

CHARACTERISTICS OF A FICTITIOUS CHILD VICTIM: TURNING A SEX OFFENDER'S DREAMS INTO HIS WORST NIGHTMARE

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ABSTRACT

There have been more criminal offenses involving the possession, manufacture and distribution of child pornography in the past decade than at any time in history. Sex offenders have exploited the ease of using home computers, peripheral devices and the Internet; computers and the Internet are now recognized means by which sex offenders can seek out and lure child victims. The Internet has afforded sex offenders contact with child victims whom they otherwise would not be able to access. Law enforcement has responded to the public outcry for greater law enforcement presence and intervention on the Internet, recognizing the threat this new technology poses to children.

Both the United States Congress and many individual states have responded by enacting new statutes and modifying old laws to deal with this relatively new and growing danger. Law enforcement has in turn increased its undercover presence on the Internet, while also developing innovative procedures and techniques to detect and successfully prosecute online offenders.

The goals of this article are twofold: first, to present a depiction of the "perfect victim" using research and the author's own experience; and, second, to suggest methods by which law enforcement personnel can more effectively apprehend child sex offenders on the Web.

I. INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement has increasingly turned to undercover operations in order to combat the growing threat of sex offenders targeting children online. An undercover persona can be more productive if it incorporates the cognitive distortions to which sex offenders are subject. Basing the persona on a sex offender's "fantasy victim," as opposed to attempting to portray an actual child, exploits the sex offender's distorted thinking patterns. Preferential-type sex offenders* (Lanning, 2001) are recognized as typically having a disorder (pedophilia, hebephilia, ephebophilia, etc.), which is fantasy-fueled. In other words, these offenders are described as having a primary sexual focus on children as compared to situational-type sex offenders, for whom the child is a sexual substitute. The fantasies of preferential-type offenders are usually based on cognitive distortions. Cognitive distortions are thinking errors, a way in which an offender gives himself permission to think or act in an otherwise socially unacceptable manner. Defense mechanisms also play a role in how offenders reconcile their cognitive distortions with the way the rest of society views their behaviors and beliefs. The most common defense mechanisms are rationalization, intellectualization and projection. Persons with normal (legal) sexual urges may have healthy sexual fantasies, some of which are not typically

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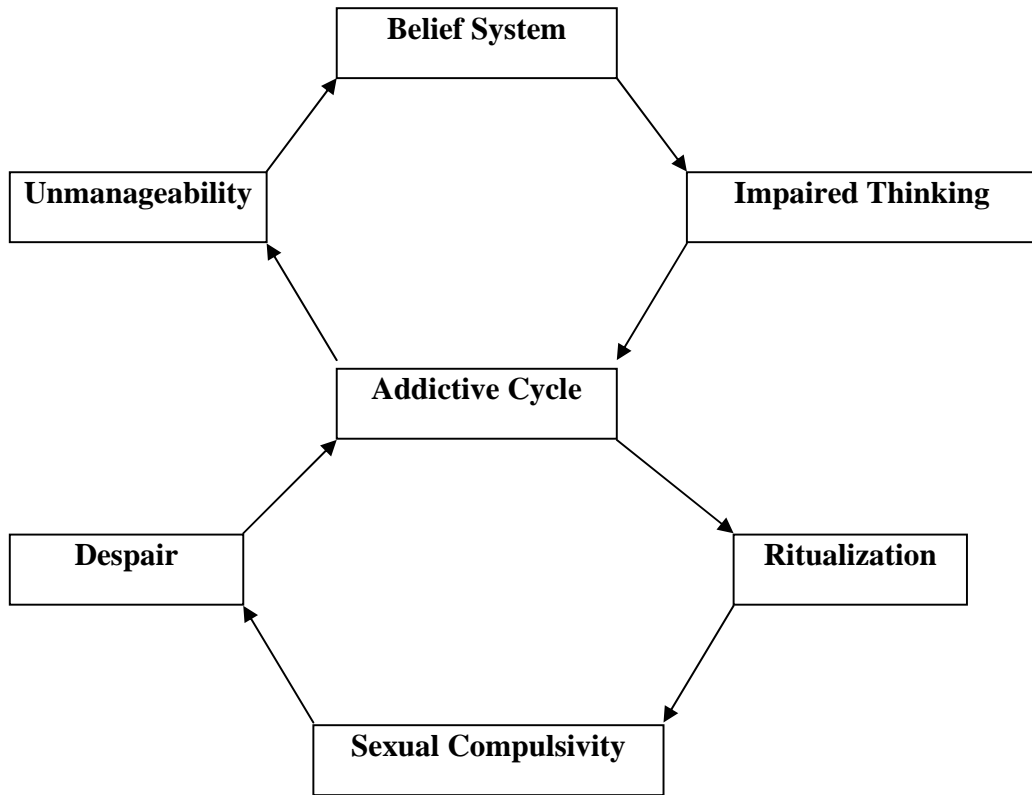
actualized. At the same time, those with abnormal (illegal) sexual urges may also have sexual fantasies, some of which are also never actualized.

Sexual fantasies typically surpass reality. Many preferential sex offenders report that they are as aroused by the ritual during the seduction of the child, as they are during the actual sexual contact. The sexual contact with a child typically does not approximate the offender's deviant sexual fantasy, but their belief they are in "love" with their victim is a common cognitive distortion exhibited by offenders. Many offenders do not accurately encode the reality of the sexual contact with their actual victim(s), since it conflicts with what they fantasized the experience would be. Consequently, the seduction and fantasies are as sexually arousing as the actual sex. Thus, an investigator who presents a potential victim that mirrors the cognitive distortions common to sex offenders will be relatively more productive conducting undercover Internet child exploitation cases. Familiarity with how an offender seduces/manipulates his victims, and the way sex offenders give themselves permission to do so, is key to creating a successful fictitious undercover persona (victim).

Carnes (1983) offers an addiction model in which healthy relationships are replaced with a sick relationship (event/process). These "mood-altering experiences" become central to offenders' lives and result in their retreating from family, friends and work. A double life is established, complete with distorted core beliefs. The four stages of the Carnes addiction system are:

1. **Preoccupation:** This involves a trance or mood change with the subject engrossed in sexual thoughts. He searches for sexual stimulation.
2. **Ritualization:** The ritual intensifies the preoccupation, adding arousal and excitement.
3. **Compulsive sexual behavior:** The sexual act is the goal of the ritual and preoccupation. The subject feels he is unable to stop his behavior.
4. **Despair:** The subject experiences utter hopelessness and feelings of powerlessness.

Carnes uses a diagram to outline the “Addictive System” for sex offenders which is as follows:



Recognizing this cycle can assist in establishing a flexible case strategy, since some offenders run “hot and cold” as a case progresses. This becomes evident when sex offenders appear sexually overt in one chat and apologetic in the next. Different offenders go through these changes at varying rates. In fact, while in the despair phase, they might avoid online contact for a few days. Here is an example of an email from an offender, who would send child pornography and erotic photographs of himself and then become apologetic, only to return to the behavior weeks later:

This is a rather difficult email to write but I know that I must do it. I have been doing a lot of thinking and I have concluded that it is wrong for me to be sending you pictures and emails the way I have been. I have never sent anybody as many pictures of myself as I've sent you, particularly not such erotic ones. It is wrong and I never should have done it. I'll admit, I do have feelings for young boys such as you, but I should not be giving in to my feelings and doing something that I know is wrong. I have to make a choice to do what I know is right, not what feels good. If we ever did have sex, I probably wouldn't be able to live with the guilt that would follow anyhow. I know that God wants something different for my life and I should not have let things go this far—God has a plan for my life and, believe it or not, He has a plan for your life too, Brad. The Bible says that we should redeem our time wisely and do things that honor God. What I have been doing with you via email is certainly far from that. And believe me, Brad, sex with another

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male will never make you happy, because like the pictures, it will just leave with a craving for more and more—it will simply get worse if you allow it and you will never be satisfied. After you have your first, you'll want your second, and then you're third, and so on. But Brad, God wants to give you a free gift—He wants you to have eternal life. I know that I have been far from a model Christian up to this point, Brad, but please just think about what I'm saying. God has something better for both of us. I hope that you will still continue to write back. Your Friend, Joe

It is also apparent that once some offenders ejaculate, the tone of their chat changes quickly, an observation also noted in a related context by telephone sex operators. A recent study by Quayle and Taylor (2002) found, by interviewing men convicted of child exploitation crimes (n=13), following masturbation they typically stop looking at pornography, shut down their computers, turn to non-sexual computer use and some found themselves averse to their behavior once sexual arousal had been lost. Although the offender may lose temporary interest, the cycle continues upon his return to criminal behavior.

The following chat excerpt is an example of an offender who has already sent illegal child pornographic image files, subsequently turns his computer camera on to allow for real-time video of himself masturbating (to be seen by a person he believes to be a 14-year-old male child), and whose plans to engage in further illegal behavior dampen quickly following ejaculation. This offender had been told in a prior chat that the fictitious child has Polaroid® photographs of himself in the nude. The times were left in to show the quick transitions (breaks in communications are designated by a space) [All chats in this article have been edited, in that chat abbreviations have been removed for better readability.]:

Sex Offender (4:09:03 PM): I would still love to see you naked

Officer (posing as a child) (4:09:12 PM): any time u want i will send you pictures

Sex Offender (4:09:52 PM): can you send them by e-mail?

Officer (posing as a child) (4:10:02 PM): no they are polaroids, remember

Sex Offender (4:10:43 PM): okay but if you send them to me you have to make sure they are wrap well so no one can see them

Officer (posing as a child) (4:10:58 PM): hey I don't want anyone to see me nude, except you

Sex Offender (4:11:19 PM): cool

Sex Offender (4:11:47 PM): if I give you my address promise not to give it out

Officer (posing as a child) (4:12:03 PM): I wont and please keep this just between us ok

Sex Offender (4:12:21 PM): I just want pictures of you for me

Officer (posing as a child) (4:12:26 PM): ok

This exchange demonstrates the strategy of mirroring the suspect's feelings, in this case fear of discovery. Mirroring increases the trust level and the empathic bond with the offender. The implicit goal is to make the suspect feel understood and accepted. This, in turn, supports and is congruent with his cognitive distortions, as can be seen in the following continuation of this exchange:

Officer (posing as a child) (4:21:49 PM): I am hard thinking of you seeing my pictures, is that weird?

Sex Offender (4:22:11 PM): no, I know I will be when I see them

Officer (posing as a child) (4:22:29 PM): ok so what address do I use

Sex Offender (4:24:26 PM): won't your parents be kind of suspicious if you are sending something in the mail

Officer (posing as a child) (4:24:59 PM): I only live with my mom and brother, I get dropped off at the post office everyday after school by the bus, it is my big chore to get the mail everyday

Sex Offender (4:25:29 PM): okay, send it to [gives real name] [gives full address]

Officer (posing as a child) (4:26:41 PM): keep between us ok

Sex Offender (4:26:55 PM): did you get that

Officer (posing as a child) (4:27:15 PM): I trust you

Sex Offender (4:28:13 PM): I will too if you promise not to get me into trouble

Officer (posing as a child) (4:28:29 PM): I would never do that, I don't want anyone to know

Sex Offender (4:28:42 PM): cool, when will you send it?

Officer (posing as a child) (4:32:57 PM): I am going to get one of those envelopes with the clasp thing

Sex Offender (4:32:57 PM): hey I need to go for now maybe next time I will let you see more of me if you want

Sex Offender (4:33:41 PM): if you can use a regular one and wrap them in some notebook paper

Officer (posing as a child) (4:33:50 PM): oh that is a good idea

Officer (posing as a child) (4:34:03 PM): I keep looking at that picture, would be so cool if you did that to me

Sex Offender (4:34:44 PM): oh man you are making me soooooooooooooooooooooo hard

Officer (posing as a child) (4:34:55 PM): really? cool

Sex Offender (4:35:05 PM): next time maybe I will let you see me naked

Officer (posing as a child) (4:35:22 PM): wow awesome

Sex Offender (4:35:53 PM): maybe sometime also we could maybe have some fun on the phone if you are up to it

Officer (posing as a child) (4:36:01 PM): might be

Sex Offender (4:38:28 PM): well I was going to show you something if you want to see it

Officer (posing as a child) (4:38:34 PM): yea!!!

Sex Offender (4:39:04 PM): well I was going to show you my dick

Officer (posing as a child) (4:39:10 PM): oh wow cool

Sex Offender (4:39:17 PM): you ready

Officer (posing as a child) (4:39:22 PM): yea

Officer (posing as a child) (4:39:38 PM): wow u r huge

Sex Offender (4:40:20 PM): do you want me to cum????

Officer (posing as a child) (4:40:24 PM): yea!!!

Sex Offender (4:41:41 PM): did you see it

Officer (posing as a child) (4:41:46 PM): yea awesome

[Post Ejaculation “Post Coital-guilt”]

Sex Offender (4:42:07 PM): well I got to go talk to you later

Officer (posing as a child) (4:42:13 PM): ok thanks

Sex Offender (4:42:39 PM): hey one more thing

Officer (posing as a child) (4:42:43 PM): ok

Sex Offender (4:43:27 PM): don't send those pictures I am afraid of them getting lost I would rather wait until you can send them by email, is that okay?

Officer (posing as a child) (4:43:35 PM): ok

Officer (posing as a child) (4:43:58 PM): when ever you want them is cool. I like us being friends

Sex Offender (4:44:06 PM): bye for now

II. STINKING THINKING: OFFENDERS' COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

Many sex offenders are obsessed with sex. A major part of their day deals with thinking about sex. Carnes (1989) writes, “[j]ust thinking about sex can initiate a trance-like state of arousal that can blot out the current demands of real life.” Finding someone, especially someone you are sexually aroused by, who is also giving sex as much attention as you are is a sex offender’s dream come true. Chou & Hsiao (2000) write how online fantasies become real, for example, when shared with others who have similar beliefs. An offender’s particular cognitive distortion can shape his or her approach to the target.

A. Direct Approach

Many sex offenders spend considerable time on the Internet and see thousands of sexually explicit images of children. They begin to adopt the notion that all children engage in sex acts. These sexualized children appear to be out there somewhere, but for some reason he has not been able to find them. These beliefs become reinforced as the sex offender continues to go to different web sites and chat rooms, in which hundreds of other users interact with one another and share both the same distorted thoughts and child pornography. These sexual images, according to Tate (1990) as cited in Quayle & Taylor (2002), reinforce offenders’ attraction to children and feed the following cognitive distortions:

- If children are interested in sex they want to engage in sex.
- As documented by thousands of child pornographic images, most children are engaging in or at a minimum want to have sex.
- Children are eager to participate in their first sexual experience.
- Children lack sexual knowledge and are thus vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous parties. Therefore, the offender is actually helping the child, and the child needs such help.
- Many children lack anyone in their life from whom to learn about sex.
- Flirting by a child indicates sexual interest/desires.

A young adolescent male or female, who has a thirst for sexual knowledge, presents an alluring target for many sex offenders, and makes an effective fictitious

online persona. Most children are reluctant to ask adults for information about sex. Moore and Rosenthal (1993) recognize parents and schools as important resources for sexual knowledge, though most teens gain their information from peers. Presenting on the Internet as a child who is starved for information about sex creates appeal. Many sex offenders in real-time chat will offer to answer any and all questions children have about sex. Responding to these offenders and feeding into their need to share sexual information is a productive way to start an online "relationship." These relationships will likely culminate in the sex offender taking substantial steps towards the commission of a crime (soliciting sex and/or distributing child pornography) if he is predisposed to do so. To a sex offender, a naïve child is a vulnerable child and an ideal target for grooming.

Lamb (1998) published a typology of pedophiles using chat rooms to engage children. Lamb termed those users who were looking to meet children for sex as "browsers," whom he found to be less common than others exclusively interested in child pornography or cybersex. Lamb found the behavior of "browsers" similar to that of the adolescents whom they were seeking to meet. Lamb also found them less likely to initially engage in overt sexual talk or to give out identifying information.

Quayle and Taylor (2001) interviewed an offender who commented about the difference in his behavior when he was seeking teenaged males for sex, versus when he simply wanted to collect child pornography or to pose as a child to chat with other children. This offender stated that he "was far more aggressive . . . [and] became far more aggressive" when seeking sexual partners. This is consistent with what Deirmenjian (2002) identified with offenders using a "direct sexual model" to seek child victims, identifying the characteristics as: (1) direct approach rather than gradual, (2) sexually explicit chats, (3) exchange of pornographic image files, and (4) the ultimate goal is to meet for sex.

Visiting chat rooms titled for teens interested in sex is a sure way to find offenders attempting to locate and victimize children. Many offenders look at themselves as altruistic persons eager to mentor a child regarding sexual knowledge. In doing so they rationalize that their actions empower children. Thus, making oneself available to the offender on the Internet as a fictitious child and reacting in accordance with his distortions creates a situation where the offender likely will reveal more information about himself. Presenting as a sexually naïve child has two advantages. First, the undercover investigator can avoid graphic discussions of past sexual experiences. Second, sex offenders are attracted to children as innocent, vulnerable and sexually inexperienced "love objects." Groth (1985) reported that offenders describe their ideal child as "innocent, loving, open, affectionate, clean, attractive, and undemanding." Selverstone (1989) identified sexual development as a key area for adolescents to establish identity separate from their family, making them more vulnerable to the grooming techniques of child sex offenders. Erikson (1968) identified gaining adult sexual identity as a central task of teens, which goes toward their gaining self-esteem. Emotional distancing from family, combined with seeking friendships outside the family to avoid loneliness and increase maturity through developing identity are common developmental milestones for teenagers. Thus, teens are more vulnerable to the sexual exploitation of offenders when they are developing their sexual and personal identities.

Sex offenders develop cognitive distortions due to feelings of inadequacies. They are not psychopathic. These thinking errors help bridge the gap between the belief that

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they would never harm a child and their actions. As a result reality is distorted regarding the behavior in which they are engaging.

The following is an example of a “direct sexual model” approach. This adult male was located in a homosexual teen chat room. The subject preceded the following section of chat by distributing numerous child pornographic image files to the fictitious child.

Sex Offender: it's best fresh from the source [offender speaking about ejaculation)

Officer (posing as a child): oh

Sex Offender: although if you wanted to mail me some that would be ok too :)

Officer (posing as a child): really?

Sex Offender: well I was kidding but I would totally dig it if you did!!

Officer (posing as a child): how would I do it

Sex Offender: hmmm, I guess in a baggie or something

Officer (posing as a child): sounds so cool to do, zip lock?

Sex Offender: or on a paper towel and then let it dry first so it would not get so nasty after being in the mail for a few days?

Officer (posing as a child): ok

Sex Offender: there are probably many options, a fed-ex freezer pack would be best :), if u squeeze all the air out before you seal it

Officer (posing as a child): just don't tell anyone

Sex Offender: i would never tell anyone!

Officer (posing as a child): ok what address

Sex Offender: are you serious?

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: oh man, it would be so hot

Officer (posing as a child): I know

Sex Offender: I mean like excellent, awesome, amazing

Officer (posing as a child): ok

Sex Offender: well you would want to send it to (subject gives real name and full address)

The following chat involves an offender with multiple paraphilias. Abel (1988) found offenders typically have more than one sexual deviance, thus a weakness, which can be exploited by law enforcement during undercover contact:

Sex Offender: you must be rubbing in your shorts

Officer (posing as a child): yea i am

Sex Offender: you going to make a mess in them for me?

Officer (posing as a child): I might

Sex Offender: I'd love that, if you don't mind

Officer (posing as a child): ok

Sex Offender: you got gym trunks on, or briefs

Officer (posing as a child): boxers

Sex Offender: if mom's going to find your cummy boxers don't do it, don't want her knowing what her little man is doing, she really does know, but you don't need to prove it to her.....

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: ok, then I'd love it if you came in them...got nice and sticky for me

Officer (posing as a child): you into cummy shorts?

Sex Offender: yes

Officer (posing as a child): you want me to mail those!!!!

Sex Offender: honest?

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: oh wow . . . would u shoot a bunch of loads in them first, not just one

Officer (posing as a child): ok, I can do it now and later tonight

Sex Offender: cool, I'd sniff them while I jacked off, kinky huh?

Officer (posing as a child): wow be so cool to chat with you while you had my boxers and we were chatting

Sex Offender: yea, especially on the phone, man, I'd blow a big load for you

Officer (posing as a child): ok

Sex Offender: You got me boning thinking about it, yea, u definitely got my attention, and I hope I got yours

B. Trust-based Seductions

Deirmenjian (2002) identified a trust-based seduction model used by sex offenders on the Internet. The sex offenders prone to use to this model often suffer the following cognitive distortions:

- When a child doesn't tell, it means they like sex with an adult.
- A child and adult can have an equal sexual relationship.

Generally, a sex offender following this model goes through the following steps: (1) gain the child's attention, (2) gain the child's trust, and (3) seduce the child into sex. (Deirmenjian 2002). In order to gain the trust of their victims, offenders identify themselves as of the same sex as the victim, of the same age group so as to present as a peer, and having similar experiences and interests as the victim. In addition, offenders present themselves as a support system for the child, and "confide" in the child so as to increase the child's self esteem. An offender, especially early on in the relationship, needs to be careful about the child disclosing whom he is chatting with and what he is doing. Certain groundwork and manipulation has to take place. This is usually ritualistic and time-tested for the more experienced sex offenders. Offenders will encourage their victims to be oppositional to parents, encourage alcohol use and other behaviors the child could not engage in while under the direct supervision of parents. This ritual needs to be accomplished if the offender wants to go undetected while meeting his deviant desires. Groups like NAMBLA (North American Man Boy Love Association) try to educate their members about adult-child relationships. The following advice comes from an article titled, "Staying Safe and Happy as a Man/Boy Lover: Guidelines developed by NAMBLA activities for surviving in an insane world" (October, 1991):

Do not rush into sex. Respect the wishes and feelings of your partner. Talk out any anxieties and fears a boy may have. Never push the relationship further than

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is comfortable. For many reasons, including security, we should strive for relationships that are mutual, caring, and ethical.

Advice to a boy in a relationship with a man from the same article:

You have the right to decide whether you and your friend share sex or affection, assuming your friend desires the same. At least part of the man's feelings for you is sexual. But most boy-lovers are happy being your friend without having sex. You can also decide that you like having sex with men without becoming their friend or lover.

One method used by offenders is to make the child feel equal in the relationship. Usually adult-child relationships consist of boundaries, of which the child is well aware. A young adolescent is striving to achieve adulthood and an identity, while acquiring new freedoms and responsibilities. Thus, his parents might be the last to recognize his or her developmental changes and/or needs. Not so with the offender, who feeds into, and encourages, the child in achieving these developmental milestones. It is recognized that children go through stages of sexual development, which include childhood experimentation, and adolescent transitions (Bolton, MacEachron & Morris, 1989), which increases their vulnerability to manipulation. The offender is very willing to meet the child's new desires and identity by interacting with the child and exploiting any vulnerability he detects. The offender will confide in the child as if he or she were a peer, engage in adult conversations (not just sexual), empower the child to make decisions and ask the child for his or her opinion. The child eagerly consumes this adult-like treatment. When a child feels as if he or she is actually being heard and his or her opinions have weight, then trust naturally develops. When the child responds to the offender's directions regarding safeguarding the relationship, the offender can then safely allow himself to move on to his ulterior exploitive goals.

The following is an example of a chat involving an offender, who was concurrently sending child pornography and carrying on a conversation giving instructions about preventing disclosure. Simultaneously, he was chatting with the intended victim about the quality of their relationship:

Officer (posing as a child): I don't want anyone to know about me, except someone like you who understands me.

Sex Offender: That's cool

Officer (posing as a child): I can tell you anything cause we are alike

Sex Offender: You can tell me anything and we are alike. Make sure you empty your "trash bin" so they can't see them in there either.

Officer (posing as a child): Yea, I always do and empty my cache also

Sex Offender: You're a smart boy

Officer (posing as a child): I even defrag

Sex Offender: Even better.

Officer (posing as a child): Thanks

Sex Offender: I REALLY REALLY like you LOTS!

Officer (posing as a child): Thanks!!!! I like you too

Sex Offender: I think it's so cool that we are so much alike.

Officer (posing as a child): and found each other

Sex Offender: Yes. That's the best part. We are kind of like father and son or something

Officer (posing as a child): Yea I like that

Sex Offender: Me too, thanks

The following conversation is with an offender who engaged in numerous chats in which he transmitted child pornography and then became cautious:

Sex Offender: not at all, I am just a little nervous because I am trusting you and that is something I don't do very easily. I pray that you are who you say you are and that I am not being stupid

Officer (posing as a child): you don't trust me?

Sex Offender: no, that is what I am saying, I DO! but I hope I am not being stupid

Officer (posing as a child): I don't want to ruin our friendship by asking stupid stuff

Note: This is an example of how an undercover law enforcement officer may consciously identify with the offender's fear and feelings of inadequacy.

Sex Offender: you are not asking stupid questions

Officer (posing as a child): ok, I just never met anyone as cool as you and don't want to mess it up

Sex Offender: What I am saying is that I am sending you pictures and videos and you could just as easily be a cop. My instincts say otherwise but it is scary, do you know what I am saying?

Officer (posing as a child): I know a lot of guys are imposters for sure, but I am not a cop, hey, I hope your not one either

Sex Offender: Cool. If I were a cop, I wouldn't be sending you a video

Officer (posing as a child): why not

Sex Offender: I don't think cops send jerk off videos, but hell who knows

Officer (posing as a child): I guess they wouldn't do that, your right

Sex Offender: So are my instincts right, I can trust everything you say as true?

Officer (posing as a child): yea, I like you, everything I say is true, this is better than real life, if I told guys at school this stuff, they would freak and I could never go back there

Sex Offender: yea, I remember those days well

Officer (posing as a child): were you freaked about other friends finding out

Sex Offender: very much so and really still am today

C. Adult-Child Friendships

Many offenders truly want to believe the sexual part of the relationship with a child is a very small and insignificant part of the total relationship. Some offenders feel they truly “love” their victims. Many child love groups (plentiful on the Internet) talk about the “total relationship” with a child and how sex is only entered into if both parties do so equally, ignoring the adult-child power/status differential. This type of offender usually believes the following cognitive distortions:

- The offender feels a child can knowingly consent to having sex.
- True friendship with a child usually leads to sexual interaction.

Most offenders use friendship with the child as the platform for manipulation. This results in the child having feelings of loyalty and indebtedness, which is fertile ground for the overt sexual solicitation that follows. Sex offenders fool themselves into feeling they are altruistic towards children and that if the child refuses sex it is all right with them. Yet offenders persist with sexual solicitations and seldom honor an initial refusal/reluctance on the part of the child. For these offenders, “no” means “not right now,” leaving open the possibility of future sexual encounters. Traditionally friendship takes weeks to develop, but over the Internet this time period can be accelerated into a few chat sessions.

Offenders like to collect information from children, then offer how such sharing will enable them to be true friends. The offender offers how their relationship will grow through the trust involved with exchanging personal information. The fictitious victim can use this same ploy to seek equally revealing information from the offender. As counterintuitive as it might be, many offenders give accurate and revealing information, which leads to their eventual identification. The same cognitive distortions that allow sex offenders to seduce children allow them to be identified for arrest.

An offender, showing little caution, sent numerous illegal image files after just a few chats. The offender had been given a fictitious name and address of a child in previous chats. The offender had also been told the fictitious child had taken nude Polaroids© of himself, but had no way to scan them so he was willing to mail them to the offender:

Sex Offender: if I tell you something, promise you won't get mad

Officer (posing as a child): ok

Sex Offender: thru directory assistance I tried to look up your phone # (wouldn't ever call without your permission) but they said they had no number for that name

Officer (posing as a child): my mom has a different last name, her maiden name, probably because she doesn't care for my dad

Sex Offender: would you feel comfortable giving me your number

Officer (posing as a child): what's yours

Sex Offender: you said you trusted me?

Officer (posing as a child): I do

Sex Offender: I promise I won't call

Officer (posing as a child): let's see you ask for my number, then I ask for yours and you ask me about trust

Sex Offender: there is a reason, trust me, you will see

Officer (posing as a child): well you have my name and address and I don't have anything from you

Sex Offender: I know and there is a reason. Can you trust me that far?

Sex Offender: I will explain

Officer (posing as a child): trust me with your phone number first

Sex Offender: I want to trust you with my life but when you consider our age difference and the shit I can get into, I just have to feel absolutely secure with you and I figure if you trust me that far, I can feel better about opening up more, which is what I want to do. I don't want any walls or secrets with you.

Officer (posing as a child): I have to feel safe too, cause you can't know what it is like to like guys and be in my 8th grade class, but here goes, here is my number and you better give me yours too (under cover telephone number given) its not listed, my mom would kill me if she knew I gave it out

Sex Offender: You swear on your mothers life that that is your number

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: Can't tell you how much that means to me. Do you understand why I am so concerned

Officer (posing as a child): so what is your number

Sex Offender: are you going to call me?

Officer (posing as a child): no

Sex Offender: even if I want you to

Officer (posing as a child): not right now

Sex Offender: ok, here goes [subject gives his home telephone number]

Officer (posing as a child): not even going to write it down just wanted you to trust me

Sex Offender: hey, thank you and back at you

Officer (posing as a child): well glad that is over with

Sex Offender: yea, me to

Officer (posing as a child): so explain why we did that

Sex Offender: I haven't made you leery of me have I

Officer (posing as a child): a little, I thought we were cool

Sex Offender: [child user name], we are and I hope we become closer, but I guess I am a chicken shit and soooooo new to all this. You hear so much shit about cops pretending to be young guys and gaining there trust and then bang. I would never hurt you or anyone and I don't deserve having my life ruined like that

Officer (posing as a child): I have tons to loose too

Sex Offender: yea [child user name] and I am sorry. Can we start from here with total trust?

Officer (posing as a child): ok

Sex Offender: promise

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: are you still wanting to send me the Polaroids

Officer (posing as a child): yea, I want to do it

Sex Offender: OK I am going to totally trust you and give you my address.

Officer (posing as a child): thanks

Sex Offender: [suspect gave his full address]

D. Mentorships

Greek historical figures such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are often used as examples of mentor relationships that benefited the child and included sexual interaction of mentor/teacher and pupil. This fact is often used for rationalization of behavior when trying to justify sexual involvement with a child. An example would include Dodd as cited by Hubbard (2000) in a publication called *Greek Love Reconsidered* and distributed by NAMBLA:

It is laid out in a simple rule, while the custom here is complex. For in Elis and among the Boeotians, and wherever men are not skilled in speaking, there is a simple tradition that it is a good thing to gratify lovers, and no one, young or old, would call it shameful, in order, I suppose, that they should not have any trouble when they try to seduce boys, since they are not able to speak well. But all who live under foreign rule, in Ionia and many other places, traditionally consider pederasty shameful (in a speech by Pausanias on love).

These offenders believe sexual involvement is not harmful for the child, but in fact beneficial to them. Having a child open to a mentorship and turning to the offender for advice promotes the relationship. The offender, in his non-cyber life, might well be the type of person no one would typically turn to for advice. So having this response, even if over the Internet, is eagerly embraced.

The following offender explores his options and explains his ethics:

Sex Offender: Hey [child user name], I think I'm falling in love. You are so cool and SMART!!!! [child user name], do I sound like a pervert to you?

Officer (posing as a child): no, way would you say that

Sex Offender: Well to most of society, I guess, I would be considered that, because of my preferences, but in actuality, I am a boylover and love boys to death. From the heart not the dick.

Officer (posing as a child): I like you a lot, you seem so cool to me

Sex Offender: Don't get me wrong, I love sex and love boys in that way very much but I love loving them more.

Officer (posing as a child): that's cool

Sex Offender: [child user name], there are a lot of gays out there and some like boys. Most just want to get off and will feed you any line that they think you want to hear to get what they want. Please always be careful, they are users!!!! and don't give a damn about you.

Officer (posing as a child): I hate people like that

Sex Offender: I on the other hand will never intentionally tell you a mistruth, I will never use you in anyway and always give much more then I take. My concern is for the happiness and safety and well being of the boy/you.

Officer (posing as a child): thanks, I feel like we are so close and we have only been friend a short time

Sex Offender: That makes me happier then you will ever know!!!! If we got to know each other better and were together, what would you want to do?

Officer (posing as a child): I want to try it all

Sex Offender: That is kind of how I am. I think that sex should be from the heart and not just to get off. You should feel the build up in your lips and toes and should end up in one huge massive orgasmic explosion like you never dreamed possible. I had a fantastic teacher when I was young and he taught me how to love.

Officer (posing as a child): tell me about it

Sex Offender: If you seriously have never been with a guy I would be so honored to be your first. If we ever get together and I hope we do, what do you want me to do to you

Officer (posing as a child): oral

Sex Offender: that would be my pleasure

Officer (posing as a child): maybe anal if it doesn't hurt much

Sex Offender: That would have to be up to you because a true boylover only does what the boy wants him to and never does anything to hurt him in anyway

Officer (posing as a child): well have you ever done anal with a guy like me, did he like it?

Sex Offender: yes, very gently and yes he liked it. I loved him so much

Here is an example of a subject describing his having taught a child his first sexual experience:

Officer (posing as a child): have you ever taught a guy his first time?

Sex Offender: yea

Officer (posing as a child): tell me about it

Sex Offender: when I was 17, I was taking care of my 12yo cousin and we were just messing around and I asked him if he ever had jacked off and he said no....so I told him to take his pants off and I started rubbing him...I put my mouth on it to wet it so I could rub him faster....I don't think he came the first time though

Officer (posing as a child): was he nervous first time?

Sex Offender: very shy....didn't know if we should be doing this stuff, but said he trusted me and when he started feeling pleasure he started moaning and his face turned red and I could tell he was enjoying himself and everything was ok

Officer (posing as a child): so you taught him something he should know?

Sex Offender: yea

Officer (posing as a child): hey did you two guys ever do it again or just that once?

Sex Offender: many times....he wanted me to give him anal a couple of months later....that was my first anal

Officer (posing as a child): so he wanted to do stuff with you, he must have liked it then

Sex Offender: I think he loved it cause he would initiate a lot of stuff...I never force myself on anyone...in fact violent forced stuff is my biggest turnoff

Officer (posing as a child): so were you afraid he might tell on u, or was he cool with it

Sex Offender: really cool....he used to beg me of all people not to tell anyone....you are the first one I'm talking to about it

Officer (posing as a child): have you taught a lot of guys their first time?

Sex Offender: four

E. Manipulative/Coercive Relationships

Some sex offenders rationalize their behavior with the following cognitive distortions:

- Children are not vulnerable and are equal in the relationship and are empowered to make free choices.
- Children are not sexually vulnerable; in fact they strongly desire sex at all ages.

However, sex offenses resulting from these distortions are marked by manipulation and coercion. Preferential-type sex offenders, especially experienced ones, have a ritual they follow that enables them to be sexually active with children and more importantly to stay away from public notice. It has been said (Lanning, 1990) that child sex offenders go through three stages to engage victims: (1) recruiting, (2) maintaining, and then (3) dumping victims when they become older than is desired. Children from two-parent families, who have high self-esteem, strong temperaments, and strong peer relationships are not good targets for sexual abuse. Such children are also not likely to be in an Internet chat room for hours on end. Offenders look at how much freedom a child has in the family structure. When seeking targets, sex offenders look for signs that there is little parental involvement in a child's life: the child does not have a definite bedtime, can be away from the home without anyone knowing where he/she is, and may have exclusive use of a computer in a private area. A child that fits this profile is fertile ground for victimization. This is especially true when the child not only responds to the manipulation, but also turns to the offender for day-to-day decisions, thus feeding into the belief the offender is making progress.

The following offender was arrested for distributing child pornography and had his computer seized and room searched. A month later he was back online. The fictitious character "Sean" is presented to the offender as an 18-year old who is sexually involved with a 15-year-old boy and willing to engage in group-sex. This suspect ended up getting arrested a second time when he showed up to meet for sex.

Sex Offender: I'm going to ask a question, so please don't get mad?

Sean: ok ask away

Sex Offender: are you a cop?

Sean: no, you aren't either are you

Sex Offender: no

Sean: good, I would hate that

Sex Offender: you never really know who your really talking to now a days

Sean: have you had bad experiences?

Sex Offender: yes, some fifteen year old was chatting to me and the next day I found out he was a cop

Sean: what happened?

Sex Offender: they took my computer a did an investigation, to find out if I was a pervert, it really screwed everything up

Sean: so you had to buy a new system?

Sex Offender: no I'm using my parents

Sean: so they are not still watching you are they?

Sex Offender: no, I'd know if I was being watched

Sean: ok, cause I don't need any of that, David (fictitious 15-year-old boy) is cool and would never say anything

Sex Offender: that's cool

F. Isolation

Some sex offenders suffer from depression and/or are socially isolated. They do not feel they fit well with other adults and prefer the company of children, which enables them to go back to a time when they feel they were happier, competent, and a part of a social network. They believe:

- They and the child teamed against the world.
- No one understands the offender and victim; they need and understand each other.

Many preferential sex offenders live either alone or with their parent(s), but can be married and have peculiar relationships with their spouses. Morahan-Martin and Schumacher (2000) wrote how computer users can use the Internet to alter their mood when they find themselves depressed, anxious or isolated. Quayle and Taylor (2002) write that pedophiles, who are marginalized within society, feel empowered by using the Internet. The theory that sexual offenders are fixated in their psychosexual development, and that their arrested development is usually trauma based, is accepted within the mental health community. Sex offenders feel alone and are using the Internet, for many hours at a time, to fill their need for company and friendship with those they are compatible with and attracted to—children. Quayle and Taylor found many of their study respondents who had communicated with other offenders and children on the Internet found both social support and a replacement for poor real-life relationships. Finkelhor (1984) writes of four preconditions for sexual abuse, the first of which is that an offender has to be “motivated” to offend. Motivation is based on three factors: (1) emotional congruence, (2) sexual arousal, and (3) blockage of normal outlets. The child in this instance is used to meet emotional needs. Presenting as an undercover persona reminiscent of the sex offender when he was a child—alone, different and misunderstood—will likely attract trolling Internet sex offenders. Expressing these emotions to the offender so that he knows others exist like him, at a vulnerable and attractive age, will result in a quick embrace.

Haythornthwaite, Wellman and Garton (1998) write about the escalation from online communication to the offline world being bridged by the exchange of gifts. Offenders who send gifts such as greeting cards, telephone cards, cash, cameras, videotapes and sex toys feel invested in the relationship. The isolated offender often tries to foster the relationship by escalating his online contact to offline delivery of gifts through the U.S. Postal Service. The offender below has made child pornography available through File Transfer Protocol from his own directory and when thanked reacts by offering to send more pornography on CD's:

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Officer (posing as a child): hey!!!!

Sex Offender: oh hi

Officer (posing as a child): cool to see you

Sex Offender: I looked for you on icq

Officer (posing as a child): I wanted to thank you for all those pictures I got to look at

Sex Offender: my pleasure.....just don't get caught [child user name]

Officer (posing as a child): I didn't keep any

Sex Offender: to bad

Officer (posing as a child): well I have to be safe and if you find good ones you will always show them to me

Sex Offender: maybe I can burn some for you

Officer (posing as a child): on CD?

Sex Offender: yeah

Officer (posing as a child): dude that would be so awesome, I get the mail after school every day at the PO

Sex Offender: well gimme po box.....tell me what to load

Officer (posing as a child): (under cover name and address here)

Officer (posing as a child): load if with guys 12-13-14-15, and some of you

Sex Offender: well you have seen me [child user name]

Officer (posing as a child): now every day i will check the mail!!!

Sex Offender: well maybe you need to wait a week.....I can mail Wednesday

Officer (posing as a child): ok, I cant wait!!!!

Sex Offender: postal service is sloooowwwwwwwww

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: when you store it give it a music label

Officer (posing as a child): yea, that is easy

Sex Offender: then put it with other music cd's

Officer (posing as a child): ok, hope me asking is ok

Sex Offender: ask away, we are brothers, actually you are very cool for 14

Officer (posing as a child): thanks

III. EXPLOITING PARAPHILIAS IN UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS

Cognitive distortions mixed with sexual topics cause many offenders to lose control and to reveal personal information, which helps to identify them. Introducing paraphilic themes during real-time chat is a productive way to build a relationship with the suspect. Email, though less productive, may also be used. Understanding the importance of sexual fantasies, cognitive distortions and defense mechanisms is key to understanding how sex offenders think and operate. How offenders think and justify their behavior can be used to flush out other paraphilias that offenders engage in and may indicate dangerous paraphilias such as sadomasochism.

When offenders engage in real-time chat discussions and/or view pornographic photographs of children they begin to fantasize and use all of their mental resources, often excluding any other peripheral stimuli. An example would include an online offender chatting with a child and engaging in acts of coprophilia (smearing feces on his body) while at the same time the police were knocking loudly on his door to execute a

search warrant. He did not respond to the loud knocking on his apartment door, requiring the police to knock his door down. He only responded when the police actually entered the room and he realized they were there. Anything about child sexuality is fertile ground to base sexual fantasies on.

Today, children are reaching puberty at younger ages. Zuckerman (2002) cites statistics from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (1988/1996) finding the onset of puberty for male pubic hair (Tanner II) has been found to be 12.0 for white children, 12.3 for Hispanic children and 11.2 for black children, and for genital growth (Tanner II) 10.1, 10.4 and 9.5 respectively. Female sexual maturation is also beginning earlier with almost half of black children and 15% of whites showing evidence of puberty at age eight. A late onset of puberty can present an offender with a more mature child with less developed sexual characteristics. A 14-year-old child, who looks like a 12-year-old, may have more freedoms outside the home, which presents a more amenable situation for the offender. Mussen and Jones (1957) and Peskin (1967) both found that male children with late onset of puberty are associated with having lower self-esteem, and thus, more vulnerability. On the other end of the scale are male children with an early onset of puberty/spermarche (i.e. boys who at age 10 can ejaculate), who are associated with having more self-esteem. Conversely Blyth, Simmons and Zakin (1985) found that young female children who have developed breasts are associated with low self-esteem due to poor body images. Offenders may perceive these children as having different levels of vulnerability, and hence, advantages. This situation can be used by law enforcement to develop attractive and realistic child targets.

Homes et al. (1998) describe how computers can be used as a mechanism to alter thoughts, with fantasies having the opportunity to become real. Döring (2000) reported how self-representation is chiefly achieved through text messaging, but that photographs as well as sexual conversations often lead to real-life meetings. Having a couple of pictures of the fictitious child character feeds the fantasy building process for the offender, fostering a pseudo-intimacy. Online relationships appear to grow more quickly with the use of photographs. Typically these photographs are of a police officer when he/she was a young teen that they have authorized the use of. School photographs—if possible, one of a child in a bathing suit—are ideal for this purpose. Having a profile online with a photograph, as compared to one without, noticeably increases the number of offenders initiating conversations. Having multiple photographs is ideal to test the interest of the offender. For instance, a simple way to measure interest is to mention you have three photographs, but then send only one and wait to see if the target makes a request for the additional photographs.

Another characteristic of the fictitious child that feeds into a male-male sex offender's fantasies is having a younger sibling. This usually prompts the offender to instruct the child how to seduce his younger brother. An example is as follows:

Sex Offender: you home alone now?

Officer (posing as a child): no my bro is around

Sex Offender: how old is he?

Officer (posing as a child): twelve, looks like my little twin

Sex Offender: bet he is cute, too. He knows you are on here chatting?

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Officer (posing as a child): he knows I am on the computer but not what I do I am way way safe.

Sex Offender: are you a virgin?

Officer (posing as a child): yes

Sex Offender: you and your brother jerk off together?

Officer (posing as a child): no

Sex Offender: I bet it would be hot.

Officer (posing as a child): really?, I thought of it but thought must people would freak about it

Sex Offender: Have you seen him naked?

Officer (posing as a child): yea, we share the same bedroom

Sex Offender: does he get boners, too?

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: bet you love to see it. How big is his?

Officer (posing as a child): well it is just like mine except smaller, probably 4 inches

Sex Offender: nice

Officer (posing as a child): no hairs

Sex Offender: he seen you jerkin before?

Officer (posing as a child): nope

Sex Offender: maybe he would like to chat with us?

Officer (posing as a child): no, I am way private he doesn't know I like guys

Sex Offender: I could just be a friend you are chatting with, we could see if he is interested at all, we need get your brother on line with us

Officer (posing as a child): why?

Sex Offender: we all would love it, he could be the one sucking on you, you could feel lips on it for real

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: and maybe you could suck on him

Officer (posing as a child): Ok

Sex Offender: think you would like that?

Officer (posing as a child): yea

Sex Offender: call him, lets talk

The following is a sample of the voluminous writings of an offender who arranged a rendezvous with a child he met on the Internet and with whom he has had about six real-time chats and numerous email exchanges:

You come into the room, and start snooping around – as if you're looking for something. I come in (from the bathroom maybe) and say "Hey, kid, WHO are you and WHAT are you doing in my room?" You look a little scared and say, "Ummmm I think I made a mistake!". And you start walking towards the door. I cut you off, and lock the door behind me. I say, "Ok, SHE sent you didn't she? Tell me! She sent you here to find something and steal it!" You say, "I...I....don't know what you're talking about" I move towards you and put my arm around your shoulders. I say, "You are going to tell me what I want to know!" You say, "Please let me go". I say, "I'll let you go if you admit she sent you, tell me what she sent you to get and if you tell me where I can contact her." You say, "No! I'm not telling you anything". I say, "Hey, are you

carrying a weapon?!” I start to frisk you. You wiggle and giggle as I hit some ticklish spots. I say, “AHH That gives me an idea!” You get a little scared and say, “WHAT? WHAT are you going to do to me?” I say, “If you tell me what I want to know, you won’t have to find out!” You say, “No, I’m not talking!” I then grab something and pretend to hit you over the head, knocking you unconscious. You fall and I carry you to the bed. If my back allows me to (I have arthritis in one vertebra in my back – just started to become a problem the last few months). Anyways, I carry you to the bed, and lay you on your stomach. I then proceed to hogtie you. Just as I finish tying you, you wake up. You realize you’re tied up and you say, “Please don’t hurt me!” I say, “I’m not going to “hurt” you, but what I’ll do will not be fun, even though you’ll probably laugh a lot!” You say, “Just let me go”. I then start removing your sneakers. I pull one off, then the other. I then say, “Are you getting an idea of what I’m going to do to you?” You say, “PLEASE don’t do it!!!” I say, “Will you tell me what I need to know”. You say in a desperate voice, “NO” I then start peeling off your socks. First the left, then the right. I then sit on the bed, with your feet just below my chin. I start lightly dragging my fingertips from the bottoms of your heels zigzag across your soles up to the toes, under the toes and back down the sides of your feet. FROM THIS POINT FORWARD, I WON’T WRITE MUCH DIALOGUE SINCE IT’S JUST GOING TO BE YOU REACTING TO WHAT I’M DOING.¹

While investigating online child exploitation crimes, law enforcement officers will encounter subjects who engage in deviant sexual behaviors which are not illegal. Many of these deviant sexual behaviors are strongly associated with illegal sexual behaviors such as rape and child molestation. It is important for criminal investigators to understand these relationships. Mental health research has documented associations between deviant sexual behavior, such as exhibitionism and obscene telephone calling (scatologia), rapists having a history of making obscene telephone calls, and transvestism and exhibitionism. While a subject may be cautious about revealing personal information while transmitting child pornographic image files or trying to meet an under-aged child for sex, he may not show the same level of caution while trying to meet others for “legal” sexual acts. The example below involves a subject who has sent child pornography online, but is less cautious about giving his home address when the discussion turns to a fetish:

Sex Offender: yup

Officer (posing as a child): weird I trust you already

Sex Offender: I am a trustable guy

Officer (posing as a child): yea, u into underwear?

Sex Offender: big time

Officer (posing as a child): maybe you should have a pair of my boxers

Officer (posing as a child): that’s legal right?

¹ Note: This offender went through with his plans and rented a hotel room which was set up with a running video camera, other photographic equipment, restraints of all sorts, gags, feathers, Viagra® and two toothbrushes. The keyhole was covered, a laptop computer was set up with a greeting to the fictitious boy victim and a piece of duct tape was cut and ready to be used as a gag. The suspect left his hotel room door open and was hiding in the bathroom as planned.

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Sex Offender: mmmmmmmmmmmmm love that, specially if you cum in them before sending them to me

Officer (posing as a child): ok, I could cum in them a bunch of times, will be cool to do, like you can be close to me somehow

Sex Offender: exactly

Officer (posing as a child): how do I send them?

Sex Offender: mail

Officer (posing as a child): ok what address?

Sex Offender: your not a cop eh?

Officer (posing as a child): no way, I hope your not one either, no one knows about me

Sex Offender: no I'm not

Officer (posing as a child): good i would freak if you were

Sex Offender: XXXXX st. Moncton, NB XXX XXX

Officer (posing as a child): do I put a name on it?

Sex Offender: [writes own name]

Officer (posing as a child): kewl

Multiple paraphilias are the rule and a single paraphilia is the exception (Abel, Becker, Cunningham-Rathner, Mittelman & Rouleau, 1988). Most subjects in Abel et al. showed significant experience with at least ten paraphilic behaviors. One paraphilia may take on dominance only to be replaced with a second paraphilic behavior taking the lead. This does not mean the first behavior is not acted on, just with less frequency. The Abel et al. study found 10% admitted to only one paraphilia, 20% had two, 21% had three, and 12% had four. The remaining 38% were engaged in 5-10 paraphilic behaviors. Of those 10% admitting to only one paraphilia, over half of those were exclusively involved in transsexualism. The average paraphilic engages in three to five paraphilias. A second study, Kafka & Prentky (1994), found an average of 1.8 paraphilias per subject. Grassberger (1964), as cited in Freud & Watson (1990), found that 12% of subjects arrested for indecent exposure had committed other sex crimes. Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy & Christenson (1965) found that 10% of convicted indecent exposure subjects had a history of committing rape.

Paraphilias not only include nuisance sexual behaviors but also crimes that cause physical harm to others, such as sexual sadism and pedophilia. The fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IVTR) describes paraphilias as follows: "The essential features of a paraphilia are recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors generally involving (1) nonhuman objects, (2) the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner, or (3) children or other non-consenting persons, that occur over a period of at least 6 months."

Subjects involved in a paraphilia may seek out employment or volunteer for a position in order to engage in their deviance. This might include becoming a teacher or coach (pedophilia); house painter (voyeurism); medical technician (klismaphilia); shoe salesman (fetish); maintenance man (urolagnia, coprophilia); Emergency Medical Technician, tattoo or body piercing worker (sexual sadism); nursing home worker (gerontophilia); or massage therapist (frottage). Seligman & Hardenburg (2000) describe the cycle these persons are subject to:

They experience tension before initiating the paraphilic behavior, are preoccupied with those behaviors and their preparatory activities, repeatedly try in vain to curtail their performance of the behaviors, and continue the behaviors despite clear evidence of the damage they cause. People with paraphilias sometimes develop a tolerance or a need to increase the frequency and intensity of the behaviors and may experience withdrawal if they do not yield to their urges to perform the behaviors.

Goodman (1993) found that fantasies and behaviors associated with paraphilias result in immediate pleasures and at the same time provide an escape from feelings of loneliness and boredom. Seligman and Hardenburg (2000) stress the importance of identifying “triggers” for symptoms and point out how paraphilic behaviors may have a higher frequency during times of high stress. They cite the following typology by O’Brien and Bera (1986) for those adolescent males who engage in paraphilias:

1. **Naive experimenter:** limited number of exploratory paraphilic behaviors; uses no force or threats.
2. **Undersocialized exploiter:** sexually isolated, unskilled; seeks self-aggrandizement, intimacy; behaviors are long-standing.
3. **Pseudo-socialized exploiter:** has good social skills; often suffered abuse, rationalizes behaviors, feels little guilt or remorse, and seeks sexual pleasure.
4. **Sexually aggressive:** angry and aggressive, wants to dominate and humiliate others, often has coexisting problems with substance abuse and impulse control, enduring disorder.
5. **Sexual compulsive:** repressed and enmeshed family background; engages in repetitive and compulsive behaviors for anxiety reduction, and no direct physical contact with victims.
6. **Disturbed impulsive:** severely troubled family, emotional and cognitive difficulties, often misuses substances, and impulsive.
7. **Group-influenced:** motivated by peer pressure and a desire for approval and admiration.

Freund (1990) divided male sexual activity into four stages: (1) searching for a partner; (2) pretactile interaction; (3) tactile interaction; and (4) genital contact. Each paraphilia involves the investment of sexual energy and is associated with a distortion of one of these stages. For example, searching stage: voyeurism; pretactile stage: exhibitionism; tactile stage: frottage; and genital stage: the rapist. Subjects with one paraphilia in one stage are likely to have a second paraphilia within the same stage, an example being an association between exhibitionism and voyeurism, collectively known as “scoptophilia” (love of looking).

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There is consensus in the mental health field that the onset of these behaviors occurs during childhood, specifically puberty (Levine, Risen & Althof, 1990). It is also believed that these behaviors continue throughout the subject's lifetime in the absence of mental health intervention (Seligman & Hardenburg, 2000). Citing Perry & Orchard (1992), Seligman & Hardenburg describe the escalation of such behaviors:

Paraphilias often change over time, escalating in frequency and severity and sometimes progressing from one paraphilia to another. A common pattern is for the disorder to begin with solitary behaviors, such as frequent masturbation in conjunction with paraphilic fantasies; progressing into behaviors such as exhibitionism and voyeurism that involve others but do not include physical contact; and then continuing into more aggressive sexual behaviors.

Studies of the history of subjects who engage in these behaviors show they often have grown up in dysfunctional homes and have histories of childhood abuse, with physical abuse being the most frequent (Perry & Orchard, 1992). Childhood abuse is recognized as allowing persons to minimize the impact they have on their victims, thus perpetuating the behavior (Goodman, 1993). Schwartz (1992) found that subjects in homes where emotional and physical abuse occur develop "distorted thinking based on belief systems assimilated through experience." Half of the subjects in one study were married with most having sexual problems with their partners (Levine et al., 1990).

An understanding of pedophilia as well as other paraphilic behaviors can greatly assist an online investigator. Abel found that multiple paraphilias are the rule, not the exception. Cross-referencing offenders with a predisposition to abuse and/or exploit children with other paraphilic behaviors can lead to identification, as well as providing additional information to build a more complete picture of the target.

IV. CONCLUSION

Understanding the psychology of an offender is key to constructing a credible "victim." If the offender's cognitive distortions are known, he can be manipulated into revealing himself to authorities during undercover computer facilitated operations. Crafting a child character based on these distortions, rather than how a typical child would realistically react, can be very productive. How quickly a target is pushed towards revealing identifying information is a question of timing, which is different for each offender. An investigator can learn the cues offenders show when they are being cautious, thus not presently interested in nurturing a relationship, thus requiring more time and maneuvering. Learning how sex offenders engage child victims, how they maintain these relationships in privacy to avoid detection, and how they rationalize their behaviors and beliefs, are key to investigating their online crimes. Recognizing offenders as engaging in multiple paraphilias is yet another avenue an investigator can exploit to identify and understand the target.

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