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## Child-Exploitation, Porn Charges Added to NXIVM Case

*With a little over a month until trial, federal prosecutors leveled new child pornography and exploitation charges against the leader of a purported self-help group-turned-sex-slavery ring.*

[AMANDA OTTAWAY](#) / March 14, 2019



*Jacob Kaplan, center, an attorney for Keith Raniere leaves Federal Court Friday, April 20, 2018, in the Brooklyn borough of New York. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)*

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CN) - With a little over a month until trial, federal prosecutors leveled new [child pornography and exploitation charges](#) against the leader of a purported self-help group-turned-sex-slavery ring.

The explosive allegations against former NXIVM leader Keith Raniere were announced Wednesday evening following the [guilty plea](#) entered that afternoon by former NXIVM co-founder Nancy Salzman.

Prosecutors contend that the cult-like NXIVM (pronounced nexium) housed a secret, smaller group known as DOS, in which women extorted recruits into unpaid labor and into sexual relationships with Raniere. In some cases, the women were even branded with Raniere's initials.

A pretrial memorandum filed Tuesday by the government accuses Raniere of having sexual relationships with two underage girls. One allegedly became Raniere's first-line "slave" in DOS a decade after she was hired at age 15 to work for Salzman, the NXIVM president.

Ranieri also allegedly coerced a minor to “engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing one or more visual depictions of such conduct,” Wednesday’s superseding indictment states.

A conviction on a child-exploitation charge carries a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison.

Ranieri’s lawyer, Marc Agnifilo, did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday morning but vehemently denied the charges in a statement Wednesday evening.

“These eleventh hour charges three weeks before the trial begins serve only to taint the jury panel,” he told [NBC News](#). “Had they been legitimate, the government would have brought these charges a year ago.”

Prosecutors claim to have images of the victim, as well as communications between the girl and Ranieri, going back years.

As to the second victim, prosecutors wrote in the memo that their “evidence demonstrates how members and associates of the enterprise were directed and expected to recruit and groom sexual partners for [Ranieri].”

They say they will bring witness testimony.

Other defendants in the case “were aware of and facilitated Ranieri’s sexual relationships with [the] two underage victims,” prosecutors said. Ranieri’s co-defendants include actress Allison Mack and Seagram’s liquor heiress Clare Bronfman. Lauren Salzman, the daughter of the NXIVM president, also faces charges that she served as a slave master in the DOS group, bringing recruits to Ranieri. Co-defendant Kathy Russell is said to have maintained the organization’s books.

The new superseding indictment includes four additional racketeering acts related to the new charges: two alleging sexual exploitation of a child, one alleging possession of child pornography, and one alleging visa fraud.

The grand jury also added two counts of sexual exploitation of a child and one count of possession of child pornography, and made small changes to other charges.

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