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UNDERWORLD: BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE NCA

EPISODE 2. RAP SHEET FROM HELL

NARRATOR [00:00:00] This episode contains descriptions of child sexual offences that you may find upsetting. Please check the podcast notes for more information and guidance on how to seek help and advice.

KIRSTY LOWE [00:00:14] Matthew Falder is one of the most sadistic offenders that I have come across for the level of depravity in terms of what he wanted his victims to do. He epitomises to me the film villain. The film nasty, but he's real.

MATT SUTTON [00:00:30] We were pretty sure he was in the UK. And pretty sure he was male. And at the time there were 32 million males above the age of 18 in the UK.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:00:40] It was the most serious, most complex case that I encountered of its kind. And the sentence that he received was an indication of how seriously the court viewed the case.

KIRSTY LOWE [00:00:53] At university, his family, his friends, his girlfriend didn't know what he was doing. Then no wonder he could convince the victims.

SCOTT CRABB [00:01:02] There had never been anything like this. I don't think from an investigative standpoint that we'd ever seen. I'd never seen anything like it. And to be honest, I continue to oversee investigations of this nature, and I haven't seen anything quite like it since.

MATTHEW LONG [00:01:16] I dealt with a number of the most dangerous paedophile, murderers in the UK. I dealt with a number of organised crime groups and child abuse. So this was the one where genuinely I saw the darkest moments of humanity in my career and I honestly haven't seen it since. And I never want to see again.

ELLIE FLYNN [00:01:40] This is the story of a four year investigation into one of the most prolific and depraved sex offenders in British history. A worldwide search led by the National Crime Agency until Matthew Falder, a Cambridge graduate, who had a dark,

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secret life online, was eventually brought to justice and sentenced to serve 25 years, for 137 offences.

I'm Ellie Flynn and this is Underworld: Behind the Scenes of the NCA.

This podcast series unearths the murky world of dangerous criminals across the UK and the incredible work undertaken by the National Crime Agency to bring them to justice.

Episode Two. Rap Sheet from Hell.

The phrase The Dark Web first emerged in print in a 2009 newspaper article describing how criminals were exploiting the TOR network. TOR is an acronym for the Onion Router, the software that powers a hidden side of the Internet, encrypting web traffic and making it difficult to trace where it's come from. In the autumn of 2013, American agents had their eyes on two websites on the Dark Web, which allowed sexual predators to target children. They alerted their colleagues in the UK.

MATT SUTTON [00:02:59] 02:08 The first signal was reporting from FBI in relation to the takedown of a website hosted on the Dark Web called *Hurt to the Core*. And this had been taken down and an individual on there was identified as likely to be coming from the UK. And that individual went by the moniker of *In the garden*.

NARRATOR [00:03:19] This is Matt Sutton. He was the senior investigating officer who led an NCA operation to uncover the offender. At that stage, all they knew was that an individual was sharing material on *Hurt to the Core* in which he encouraged victims to share images of extreme self-abuse online. Although this episode provides details of some of the offences, there are many elements of Matthew Falder's offending that are too dark to share. Kirsty Lowe is a clinical and forensic psychologist. The NCA instructed her to provide a written report that assessed Falder's offending and the impact of his crimes on his victims.

KIRSTY LOWE [00:03:55] 03:06 There was a man called Matthew Graham, which he's quite well known within the online sexual offending world. He was an Australian. He then decided that there should be a place for people that wanted to hurt children. So he decided to call that *Hurt to the Core*. So he had *Love to the Core* then he set up *Hurt to the Core*.

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And he actually said, I don't want *Hurt to the Core* to be for your normal paedophile. I want *Hurt to the Core* to be something different. This is for a different type of offender. This is for the people that want to actually see the pain, observe the pain that's been perpetrated on these youngsters. He had what he called the Producers Lounge, and there were 16 members, and these were people who kind of earned the place by not only being collectors of online pornography, but they're also creators and distributors of the child pornography. So Matthew Falder got some of the girls to hold up *For Lux — L.u.x, For Lux* on their bodies, like hold up signs. *Lux* was the username of Matthew Graham, the Australian. So, it was very clear that Matthew Falder seemed to be saying for like, yeah, I want to impress. Because he talked about, *I hope to help people out with forming new ideas for how to go about blackmailing their own victims.*

NARRATOR [00:05:12]

In 2015, the NCA was alerted to another dark web domain that set alarm bells ringing and triggered the start of Operation Cacam, with Matt in charge. That site, on the Dark Web, was called *Scream Bitch*, with similar users, material and abuse as *Hurt to the Core*.

MATT SUTTON [00:05:29] 34] An individual was advertising under the name *Evil Mind* that they were going to abuse their daughter and they were looking for ideas on how to abuse their daughter. The avatar was that of a small child between five and seven years old, with, holding a sign *I love SB*, which is I love *Scream Bitch*, with that particular date. So the investigation commenced to try and identify that female child to safeguard the female child - that's how it restarted. Trying our best to try and see that we'll keep them from harm.

As we were investigating, a number of victims had reported to forces and these victims all had a similar relationship with each other in the sense that there was a commonality to the emails that were speaking to them, that were coercing them to provide images and that's how we identified that he was searching Gumtree, which is the online marketplace. Very innocent. And on that marketplace he would look for adverts from usually young children, male or female, who were looking for a little bit of cash. So it might be dog walking. Babysitting. Anything like that. And he would then reach out under the guise of a female. And the first thing he would do, he would pull them off the Gumtree servers and directly speak to them outside of Gumtree. And we were able to identify those emails.

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He was advertising that he was an artist, by the name of Liz, one of his most common ones, and *she* was a depressed person who liked to draw in chalk and pencil and wanted to draw people. And like to draw people and she was asking for them to send her images of them, for her to sketch later, and she promised that nobody would see it. She would just have a half shot of the body and would offer two, three, four hundred pounds for these pictures, which to a twelve, thirteen year-old child is tempting. Better than any babysitting job they'll ever get for a quick photograph. So they would send. And then once the picture has been sent to them, there then follows a coercion.

NARRATOR [00:07:42] That coercion followed a well-rehearsed grooming routine, a script that the offender *In the Garden* used over and over again.

KIRSTY LOWE [00:07:50] :01] No, I'm not Liz, this this poor, depressed female. I'm your worst nightmare. I'm going to destroy you unless you do what I say. They suck these children in by... They find out information about them... find out what school they go to, they find out weaknesses. The person is like very vulnerable, wants somebody to talk to, somebody who's nice to them. Along comes Falder. *You know I'm going to... I'm really interested in you and I want to find out more about you. And isn't your life hard?* You can just imagine all of this conversation going on, all the while they're just getting more and more information that they're just going to then use.

MATT SUTTON [00:08:26] 43] You can do two things. You can either send me more images as I asked or I will send these to your family, to your friends, to your school. I'm sure you won't want that. If you don't if you don't do this in 48 hours, I'll just send them anyway. And that young child would then feel pressure and coerced to send the next image and the next image. And they can't get out of it. And the images got worse and worse and they were degrading images, degrading to a child, to tell them to go lick a toilet bowl or to write horrible words on their thighs or whatever it might be, just really horrible.

MATTHEW LONG [00:09:10] This investigation was in the dark web and also this was an investigation that at the time we didn't know was an extremely intelligent and clever and able to avoid detection. So in terms of the things we used, we had a global effort where we had to break encryption. We had to look at psychological profiling. We had to come together as a team using all those tools to actually find this individual. So it was a challenge, both of mind and technology.

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NARRATOR [00:09:03] That was Matthew Long. He had overall responsibility for the operation known as Cacam.

NARRATOR [00:09:40] From the outset, the NCA forged a close working relationship with a team from the US Department of Homeland Security, including Special Agent Scott Crabb.

SCOTT CRABB [00:09:49] It was around, I think, July of 2016 and they'd come over to the embassy at the time and asked for some help and support and we had a couple of US victims identified in the case. So, so we got pretty intricately involved. My agency, Homeland Security Investigations, we conduct a lot of these types of investigations. And so child exploitation and victim based crimes are a priority for the agency. Our diplomatic relations with the UK, we decided we could provide some support.

NARRATOR [00:10:20] Despite all the analysis, the suspect known as *In the Garden* couldn't be identified. Meanwhile, he continued to approach potential victims using the same methods of coercion and blackmail.

MATT SUTTON [00:10:32] 52] The offender remained anonymous by using free email addresses and use of the *Onion Router*, or *TOR* to access and communicate. So therefore, it was untraceable. But the victims, again, very few, not many of them came forward to the police. The two or three ones that did at the beginning, they were unrewarded because the police could not identify who it was. The Police even went to the point of using cease and desist emails to the individual to try and get him to stop because they couldn't find him.

MATTHEW LONG [00:11:34] It was multilayered encryption, to be clear. So I mean, we had the encryption where he was in hidden services or *The Onion Router* as it was at the time. We also then had the layer of encryption that he applied over the top of that himself. And then we also had like what I class as human encryption. So, what he was also doing is a number of steps to safeguard himself so he would actually advise others on how not to get caught. So there was some of those things like, for example, don't do this in an image. Or, don't do this in a particular way. So you had like three layers all coming together. In one case.

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NARRATOR [00:12:09] The Operation CACAM team worked around the clock trying to locate and uncover the depressed female artist who called herself, Liz. Front of mind at all times was protecting, safeguarding and supporting the victims.

KIRSTY LOWE [00:12:22] The victims that he picked and the victims that people tend to pick when it comes to females or youngsters. Usually they have a pattern already of vulnerability that makes them very attractive to the people that want to exploit them. So on top of the trauma that they've already suffered or the difficulties they've already had in their lives, along comes a person to put more and more on top of it.

NARRATOR [00:12:57] By now, the NCA was leading a taskforce that included the US Department of Homeland Security, the Australian Federal Police and Europol, plus other international partners.

MATT SUTTON [00:13:08] We found other victims also contacted by our subject. I then set up a separate team just to manage the engagement with identification of engagement with all those victims. There were over 200 victims. We contacted some very fragile individuals, you know, not just from Gumtree, from other places as well. There was an anorexia nervosa site,... there were other contacts in other countries. He didn't just prowl in the UK. Wherever you could get a victim, who could respond to him, and then he blackmails them to do awful things.

NARRATOR [00:13:40] The NCA provided support throughout for its officers. Working tirelessly, long term on a case like this inevitably took its toll.

MATTHEW LONG [00:13:48 So we are here to protect children worldwide, wherever, wherever they are, and that's what we do. But when you're sitting watching a video of the darkest, the most depraved thing you've ever seen, that takes a toll on those officers. My job, of course, if you're sitting at the top of that investigation, is to make sure they're safe. So it is tough. So it's about making sure that they have what they need. And that ultimately, sometimes it's about intervening and making sure they're safe. I remember in this investigation, walking through the office one day and just out of the corner of my eye, I just caught someone I could just see a little tear in their eye. And it was just that moment, just that one second where I thought, you and I need to sit down. And, you know, we had a

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really good chat. They weren't okay, you know. But then what we did is wrap what we do around them to make sure that they were safe ... and they were back on the investigation. And I was really proud. They're actually with me at court at the end of the investigation.

MATT SUTTON [00:14:42] :04] We were pretty sure he was in the UK and pretty sure he was male. And at the time there were 32 million males above the age of 18 in the UK. But there was that many people you got to whittle it down to try to find ways and narrow that picture down. With my team working tirelessly to try with all the information from the forces we're getting from these victims that had come forward. Is there anything we can patch together? Is there any language we can use? Is there any wording that he may have used that would give him away? All that stuff.

MATTHEW LONG [00:15:13] This was a very intelligent man who was hiding in some way in plain sight, and ultimately he was using technology and using his intellect to master that technology. So we had to fight technology with technology.

NARRATOR [00:15:23] Victims were coming forward to local police, but still, the suspect evaded capture. Early on in the investigation, the NCA worked closely with the Crown Prosecution Service and their senior specialist prosecutor Ruona Iguyovwe. Finding and stopping the offender was one thing, but officers also needed to be mindful of gathering evidence for an eventual successful prosecution.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:15:45] Falder had been targeting victims on the worldwide internet. The work that I did was providing advice to them. There was a long running undercover operation, but my role was to advise them on the sensitive techniques that they were using, the legal and the evidential implications of those techniques and how those techniques could be protected whilst deploying evidence from those investigations. Very distressing because a lot of what we were witnessing, the evidence of what was happening to the victims involved victims being blackmailed. A lot of victims had been controlled by Falder for a considerable period. One of them was nearly a year, another one was over a year. And because he was not identified for so long, it emboldened him. And so he became increasingly depraved in his activities towards the victims.

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NARRATOR [00:16:44] 17:48] The NCA used all of the tools and tradecraft at their disposal including language analysis, behavioural science and the deployment of undercover officers and tech experts, working online to crack the layers of encryption.

MATT SUTTON [00:16:56] They would look to try and pull the, the individual off into a site that where he could be identified as well as with my international partners, so with Homeland Security Investigations, there was a lot of work with them with the HERO program in relation to trying to do research onto IP identification resolution. The HERO program is something they set up for ex-returning military to become more technical. So you had that. They were working for us as well. Plus our own intelligence partners trying to help and trying to find ways to identify somebody who chose through discipline and technique and capability to remain anonymous online.

NARRATOR [00:17:34] It was relentless work, a four year search that took the team down endless rabbit holes without DNA or fingerprints and battling technology that was created to provide total anonymity.

MATT SUTTON [00:17:46] 18:47] You try your hardest. You hope that someday he may make a mistake. And that mistake could come from a number of ways as well as it could be also interaction with undercover officers both from us, UK and abroad. What we would call a true IP so the real IP of somebody's address. So it might be at home, for example, or your mobile phone. Rather than being spun, you know, in a web of *TOR*.

ELLIE [00:18:12] And then finally, at the end of March 2017, came the credible lead they'd been waiting for. Covert work provided an address that investigators believed to be of interest. For the first time, the team had a real suspect with a name and a face – Matthew Falder.

MATT SUTTON [00:18:18] I'm rushing to try and pull a number of things together. One was identify that it was him, that he was the offender, establish that I had the evidence at the time. I didn't want to arrest him and then bail him or release him under investigation and allow him to offend continuously. I needed to make sure that the Crown Prosecution Service were prepared to charge on arrest, which is quite a big feat, especially when on a long running case. And also, I need to make sure that while I'm investigating and trying to get the evidence and get access to devices that he may have, which may be heavily

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encrypted, he didn't offend or if he did offend, I'm able to mitigate the offending. So that required us watching him closely online and physically for a period of nearly three months till I was in a position where I think if we arrest him now, I'll be able to get the evidence I need to support charges by the CPS.

SCOTT CRABB [00:19:24] I think when we started communicating with him real time through a victim account, but when we started providing that information, we could tell that things were progressing along pretty, pretty well. We started getting some information about surveillance and locations, and I think at that point we knew and that was probably around 2018, 2019, I don't recall exactly when, but myself and the agent who was assigned the case, we were noticing there was an uptick in activity and we felt like we were pretty close to getting him at that point.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:20:02] Falder regularly boasted to his victims, that he was untouchable. He used many false identities online and that made it all the more difficult. But the work that the National Crime Agency investigators did with our international partners in the US and other countries enabled them to infiltrate that Dark Web and to break through the layers of encrypted communication.

ELLIE [00:20:24] Timing was critical. If they went too soon, the NCA risked the possibility that the suspect could destroy any evidence of his crimes.

MATT SUTTON [00:20:34 :34] You're racing, you're worried about what he might be doing online and you don't see everything online, but you come to a point where, yes, let's go for a chance to try and arrest him, get access to his... the material that's contained within the devices that we thought he was using and then making sure we get those devices.

ELLIE [00:20:51] When it came to profiling, the man that was identified was not what they expected to find.

MATT SUTTON [00:20:55] Very surprised. So Matthew Falder was a 28 year old individual, come from a well-to-do family in the north of England, was a Cambridge alumni first at Cambridge for geography. Completely clean skin, in the sense that he had no previous offending, and seemed to come from a lovely home and very surprised, and it just seemed very out of character. Not what you expect at all really.

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KIRSTY LOWE [00:21:25] A lot of offenders we can now look, we can do studies over time and we can look at them, how they might do...They've been in prison, so they've had particular assessments done when they've been convicted. So you get a better handle on 'this type of person has these type of characteristics'. Technology, assisted sexual violence, because it's so new, people who might not have committed the offending in person are now doing the same sexual offending, but using Internet as a mode of doing it. So you can draw on some of those psychological theories to help understand the person that is very interested in child pornography, but we didn't seem to have that same pattern within Matthew Falder.

MATT SUTTON [00:22:03] There hadn't been up to that point, there hadn't really been much research in online offending. Since Matthew Falder there have been others, who have come to prominence. So what they look like is not what you normally expect a child sex offender, but then it wasn't the offending that that was what made him tick. What made him tick was being able to control somebody else. And it was having that ultimate control to do anything, make them do anything, anything, including abusing their own children, which is what he was convicted of, one of the offences... to make somebody do that was his power trip.

NARRATOR [00:22:41] 23: They began a surveillance operation to monitor Matthew Falder, watching his every move as he went about his professional life — all the time, waiting for the right moment to effect an arrest without compromising his devices and potential evidence.

MATT SUTTON [00:22:54] I believed that there was an opportunity for me to arrest him and gain access to his devices and the material that would already be on them. I was...I was fairly confident that I could avoid any encryption opportunity.

NARRATOR [00:23:12]] Matthew Falder was arrested at his place of work, his office at the University of Birmingham.

[ARREST FOOTAGE AUDIO]

FALDER [0023:17 So what? So what was it I've done?
What was it I'm supposed to....?

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UNKNOWN ARRESTING OFFICER [00:23:23] The offences that I've arrested you on suspicion of being involved in were blackmail, causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity. Possessing indecent images of children.

FALDER [00:23:34] Sounds like the rap sheet from hell.

UNKNOWN ARRESTING OFFICER [00:23:37] Distributing indecent images of children and causing GBH injuries to a person.

MATT SUTTON [00:23:45] So we had three days to, well up to three days to prove or to get enough evidence to convince the CPS that Matthew Falder was the individual we knew online to be *Evil Mind 4*. *Evil Mind 4* was the last email address that he was using. So that's what we were looking to prove and that he has in possession of the images that we believed he had. Without it, there was nothing. He would have been arrested and he could have had no comment and bailed and walked off and had the devices been encrypted at the time, we would have had nothing.

SCOTT CRABB [00:24:21] There's a different way that the US might collect and maintain and preserve evidence than from the United Kingdom. And we had to do that in a joint nature so that we were able to ensure that he was going to be prosecuted. It was a UK based case. We had violations in the US. We could have that as an option that we always want to keep that in the back pocket in case something happened with the UK case. We could always come back and have a US prosecution, but because there was plenty of evidence and plenty of activity in the UK, we were just in a support role for that. But we always maintained that evidence so that we could provide that in the case.

MATT SUTTON [00:25:04] He had a number of devices in his apartment and there was one old netbook, 12 years old, it was a battered old thing. And that was the device he used. And in that was folders of all the victims he had. Back to 2010, including some voyeurism stuff, where he set cameras up in bathrooms and bedrooms, and stuff.

[AUDIO FROM INTERVIEW FOOTAGE]

INTERVIEW SEQUENCE [00:25:28]

FALDER [No comment.]

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UNKNOWN OFFICER Is there any other email accounts, Matthew, that that you're using at the current time?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER If there are any more email accounts, what are the passwords?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER Have you done that?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER Have you sent pictures of your blackmail victims to the parents?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER ...of the victims, the grandparents...

FALDER [No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER ...the workplace...

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER [00:27:05] ...the schools...

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER ... the images that he provided to you. Have you shared them with anybody else.

FALDER No comment.

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UNKNOWN OFFICER Have you distributed those images to any likeminded individuals on the forums we've discussed previously?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER ... or with any other person?

FALDER No comment

UNKNOWN OFFICER Did you get any sexual gratification from that, or was it a power and control thing Matthew?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER Or was it humiliation?

FALDER No comment.

UNKNOWN OFFICER] You go on to say. And so, you know, I know I'm 100% anonymous. How was that, Matthew?

FALDER No comment.

NARRATOR [00:26:32] 27:42] On day three, he provided two prepared statements, in one admitting that he controlled the *Evil Mind* account. Investigators discovered devices, which contained evidence of *voyeurism* offences committed by Falder dating back to 2009 against thirteen victims at eight locations. Each identified victim was approached and offered safeguarding support. On the 24th of June 2017, Falder was charged with sixteen offences. Two days later, he was charged with a further forty offences, including encouraging or assisting the rape of a child, causing and inciting sexual exploitation and blackmail.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:27:08] When they read out the long list of offences and it was a long list of offences. In the end he pleaded guilty to one hundred and thirty-seven offences and those offences spanned from fraud, blackmail, committing child sex offences online,

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encouraging rape online. And in one case there was a modern slavery offence for the individual in the US that he had required to carry out depraved activities whilst distributing that to members of his online community. So, yes, it was in fact for him, he said it was a *rap sheet from hell*.

MATT SUTTON [00:27:44] So identification and safeguarding are the two primary things we do. So most of it is making sure they are informed. But we continued for quite some time to make sure that they are okay. They've got their support there for them. And when we come knocking it is the first time they've spoken to anybody about it. They may not have reported it. You know, we try and take whatever images we can down, but we can't. We never going to be 100% successful. So but yes, we do try and give them the support they need.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:28:28] I worked very closely with victims through the work of the victims support officers. I made sure that the victims were kept informed. I made sure that they were kept engaged and I made sure that they had the opportunity to give the evidence through special measures. That means for some of the victims pre-recorded interviews which can be played and then that can be used in the course of the proceedings. And importantly, I made sure that the victims' voices were heard through their victim personal statements that they provided. Those victims' personal statement spoke about the effect of Falder's offending on them. And one of the victims came to court and read a personal statement, and that was very moving to hear her account. But the judge took that into account and he noted it in his sentencing remarks, and it was part of that, that helped the judge to fully understand the real impact of this offending on the victims, because there's a tendency for people to think it's online offending. Therefore, it's not so serious. Not the case. Not the case.

NARRATOR [00:28:58] Falder's victims were asked whether they would give evidence in court and 46 agreed in the form of written statements. Three were prepared to give evidence live in court at the sentencing. The following anonymous witness statement has been voiced by an actor.

VICTIM STATEMENT [00:29:15]

Describing how the crime has affected me is one of the hardest things I've had to write. I feel like my whole life is like a duck, calm on the surface, paddling like mad underneath to

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keep up appearances. I don't want anyone to know what happened to me. I feel dirty like I'm used goods. At the time, I refused to go out of the house, refused to wear anything that you could see me in. I dyed my hair and wore lots of makeup. I didn't want to be seen. I didn't want to see myself because I was ashamed of myself, of who I was and what I'd done. No number of showers or changes to my life or baggy clothes could make me feel clean. Eventually, I had to leave the house. You can't stay indoors forever. And it was hard. I wouldn't go out without a big winter coat on because it made me feel hidden, even in the summer. I wouldn't make eye contact with anyone and I wouldn't talk to anyone I didn't know in case they tried to trick me or con me.

MATT SUTTON [00:30:44] 50] The judge made some great comments about the impact of such crimes against people, it is just as impactive on people mentally, as it physically can be. But it just raised awareness of the damage that it can do, which was, hadn't really come to, come to the fore. So that's what this trial lead at, because it was, it put it out there for people to hear.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:31:05] You have to be aware of how the offending has impacted the victims. And it's also difficult for them reliving the experience, that itself is traumatising. And so it's very important that the right people do that. And in this case, we had trained specialist investigators who were accustomed to working with victims of sexual offences who were able to interview them in a sensitive way and to gain their confidence, gain their trust and to get the evidence from them and get the best from them throughout the process.

NARRATOR [00:31:46] In his sentencing remarks, Judge Philip Parker QC noted that one of Falder's tutors said he was one of the finest students he had ever supervised. He added, "As for your equally extraordinary sexual offending, no one who knew you above ground had an inkling of what you were doing below the surface." He described Falder's behaviour as cunning, persistent, manipulative and cruel.

RUONA IGUYOVWE [00:31:59] And he only pleaded guilty, I would say, because the prosecution had worked together with investigators to build a very strong case for the victims, the sense that they no longer had to be in fear because for many years they lived their lives not knowing the identity of the offender and the perpetrator. And so everybody was potentially a suspect as far as they were concerned. And one victim spoke of the

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impact of his actions on her, so much so that when she walked the streets and she was recognised, she thought that she had been recognised by somebody who had seen her image online. And so for individuals like that, having the identity of their perpetrator established through the courts was hugely satisfying.

NARRATOR [00:32:45] Operation CACAM had a profound impact on everyone who worked on the case and it changed the way police and the NCA tackle abuse online.

MATTHEW LONG [00:32:53] In probably every part of the law enforcement rulebook, we helped something. I mean, I remember, so if you look through things like the SIO's handbook, you've got all these different sort of chapters, and there wasn't a chapter in that book that we didn't actually have a reflection on as a result of this case. And we didn't just help the victims of this case. We helped victims of child abuse going forward through this. And that's one of the things sometimes, you know, I find the word legacy sometimes a bit trite. But actually in this particular investigation, this was a legacy, and is a legacy. And it's a legacy because some of those things we've learned are still being used today.

NARRATOR [00:33:38] For the NCA and other agencies. the threat and the work continues.

MATTHEW LONG [00:33:43] This case shows you one thing about brave victims where they step forward. I always think about every single person in society. And if you see something that feels wrong or looks wrong, do something about it. I think this is one of those cases where many, many people took a step forward and did something about it. And I think the second piece is that many people out there are parents. Many people are in professional roles, and there's a wealth of influence, a wealth of information out there, sorry, where people can actually use that and learn how to protect their children and how to report it, because preventing child abuse is a team game.

NARRATOR [00:34:02] Lorna Sinclair manages the Child Exploitation and Online Protection education team at the NCA.

LORNA SINCLAIR [00:34:23] I think the big key message that underpins a lot of what we do is having those regular ongoing conversations with your children. This should be part of family life. Having these little conversations. Not a big sit down...we need a talk, but just

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little chats through regular family time to understand a balanced view of being online. So it's talking about what's really great about being online and the opportunities it affords you, but then also learning together, learning with your child about different apps and platforms together as they discover them.

MATT SUTTON [00:35:00] Whatever you put online stays online. People need to understand that so whatever image you think you're sending, it will stay online forever. It's hard to... never get it off. Predators like Matthew Falder are hunting in the clear web, in forums, in groups, in kids groups, in conversation groups, are hunting for people to try and coerce, to either meet or to obtain images from. So the dark web is where those individuals then go to share those images and their experiences. The open web is a great place, but it's also a place that people need to be aware of the surroundings and who they speak to.

LORNA SINCLAIR [00:35:39] 52] I think it's good for us to say to them, yeah, you probably do know a lot more than me about how these apps work. Why don't you show me? But the bit that they don't know yet, because they're children and young people that are still developing is the relationships bit. And the fact that we have to understand is that young people are living their lives online, their relationships, their social lives connecting. It's not just like a game. It is their life online. So those skills that we need to teach them in person about how to manage relationships and emotions, all those things are also happening online and that's where they don't know it all. And we really need to support them.

MATTHEW LONG [00:36:19] We as an organisation challenged ourselves in a way we've never challenged ourselves before and we used techniques that we never used before. But one really important thing about this investigation is there was never, ever a sense that people weren't in the team when you walk through the door. The thing I always got asked was, how can we help? And that was always what I got asked. So I remember being at events, for example, at Europol, where other enforcement agencies would come along and say, Look, we've just come up with something else we think might help in the Falder case. It was one of those things where it was a genuine, wicked problem.

KIRSTY LOWE [00:37:14] I distinctly remember turning over a page and reading one of his fantasies that he shared with people online, and even to me it was like that took my

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breath away. It's like thinking this is a different level even for me. And I've heard a lot of things. He was selling these ideas to people out there to say, you know, wouldn't it be interesting if you just did this? And I'm holding back in some... on some of the things in what I would say about some of the fantasies that he was sharing. Vile, vile. I don't know how to say how vile it was. Some of the things that he wanted to be done to young children.

LORNA SINCLAIR [00:37:57] Offenders will look to meet children, young people in the places that they spend time online. You know, the same as pre-online technology. Offenders would seek out children in the places they hang out in person, you know, youth groups and playgrounds and things like that. It's absolutely the same online. They want to know where young people hang out online and they will go there. And then what often offenders try and do is move to encrypted spaces or private chats. And that's one thing we can teach young people to be worried about, not only friend requests or conversations with people online that you don't know in person, but also that other red flag of trying to move you to another platform to have a private conversation.

MATTHEW LONG [00:38:42] You often get asked, is this the worst you've seen? And, you know, my measure was I dealt with a number of the most dangerous paedophile, murderers in the UK. I dealt with a number of organised crime groups and child abuse. So when you asked me that question, but this was the one where genuinely I saw the darkest moments of humanity in my career and I honestly haven't seen it since and I never want to see again.

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