



Scripps investigation uncovers flawed system for tracking convicted military sex offenders

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – After an exhaustive review of more than 1,300 military cases and sex offender registries from across the country, the Scripps national investigative team has uncovered disturbing truths about military sex offenders and the civilian world's efforts to track them.

Zimman Casey was an Army private first class when a military court convicted him of assault and "indecent acts" on a young girl and sentenced him to three years in prison. After his release in 2002 from Fort Sill in Oklahoma, Casey headed for Texas, where the convicted military sex offender effectively slid under the public radar, allowing him to prey again and again. By 2007, the former soldier had been convicted of sexually assaulting a minor under 14.

The investigation, *Under the Radar*, revealed that Casey is one of at least 242 convicted military sex offenders who returned to civilian life but do not appear on any public registry of sex offenders. Among their offenses: rape, sexual assault with a weapon and child molestation.

As a result of the Scripps investigation, law enforcement officials in three states are hunting for former Army Specialist Basil Kingsberry. Convicted of rape and forcible sodomy in a military court martial, Kingsberry hasn't appeared on a sex offender registry anywhere in the country in the nearly 10 years since his release.

Federal law requires civilian sex offenders to place their names and details of their crimes on a registry *before* they leave prison. The military has a different system. It relies on sex offenders to self-register *after* their discharge, a practice even the inspector general for the Department of Defense has criticized recently.

Sex offender registry coordination and communication can break down even when a state receives notification. The Scripps investigative team uncovered cases where states failed to register convicted sex offenders because they simply didn't understand the military jargon or the military convictions did not correlate to civilian felonies. The results were devastating.

When one mother typed "Matthew Carr," the name of her daughter's new boyfriend, into sex offender registries in the summer of 2010, she found nothing. By the time she learned Carr served seven years in a military prison for indecent

assault against seven women, it was too late. Her daughter already was another victim.

"My blood turned absolutely cold," said the mother, who Scripps is not identifying to protect her daughter's privacy. "I've never felt such danger, such helplessness as a mom before."

In a statement, the Pentagon says it "categorically does not condone the heinous behavior of convicted sexual offenders" cited by Scripps. Military officials say they notify civilian authorities upon the initial release of an offender and his location. At that point, it is up to the state to follow through on the registration.

That's not good enough says Congresswoman Jackie Speier, a California Democrat and member of the House Armed Services Committee. She adds that the military's reliance on others to ensure offenders get registered "shows a gross lack of responsibility."

The Scripps News investigation, *Under the Radar*, will air starting Sunday, Nov. 23, 2014, on Scripps TV stations and their digital outlets across the country. Find the story at Detroit ABC affiliate WXYZ-Channel 7 at www.wxyz.com.

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