

The two ringleaders of Scotland's biggest paedophile network led sordid double lives.

Report by Sky News:

6:03pm UK, Thursday May 07, 2009

Ringleaders James Rennie and Neil Strachan had respectable jobs

On the surface, Neil Strachan and James Rennie held down good jobs and were trusted members of the community. But the pair, both from Edinburgh, had a shared interest in young boys and had collected some of the worst child abuse images ever seen by police experts. They were also responsible for the abuse of very young children - one as young as three months old. Strachan, 41, also hid a dark past, in which he was jailed for three years for molesting a young boy.

Sick gang traded in porn

Rennie, 38, was the successful chief executive of **LGBT Youth Scotland**, an organisation dedicated to helping young gay people. A former secondary school teacher, he regularly spoke out in public on gay issues, particularly how they affected young people. But the High Court in Edinburgh heard he was "polluted by deviant compulsion". Crown QC Dorothy Bain said: "In reality he is someone who allowed his profound interest in the sexual abuse of children to engulf his entire life." The extent of his obsession with under-age sex unfolded as the 10-week trial progressed. He was charged and ultimately convicted of molesting a child over a number of years, starting at the age of three months. And in an online conversation with another accused, he even expressed a wish to see children with **Down's Syndrome** or a learning disability sexually abused. Operation Algebra officers found that Rennie had links with

paedophiles in the US and the Netherlands.

Gang preyed on youngsters

Rennie was traced and arrested by police at the end of 2007. He was suspended from his high-profile post and by February 2008 had resigned.

Strachan was the man who sparked Operation Algebra when indecent images were found on computer equipment used by him in his work.

Tests revealed "sinister" emails between him and Rennie.

They had encountered each other online in 2004 when Strachan congratulated Rennie on the content of his web page on a site known to have been misused by paedophiles.

When the case came to trial, what the jury did not know was that Strachan had offended before.

He was jailed for three years in 1997 for repeatedly molesting a young boy while he was an official at a youth football club.

He started abusing the child when he was five years old and the abuse went on for two years.

Strachan quit his post as secretary of Celtic East Boys Club in Edinburgh after he was caught.

When he was jailed, it emerged that he had also been convicted of a similar sex offence 12 years previously.

Among the charges faced by Strachan in the current trial was an allegation that he committed a serious sexual offence against a toddler at New Year from 2005 into 2006.

But Strachan, despite being one of the worst offenders in the group, was the only one of the eight men on trial who denied every charge against him.

Prosecutors were forced to piece together the case against him bit by bit.

Crucial to their case was a photograph partially showing a man sexually assaulting a young child.

The Crown called on a world-renowned expert in human anatomy to examine the picture, known in court as The Hogmanay Image.

Pinpointing the abuser's physical traits, including a distinctive thumbnail, Professor Susan Black said there was "strong evidence" that Strachan and the man in the picture were the same person.