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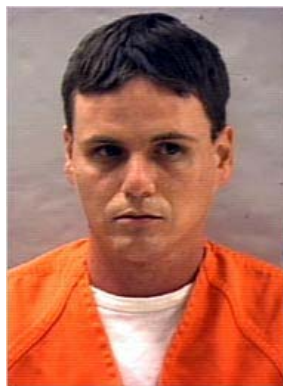
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# Posing as a Family, Sex Offenders Stun a Town

By JENNIFER STEINHAUER  
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## Correction Appended

EL MIRAGE, Ariz., Jan. 31 — To neighbors, Casey Price was a seventh grader with acne and a baseball cap who lived an unremarkable life among a bevy of male relatives.



Yavapai County Sheriff  
Neil H. Rodreck II

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Laura Segall for The New York Times  
Lori Morgan, a teacher in Chino Valley, Ariz., had Neil H. Rodreck II in her class for one day this month.

He built the occasional skateboard ramp and did wheelies on his bicycle down the streets of this subdivision of stucco homes north of Phoenix.

In nearby Surprise, where Casey was enrolled as a 12-year-old in a public school for four months, he was regarded as a shy, average student with chronic attendance problems. A man identified as his uncle had registered him, attended curriculum night and e-mailed his teachers about homework assignments.

Now Casey is in jail, and his former neighbors and classmates have learned the unthinkable: Not only is Casey not Casey — his real name is Neil H. Rodreck II — but he is also a 29-year-old convicted sex offender who kept a youthful appearance with the aid of razors and makeup.

And the men known as his uncle, grandfather and cousin, who until recently shared a three-bedroom house with him here, were not family at all, but a web of convicted sex offenders and predators, law enforcement officials say, preying in part on one another.

A retracing of Mr. Rodreck's tracks over the past several years shows that he is under investigation in three states. The authorities in four jurisdictions say he repeatedly failed to register as a sex offender, housed a large cache of child pornography in his computer and, based on videos found by the police, had sex with at least one boy.

"Obviously there are a lot of emotions to work through," said Mindy Newlin, the mother of a kindergartener at Imagine Charter School, the school in Surprise where Mr. Rodreck posed as Casey. "We are just shocked."

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of the classroom," she said. "She said he looked like he had been held back."

Janet R. Lincoln, the public defender for Yavapai County, who represents Mr. Rodreick and the other three men, did not return multiple phone calls. A receptionist in her office said Ms. Lincoln would have no comment. The men have been indicted on numerous counts and are scheduled to appear in court in late February; they have already pleaded not guilty to charges of fraud and failing to register as sex offenders.

Mr. Rodreick spent seven years in prison in Oklahoma for making lewd and indecent proposals to two 6-year-old boys. After being released in 2002, law enforcement officials said, he was able to convince Lonnie Stiffler, 61, and Robert J. Snow, 43, who had been trolling the Internet for boys, that he was a minor.

In 2005, he talked the two men into taking him from Oklahoma to live with them in [Arizona](#), where Mr. Stiffler posed as Mr. Rodreick's grandfather and Mr. Snow as his uncle, and both men regularly had sex with him, the authorities said. Another man living in the house, Brian Nellis, 34, a sex offender Mr. Rodreick had met in prison, is believed to have aided Mr. Rodreick in the ruse, the authorities said.

Mr. Rodreick continued the charade as a minor for nearly two years, the authorities said, registering at four charter schools in Arizona, until this month, when school administrators in Chino Valley called the sheriff.

The police and school officials in each location where "Casey" enrolled said they knew of no children harmed, although the indictment against Mr. Rodreick includes an assault count. The authorities are trying to determine, with the help of videos confiscated from the men, if there were victims in the schools.

"With boys it is a really tough deal," said Lt. Van Gillock of the Police Department in El Reno, Okla., where Mr. Rodreick is believed to have posed as a 12-year-old to ingratiate himself with boys at church. "If they did it voluntarily, they have the stigma of homosexuality, and if it is forced, well, boys are supposed to be tough and the things the boys have on them gives them an embarrassment factor."

Though many parents have publicly praised the Surprise school's handling of the deception, Mr. Rodreick's enrollment has raised questions about admissions procedures, which officials at Imagine, one of the state's largest charter schools, said they were reviewing. Arizona, the nation's fastest-growing state, is a leader in charter school enrollment, with more than 450 schools that account for 8 percent of the state's total student body.

"He probably thought that a charter school was easier," said Candace Foth, another parent in Surprise. "It is not really difficult to enroll."

Mr. Rodreick's time in Arizona was the latest episode in a life speckled with disappointment, crimes and estrangement, according to relatives and law enforcement officials.

When he was growing up in Oklahoma, he was sexually abused by neighbors, said his mother's sister, Jan Bautista, with whom he lived briefly after his release from prison in 2002.

*Cheryl Camp contributed reporting from Kingfisher, Okla., and Alain Delaquerière from New York.*

**Correction: February 3, 2007**

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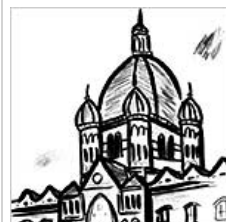
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