

Orangeville man among eight charged in separate child exploitation cases

By Mike Pickford

An Orangeville man is facing numerous child pornography and other sexual-related charges after a province-wide investigation turned up eight individuals accused of multiple offences against children.

In collaboration with its municipal law enforcement partners, the OPP's Child Sexual Exploitation Unit recently executed 10 search warrants across the province relating to cases of child sexual exploitation. These warrants led to the arrest of eight individuals, against whom a total of 36 charges were laid. Some of the accused have past convictions for child pornography and sexual offences against children.

Christopher Robinson, 40, of Orangeville faces two counts of agreeing to commit a sexual offence against a person under 16 years, two of invitation to sexual touching of a person under 16 years, and one count each of possession of child pornography, accessing child pornography and making available child pornography.

Police first identified Mr. Robinson as a potential offender in January when, in the course of an online undercover investigation, the Sureté du Québec alleged he was seeking to engage in sexual relations with two girls, aged six and eight. Further investigation was carried out by the OPP on Feb. 7, with its Child Sexual Exploitation Unit, accompanied by Orangeville Police Service members, executing a search warrant at his residence. In addition to evidence of the original offence, police seized computers said to contain images of child sexual abuse.

Police confirmed there are no connections between the various cases, noting they are all independent investigations.

Also arrested and charged with sexual-related offences against children were Ernest Hesse, 35, of Stratford; David Banks, 49, of Fordwich; Bruce Davidson, 47 of Formosa; Justin Campbell, 31, of Walkerton; Jacob Baker, 29, of Owen Sound, and Lee Hughes, 36 of Kintore. As part of the investigation, Justin Horrigan, 23, of Fordwich was charged with possession of illegal drugs and possession of stolen property.

OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes noted this investigation was one of many the provincial force has carried out in recent times, noting it was of the utmost importance that police do what they can to protect children from potential predators.

"Our most fundamental responsibility as a society is to protect our children from those who would do them harm," Mr. Hawkes said.

"The OPP will continue to aggressively identify and pursue individuals who use technology to exploit children. These investigations highlight to many OPP, municipal and First Nations officers who are working diligently to keep our children safe."