

OPERATION
*Someone
Like Me*
**TBI HUMAN TRAFFICKING
OPERATION TARGETS
CHILD PREDATORS**

TBI Recovers Missing and Endangered Teens, Makes Human Trafficking Arrests

Posted by: [Submitted Report](#) in [National](#) August 2, 2015 [0](#)

JACKSON, Tenn. – Less than a month after a new law went into effect to help identify, investigate, and prosecute human trafficking in Tennessee, Special Agents with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation joined with partner agencies in West Tennessee to identify and arrest individuals who prey on children.

Operation SLMTBI Agents, including those assigned to TBI's [Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force](#), worked alongside investigators from the Jackson Police Department and the Madison County Sheriff's Office on a multi-day sting operation in Jackson. One part focused on prostitution and human trafficking, as a separate effort targeted individuals trying to meet children over the internet for purposes of sex. With the assistance of nonprofit agencies End Slavery Tennessee and The Scarlet Rope Project, the undercover operation also identified potential victims of trafficking.

The TBI is duplicating similar efforts, being called *Operation Someone Like Me*, in other parts of the state as the agency works to better equip law enforcement departments to investigate human trafficking and help victims.

“The biggest win in this operation is the fact that we recovered missing and endangered juveniles who were being commercially exploited in the state of Tennessee,” said TBI Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge Margie Quin. “We were also able to identify a man who was ultimately charged with trafficking for sexual servitude of a juvenile. We are fine-tuning the way to maximize our efforts in identifying and helping these victims of trafficking, and taking the predators off the streets.”

This month, authorities arrested more than a dozen individuals on various sex-related charges, including Sexual Exploitation of a Minor, Solicitation of Aggravated Statutory Rape, and Trafficking for Sexual Servitude. More importantly, the sting also identified several young women who may be victims of human trafficking.

In May, Governor Bill Haslam signed legislation into law giving TBI original jurisdiction over investigations of human trafficking. Additionally, the state legislature approved funding for four Special Agents, who exclusively investigate human trafficking cases and train law enforcement statewide on recognizing and combatting this type of crime.

“We are developing valuable relationships with local law enforcement agencies who are also working hard to protect these individuals whose very lives are at stake,” said TBI Director Mark Gwyn.

“Sex-related crimes have devastating effects not only on the victims involved, but also community as a whole,” says Captain Phillip Kemper with the Jackson Police Department. “Our agency always welcomes the opportunity to be able to work hand-in-hand with our law enforcement partners towards common goals of safer communities with less opportunity for crime and a better quality of life.”

“It takes all of us working together to bring about these successful results,” added Madison County Sheriff John Mehr.

Last year, as part of its commitment to address this issue, the TBI unveiled a public awareness campaign, dubbed “IT Has To Stop,” which includes online resources, public service announcements, and contact information for nonprofits who work with survivors of human trafficking. Visit www.ITHasToStop.com for more information.