forensic Imaging Unit

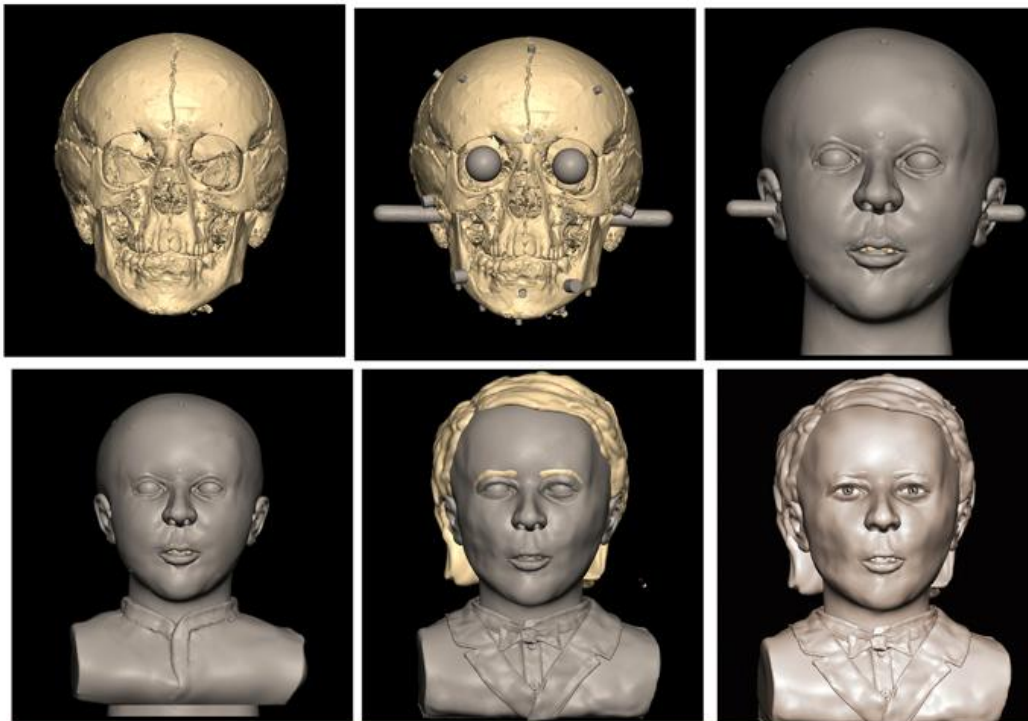
- **Facial Reconstructions/Composites**
  - From skulls
  - From postmortem photographs
- **Age Progression**
  - Long-term missing children
- **Missing / Unidentified Comparisons**
  - Identifying points of comparison
  - Superimposition



# Reconstructions from Skulls



Working with anthropologists, Forensic Imaging Specialists at NCMEC prepare facial reconstructions from skulls for distribution to the public.



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# New Forensic Imaging Technology

Composites are now created in three-dimensional, virtual sculpting software.

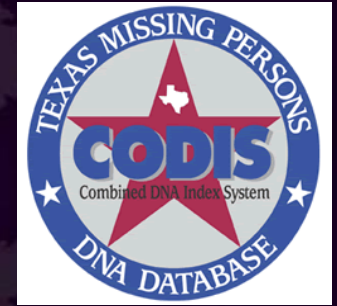
- Skulls are first sent to the Smithsonian Institute, where a CAT scan is performed.
- The data file from the scan is loaded into the sculpting software to create a 3-D image of the skull on-screen.
- The artist then sculpts the composite in a virtual environment, allowing the images to be created without risking damage to the remains.



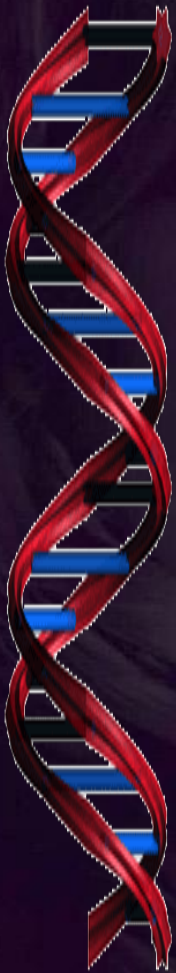


# DNA Collection Program

Through a partnership with the University of North Texas and with grant money provided by the National Institute of Justice, the Forensic Services Unit facilitates free DNA profiling for missing and unidentified persons.



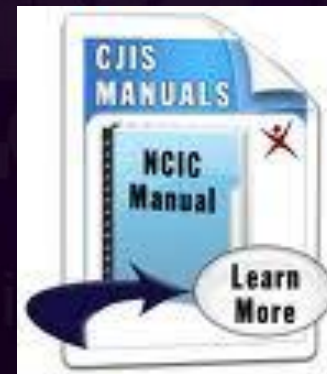
- Each profile is loaded into the National DNA Index System, where it is proactively compared with all other profiles in the database.
- DNA collection kits are provided to law enforcement at no cost .



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# NCIC

- Lastly, Project ALERT will be seeking permission of the law enforcement agency for uploading images of the children into the NCIC Missing Person Database – will included AP's.





# Infant Abductions

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# “Typical” Infant Abductor

- Childbearing age (12-50)
- Often overweight
- Indicates she has lost a baby or can't have one
- Often married or cohabitating
- Desire to provide companion with “his” child
- Frequently visits nursery and maternity units
- Plans abduction , but does not necessarily target child
- Frequently impersonates a nurse
- Becomes familiar with healthcare staff & parents

# WHY?

## Who would steal a baby, and why?

By Madison Park, CNN  
January 25, 2011 12:43 p.m. EST



Such cases of baby abductions are extremely rare -- 271 cases in the U.S. have been reported since 1983.

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

(CNN) -- In a case that captured much attention this week, a woman

In these types of cases when a woman snatches a baby, the typical perpetrator is not motivated by maternal envy or a burning desire for motherhood. It's usually her desire to hang on to a boyfriend or husband in a deteriorating relationship, experts said. To do that, she feels she must produce a baby.

The reasoning may sound like a plot line from a soap opera, but the aftermath is tragic.

Madison Park- CNN

Cathy Nahirny -NCMEC -January 2011

## Hospital Scare

An 18-year-old woman is waking up in a Henrico jail this morning, accused of trying to abduct a newborn baby from a hospital. Ebony Tucker is charged with kidnapping. Police say she somehow gained entry to the fourth floor of Henrico Doctor's Hospital, and while wearing scrubs and a stethoscope, told the mother of a newborn that she needed to take the baby to check it's vital signs. But police say the mother was suspicious and didn't let her. Tucker was eventually stopped by a nurse and detained by security. Police say the incident happened back on May 18th, but the investigation didn't conclude until Tuesday, when tucker was arrested.

# Infant Abductions

NCMEC has

- Trained more than 65,000 healthcare professionals
- Provided on-site security audits of more than 1000 healthcare facilities
- Advised and assisted law-enforcement officials across the country handling infant abduction investigations

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# Woman Arrested After Allegedly Caught Stealing Newborn From Hospital Nursery

Friday, March 28, 2008



AP/Sanford Regional Medical Center

Jennifer Latham is shown with a day-old baby under her arm in this surveillance image from Sanford Regional Medical Center in Sanford, Fla.

**SANFORD, Fla. —** A woman on Friday abducted a 1-day-old baby from a secure hospital unit and apparently managed to smuggle the child from the facility inside a tote bag, police said.

Jennifer Latham, 39, of Sanford, was arrested a short time later after being pulled over by police in nearby Lake Mary, said Darrel Presley, deputy chief of the Sanford Police Department near Orlando.

Officials at Central Florida Regional Hospital alerted police of the abduction around 1:45 p.m. after hospital alarms indicated the child had been removed from the newborn unit, Presley said.

The hospital was immediately locked down as officials searched the grounds, but the woman was apparently able to slip by security because she had the child hidden in a bag, he said.

"We believe at this point she had a large blue tote bag that she may have actually placed the child



# Questions?



FBINA  
177th Session

**Robert G. Lowery Jr.**

Executive Director  
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