

# Child porn scars Canadian city

## Underworld revealed beneath London's wealthy veneer

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LONDON, Ontario — The proud boast of this leafy, riverside university city was that it was once home to more millionaires than anywhere else in Canada.

But a young fisherman's riverbank discovery of a batch of videotapes showing men having sex with boys sparked an investigation that has smeared London as the nation's "kiddie-porn capital."

So far, 30 men — including schoolteachers, social workers and a politician — have been charged with more than 1,300 counts of sex crimes against more than 50 boys, some as young as 8.

"It's become known as London's child-pornography ring ... but in reality it's far more insidious. It's sexual abuse, a child-exploitation ring," said Superintendent Jim Balmain, the officer heading the criminal investigation in London, a city on Ontario's southwestern peninsula about midway between Toronto and Detroit.

Police interviewed up to 600

people and seized more than 1,200 homemade videos and hundreds of Polaroid photographs and child-pornography magazines during the 9-month-old probe, known as Operation Scoop.

The two ringleaders are behind bars, and seven others have been convicted and sentenced. Gary Gramlick, 59, described by one victim as "a nice, normal old man," was sentenced to 10 years in jail on nine charges, including making obscene material and sexual touching.

Thomas Jewell, 42, a former hockey coach, was jailed for 15 years for 10 offenses, including anal intercourse and making pornographic material.

But police say the pedophile ring has spread far beyond London, and the provincial government recently agreed to launch a joint-forces investigation across Ontario, Canada's most populous province.

There is little hint to the visitor of such a seedy underworld in London, which shares many of the features of the British capital — in-

cluding its own Thames River that winds through the city.

Several of Canada's most august companies were founded in London, including brewing giant John Labatt Ltd.

Superintendent Balmain described London as a middle- to upper-class conservative city with its average share of crime.

The children, often street kids or from troubled family backgrounds, are not hauled off by strangers and assaulted. Instead, the pedophiles entice them into their homes with the promise of cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, cash or just a chance to watch TV.

Weeks may pass before the first sexual assault, but then the youngsters are passed around among members of the pedophile ring, sodomized and made to "perform" for the video camera, often filmed in secret.

But at the age of 13 or 14, the victims have outgrown their usefulness and are dumped back onto the street where they turn often to a life of prostitution and crime.