



Men Speak Out

My Pedophile

Murray David Schane

I was seven years old when I was attacked by an abuser, a predator, a pedophile. He was—I have to guess—fourteen. I have never been able to get him completely out of my mind, cleared out to the last synaptically encoded memory trace. He still hovers there vaguely, like an odor whose source and identity and character I can never quite seize upon. At once very specific because of the strong feeling attached to “him” (terror is the closest word, but it is broader, bigger, more crushingly cosmic, less localizable than any terror I have felt since), haunting and yet still intangible and evanescent.

He always seemed like a man to me, though I knew his age even then. He must have told me, or I knew it from knowing him and knowing about him at the time. Perhaps it is unfair to judge him. I only react to him, to the glimpse of a memory I have of him and to the implanted feeling/idea he has become.

Why do I bother with it now? So many years later? With such a long and basically happy, successful and little outwardly troubled life?

Two recent experiences have brought my pedophile forward to me. Both occurred at the movies, one a fiction film from 2001, “L.I.E.,” and the other the currently playing documentary, “Capturing the Friedmans,” both about pedophiles

living their lives, suffering their fates.

There was something alluring in “L.I.E.” about Brian Cox’s portrayal of Big John, the predator pedophile who lives like a spider in his Long Island community, spinning a benign avuncular web that makes him buddies with the police while he closes in on his prey. But his character is given depth, a despair over his obsessions, a resignation when following his compulsions, and an apparent sincerity when acting like a benevolent father to the young teen who is currently in his cross-hair. The boy responds to this tenderness, this gentle respect for his so-young masculinity, while also hinting at a suspicious curiosity about Big John’s sexual intentions. When Big John shows the boy Howie how to shave his clearly beardless face I was caught up in that moment. I knew that feeling: the boy yearning to be brought into a grown-up man’s skin, to be taken seriously for this desire, even to be admired for it. Big John carries out this ur-paternal act with seemingly great love. That is the seducing moment. But it is so pure that what follows in the film is that Big John tucks Howie into bed and leaves him there.

Is this meant to establish Big John’s redemption? We know he has already thrown out his previous boy, obviously aged out of adolescence, and, in the next to last scene, goes to pick up a boy at a

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sexuality was depicted as an irresistible aphrodisiac

cruise spot.

But he has left Howie now ready to grow up.

This is the part of the film that most disturbed me. Big John, though murdered by the boy he overthrew, is portrayed as a man with at least some small corner of respectful love for the boys he is compelled to seduce and abuse. I believe such men must exist, just as I believe there may be men with pedophilic desires who never act on them and may lead lives as decent men and even as good parents.

But when they *have crossed that line*, when they have sexually assaulted a boy, all love, all concern, all respect, all empathy for the boy has been dismissed and transformed and re-interpreted. They have committed soul-murder and in order to justify it to themselves, they redefine everything, sometimes subtly, sometimes grossly: the boy was not harmed but was fondly initiated or the boy was really the seducer, the true predator trading on the natural lust of a testosterone-enriched adult man.

I was as shaken by "L.I.E." as I was by "Tadpole," where adolescent male sexuality was depicted as an irresistible aphrodisiac deliberately aimed by a fifteen-year-old boy at middle-aged women. In this film, the boy's "abuse" is, of course, his glorious initiation into heterosexuality and lends him a new swagger and a prowess ready to be exercised on the fifteen-year-old girl who flirts with him. The negative effects of the boy's "initiation" obviously were relegated to a never-to-be-conceived epilogue.

Then came "Capturing the Friedmans," an extraordinary documentary only made possible by the family's near mania for filming and videotaping almost every major family event, going as far back as the courtship in the 1950's of Arnold and Elaine Friedman and proceeding right through the tumultuous time of Arnold's and then his nineteen-year-old son Jesse's indictment and sentencing for multiple counts of child sexual abuse and then up

to the time of Jesse's release on parole and present-day interviews with him, his oldest brother David, his mother, and members of the arresting and prosecuting police, judge, and lawyers for the defense.

The father, Arnold, admitted in a piercing letter appealing to Debbie Nathan, the journalist who wrote about gross injustice wreaked against nursery school workers, that he had known he had pedophilic leanings from adolescence onward but had kept them almost wholly in bay and never acted on them in his home except by buying child pornography, which initially led to his arrest. A witch-hunt ensued in which police investigators obtained scores of counts of sodomy committed by Arnold and Jesse, who assisted him in the computer classes he taught in the same room where the mother, Elaine, held child-care sessions in the morning. Jesse, who vigorously maintains his innocence, was apparently coaxed by his lawyer and his mother to plead guilty in order not to receive a much harsher and seemingly inevitable sentence.

The family's tragedy stemmed from Arnold's pedophilia which he satisfied with child pornography, managing to be caught apparently because he was ignorant of changes in the postal codes governing the receipt of such material from overseas. But Elaine stated in her filmed interview that Arnold had told her that he had been to see a psychotherapist and was re-assured that, apparently free from acting on these desires, he had "everything under control" and need not worry.

If this is true it is surely an example of ignorance or incompetence: a therapist, knowing of Arnold's predilections, might have condoned the secret resort to fantasy to satisfy his urges, but should have sternly warned him that the use of child pornography was indirectly but materially contributing to the abuse of children.

Far worse was that Arnold, a popular chemistry teacher, should have been

warned away from teaching children, and certainly should have been severely warned against giving piano lessons and computer classes to children in his own home. Since mostly boys took computer classes in the mid 1980's, Arnold had established a dangerous condition for himself. I wonder if he had Jesse working there with him to act as a monitor, a built-in control to prevent him from acting on impulse. In the end this brought the entire family down and sent Jesse to prison for thirteen years. Now, released two years ago, he is registered as predatory homosexual child abuser of the most dangerous type and cannot live in an apartment building where children reside, must wear a radio monitor, must be home by 8:00 PM, may not leave Manhattan, and may not go anywhere that children frequent, such as Central Park.

"Capturing the Friedmans" began as an entirely different film, one about clowns who entertain the offspring of wealthy New Yorkers, the most famous of whom is David Freidman, Arnold and Elaine's oldest son. As David's interviews proceeded the story of Arnold and Jesse emerged. David wholly believes in Jesse's innocence. And he still deeply loves and respects his father, who committed suicide in prison apparently to provide Jesse with money from his life insurance policy. David maintains that his father was a wonderful, caring man who always supported him, especially in his pursuit, beginning at a young age, of a career as a magician and clown.

Here again is the other, the human, side of the pedophile. Perhaps, having lost his love for his mother and having seen his family and his home disintegrate, David has a defensive need to idealize Arnold. But the evidence is there in the home movies and videotapes: Arnold played the loving father and he appeared to play it well and consistently. None of his boys admit that he ever molested them.

But Arnold permitted himself to walk a

thinning line between secret thought and acting out with the horrific effects that such an act can place in a boy's body and, especially, in a boy's mind.

A day never goes by that somewhere deep inside me, somewhere that I rarely see and do not even have to visit, that I do not wish my pedophile dead, dreadfully killed, heinously suffering. I am on the other side of that thin line that Arnold danced along and dragged his son across. I can feel sad for him from the movie seat I occupy as a reasonably adjusted man. But the boy in me watches him, as I watched Big John in "L.I.E." with dreadful caution, with my hand wishing for a gun and a trigger to pull.

Last spring the Kite and Key Society of the University of Pennsylvania discovered MaleSurvivor and wrote to us offering to hold a charity basketball tournament in order to raise money for us.

The tournament took place with nine teams entered into the competition, even though it was held early on a Sunday morning (9:00 AM) the weekend before final exams and during fraternity/sorority formal dinner-dances.

In addition the society collected a wide range of merchandise and gift certificates from local restaurants and stores and then sold raffle tickets all over the campus.

They apparently had, according to Kite and Key Society president Rory Levine, "one of the most fun-filled and enjoyable events I've had the pleasure to coordinate during my time here at Penn."

The Society sent us a check for \$350 which we will be using toward scholarships for the conference in Minneapolis. We sincerely and gratefully thank the members of that outstanding organization.

Spontaneous Generosity

Book Reviews

A Walk In Hell
by Gregory A Helle

**Innocence and
outRAGE** by
Chris Logue and
Peter VanDe Bogert



A Walk In Hell

Read *A Walk In Hell* for an unforgettable look at the Vietnam War from the inside out, seen through the eyes of a young American. This collection of poems captures the journey of a farm boy from Iowa to Vietnam and back. The author, Gregory Helle, has experienced hell on earth. A combat veteran and sexual assault survivor, he shares how these traumas shaped his life and how his dreams mutated into nightmares.

By definition, art is something that causes a reaction or stirs feelings inside the viewer, or in this case, the reader. Each poem in this book is a gripping work of art. Gathered into book form, you are immersed into a gallery of inspired works. Read slowly with an open mind. It is shocking. You are there. To help set the tone of the book, it is sprinkled with photographs and thought-provoking quotes, such as this one from Mark Twain :

Man is the only animal that deals in that atrocity of atrocities, war. He is the only one that gathers his

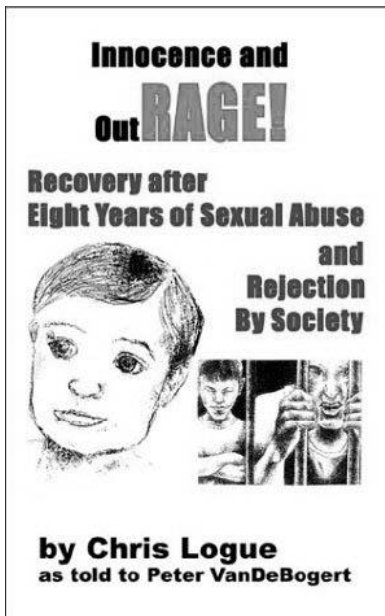
brethren about him and goes forth in cold blood and calm pulse to exterminate his kind. He is the only animal that for sordid wages will march out and help slaughter strangers of his own species who have done him no harm and with whom he has no quarrel ... And in the intervals between campaigns he washes the blood off his hands and works for "the universal brotherhood of man" ... with his mouth.

This book is dark in places, which serves a distinct purpose, because when rays of hope and brilliant light shine through, as they do, they are held in stark contrast.

Part way into the book, the issue of sexual assault is dealt with head on in "Violated" and the group of poems that directly follow. Intense and accurate, these poems resonate with deep feeling. Expressing and exposing these feelings clearly illustrate this personal journey. Sanity, self-hatred, and running are well covered. These concise lines from "Running" strike home with me. "But whenever I run/ There I am/ I cannot escape me/ I cannot escape my past".

These words from "Meaning of Life" express the true essence of this book as I see it. "There must be a way/ That I can make a difference/ In someone's life/ That's meaningful" Not a catalyst in the literal sense of the word, but an inspirational milestone for healing change and introspection. I cannot think of a higher compliment and I heartily recommend this book to anyone who wants to increase human awareness. It is truly a gift to society and a strong voice for change. Thank you Gregory A. Helle for *A Walk In Hell*.

— Paul Lango



Innocence and outRAGE

by Chris Logue and Peter VanDe Bogert.

This book tells the story of Chris Logue who was sexually abused by his alcoholic father from the age of 3 to 7 and then by the infamous Father Geoghan for the next four years. The book began when VanDe Bogert wrote a column in a Boston paper saying that more attention should be paid to the victims of sexual abuse and less to the problems of the Catholic church. Chris Logue replied to his column and this partnership was the result. Chris Logue wants his story told to help other victims, and also to help the healing professions do a better job with "violent appearing males." At the end of the book he says that he believes that violent men are the most under-treated segment of society. "You find lots of them in prison, but very few in a therapist's office." Certainly Chris was a very violent and rage-filled young man. In

addition to the sexual abuse he was dyslexic, so his school years were not happy ones. He did not perform well, acted out and never completed 7th grade. He was drunk much of the time. His salvation began when he married, and after he and his wife separated he retained custody of his daughter, who often lived with his parents. One day she asked if she and her grandfather could "play that game now?" It was immediately obvious that she was being abused and the family was horrified. Chris had become aware of his own abuse in a group therapy session, but those members of his family to whom he told this shrugged it off as being a long time ago. There is a useful discussion of the very different reactions to the two sets of abuse. This revelation led to a major split in the family and Chris did not see his relatives for about seven years.

At this time he was in a detox center and married again, sobered up, began a successful karate business and fathered three children. All seemed to be going well until he saw a newspaper description of Father Geoghan's abuse of two other boys who had been altar boys at the same church as he had and who had been abused by Father Geoghan. He said "Then the memories came flashing back like videotapes of the mind. ... I felt my world was being shattered, . I had no safety spot." To forget he began to drink and do drugs again. His life disintegrated and he became suicidal. When he called the church they did not challenge his assertion, and simply asked for the dates. But there was no apology.

Ultimately Chris found a therapist who did help him, who was not put off by his method of introducing him-

self by saying " I need some f..... help.". Interestingly he wanted a woman therapist, having learned not to trust men, and gradually he lost much of his rage. The revelations about the Catholic church, and the condemnation this led to, gave him a feeling of vindication; but he remained furious at the indifference of society to the problems he and others endured for so long, and the fact that therapists were so unhelpful.

I found the second half of the book much more interesting than the first. This is in part because Chris related his story to VanDeBogert and, perhaps because of repression, did not remember much of his childhood. Also Van De Bogert has a curious style of switching tenses between sentences. This led to the first half being rather disjointed. At one point Chris says he wants to give an unedited account of his life; I felt the book would have benefited from judicious editing. However, it does give a first hand account of the experience of being abused and how this led an athletic boy with a sense of humor who nearly killed himself and others and shows the damage that sexual abuse causes to individuals and to society.

— Jane Flinn

Correction

In the Fall 2002 issue of *Men Speak Out* the article on pages 11 and 12, "Partners of Adults Sexually Abused as Children" misprinted the male author's name. It should read " Justin Glenn Smith.

A Message From the President

Richard Gartner



write this in late July. The summer heat in New York City is still with us but sometimes there is a hint of fall in the early morning breezes. It reminds me that we will be meeting in Minneapolis for our biannual conference just as summer officially turns to autumn.

The brochures for the conference arrived in your mailboxes within the last few weeks, and the program in it is impressive indeed. I extend our thanks to Peter Dimock and his conference committee for all their hard work in getting together such a varied and full group of presentations.

The conference is entitled "Recognizing Strength and Resilience," and there is a focus in many of the presentations on the creative and admirable ways many men have developed, often alone, for dealing with a history of boyhood sexual abuse.

There are workshops in every time slot for survivors as well as for the professionals who work with them, plus some that are particularly apt for survivors' family and partners. There will also be full-day preconference institutes on a range of subjects. Our plenary speaker, Dr. William Friedrich, is renowned for his work with sexually abused boys. We are indeed fortunate that we will have a chance to hear from him. In addition, we have speakers from all over the world and a wide range of presenters, some of who have presented before at our conferences, and others who are coming for the first time to share their expertise with us. I welcome them all.

There will also be numerous other activities at the conference:

- the world premiere of *MaleSurvivor* member Ethan Delavan's documentary "Stories of Silence: Recovering from Boyhood Sexual Abuse"
- an art reception and multimedia presentation on the healing potential of art given by Gregory Stavrou, Executive Director of the Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts

- entertainment by the Minnesota Boys Choir
- a silent auction to raise money for MaleSurvivor
- an evening Keynote address by Syl Jones, the African American playwright and journalist who has written about his experiences as an abused boy
- an evening of performance art by male survivors, an outgrowth of the unforgettable performance art workshop at the New York conference
- a reunion for those who have attended our healing retreats
- a sweatlodge healing experience that draws from native American traditions
- an artists' reception at the University of Minnesota's Weisman Art Museum.

All in all, I expect that, like the nine conferences that preceded it, our Minnesota conference will be intense and immensely rewarding. It may still be hot out when you receive this copy of *Men Speak Out*, but I urge you to make your plans to come to it. It may be the most important thing you do this year.

For survivors who have never attended a conference before, I have a few words of encouragement and advice. Conferences are not therapy, nor are they a substitute for it. Be sure you are feeling secure and stable enough in your own healing journey so that you are not overly shaken by any experience at the conference. If you are in therapy and have any doubts about whether to attend, discuss it with your therapist. For anyone who gets triggered by an experience at the conference, there will be a safe room staffed by counselors who can talk you through whatever you are feeling.

That said, I must tell you that many survivors have been profoundly affected in positive ways by coming to a conference. Conferences can be an opportunity to network with others in a friendly and supportive environment. I have heard many men talk about how liberated, validated, and freed up

they felt by a conference experience. So, please consider coming, but make sure your personal support system is in place when you do.

Moving beyond the conference, MaleSurvivor's healing retreats have continued to offer opportunities for sexually abused men to support one another, learn from one another, and give up old patterns of living while finding new ones. Retreats Chair Howard Fradkin and his dedicated team of volunteers have worked wonders and created safe environments for healing to take place. We are very excited that on October 10-12, 2003, there will be a special retreat for survivors of clergy at the Angels' Rest Retreat and Conference Center in Leyden, MA. There will also be a Level 1 retreat open to all male survivors held on November 13-16, 2003, at the Pilgrim Firs Conference Center in Port Orchard, WA. For more information on these or any other retreats, consult the MaleSurvivor web site.

You will find ballots for members of MaleSurvivor's Board of Directors elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter. The Board is the governing body of the organization, and so this annual election is very important. Please take the time to read the ballots and vote. Remember, Board members are your representatives.

On a personal note, many of you know that I underwent major back surgery in June, and I'm taking the summer off to recuperate. I am happy to report that the surgery seems to have been completely successful. Sciatic and other related back pain that has dogged me for many years is completely gone, and my recovery is going extremely well.

I look forward to seeing you all in Minneapolis!

The first rule in being an Advocate is never getting attached to a client. Never take your work home with you. I know that when you do these you are a bad advocate. Why or how do you not care for your client more then 9 to 5? What can make a person that cold, that dead to a client? To change their life you must understand their life. You must listen to them and not "try to understand" what they are going through. If you are trying then you are failing them. You must listen with all your heart and soul to understand them. Never say "I know how that is" or "I know" or "I've been there." Every client is different. Everything that you or I have gone through is different from one another. How could you know what a victim is going through. The more you read about being an Advocate the less you know. A true Advocate relies on him-or herself. We are here to show our clients the doorway not open it for them. I can understand what a thousand victims of domestic violence are going through but I most look at each one with new eyes to show them the doorway and to give them back their power.

When I started being an advocate I was smart, read all the books, went through endless hours of training. The first case that I worked on was a boy who had been through six different schools in six months. His family was homeless and they never stayed long enough for him to make any friends. I came into his life thinking I can change the world for him and his family.

The hardest thing for me to learn was looking him in the eyes and not saying, "It will be all right." Sadly it was not all right. His father was abusing him every night when I would drop him off at home after our visits. I had to find this out because of the marks on his arms and from the police that where there when I came to pick him up one night. How can you be prepared to handle a child being abused? No training

**Advocate:
a light
in the
darkness**

**the
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was able to help me control my own feelings. How fast I would go from sadness to anger about his situation. I was also sad that he did not tell me he was being abused so that I might be able to help him. Who am I to say that he should have told me. I have no right to make him talk.

After the hospital visits and the foster homes he was feeling very down. It is hard to tell a child that he was right to report his dad hitting him even though he was the one to be taken away from his family and friends. This was a hard thing for me to overcome. How do you tell an eight year old that he did the right thing but he is the one being punished by being moved? I was at a loss it was not easy to tell him that I did not know what would happen. I went to court for months with no progress on his case. He stayed in foster care for months with no hope of being reunited with his family. God how I wish I could have just taken him home and saved him. After six months of court visits they finally charged his father with child abuse and sent him to live with his mother.

I wish I could say that things turned out great for this little guy but sadly they did not. He was yet again abused, this time by his mother. Once I found out about his mother abusing him I was able to help him much more. Again the court system was slow-moving so I had to step in to the picture again. After the first couple of rounds with the lawyers we had a mutual dislike. I had no respect for the men who were supposed to be saving him.

After another six months of foster care and three runaways his aunt came forward to offer him a place to stay. This was a big change in this little guy's life I mean he has always lived on his own taking care of himself. No one cared if he had dinner, went to school, nothing. I was not sure whether I trusted her or not. His aunt had come all the way from California to pick him up.

Needless to say it was a very hard choice for him to make. In the end he was sent to live with his aunt. After a year of court battles and months in foster care, it was hard for him to trust anyone. His aunt, I have to say, was a great person. One of the hardest things I have every had to do was shut the door to the car and wave goodbye to him.

Days passed, then weeks, then months without a call. Then after six months I got a call from

his aunt. She told me that the two of them were getting along great. For a child that had not been in school for over a year and a half he was at the top of his class in reading and math. The teachers moved him into advanced placement for fifth grade. For a child that hated to read he had found a new love and it laid in poetry. I did not even know he liked poetry at all.

After hours of talking with his aunt and then him I started to cry. Still on the phone with him he asked me why I was crying. I said I am happy for him and he asked, " Why." I said I am so happy for you that I cannot put it into words. To think that in a year he had gone from an abused child living on the streets to a boy who loves to read and write poetry. To a child that is looking forward to school every day. To a child that has a home a loving parent and, best of all, he was happy and loved.

After years of being an advocate for abused and neglect children I have learned many things. I have seen the depths of the human soul. I have seen humanity at it's worst and I have seen it at it's greatest. It is not in our nature to abuse our children. It is our nature to love and care for one another. I have seen the loving and caring nature of people more and more every day. To be an advocate you only have to care for another person. One of the happiest times the child that I worked with was when anyone who worked with him, a teacher, bus driver, friend, etc. just smiled and said, "Have a great day." These simple words make a difference in a child's life.

When I sat down to write this I wanted to tell you what a joy it has been in my life to be an advocate. I still want to change the world but that cannot happen over night. If come into work and I am able to change the world for one child, in all my work just onethen I have lived up to my statement. I changed the world for that one child.

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