



Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis

For Professionals Investigating the Sexual Exploitation of Children

In cooperation with the



Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis

**For Professionals Investigating the
Sexual Exploitation of Children**

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Dedication

This publication is dedicated to child victims of sexual exploitation and the organization that allowed me to devote most of my 30-year career as a Special Agent to fighting “crimes against children.”

To the Federal Bureau of Investigation

I also dedicate this publication to my wife and children, without whose support for all these years I could not have maintained my objectivity and balance.

To Kathy, Melissa, and Rick

Kenneth V. Lanning, M.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (Retired)

Mr. Lanning is currently a consultant in the area of crimes committed against children. He was a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for more than 30 years before he retired in 2000. He has been involved in the professional study of the criminal aspects of deviant sexual behavior since 1973. He specialized in the study of the sexual victimization of children after being transferred to the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, in 1981. He was assigned to the Behavioral Science Unit from 1981 to 1996, Missing and Exploited Children's Task Force from 1996 to 1998, and National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) from 1998 to 2000. He is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) and former member of the APSAC Advisory Board. He is a current member of the Advisory Board of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA).

Mr. Lanning has made numerous presentations at major national and regional conferences about the sexual victimization of children, child abuse and neglect, and missing and exploited children. He has testified before the U.S. Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence, President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, and U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. Mr. Lanning has also testified on seven occasions before the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and many times as an expert witness in state and federal court. He has consulted on thousands of cases involving deviant sexual behavior, the sexual victimization of children, missing and exploited children, and the use of computers and the Internet to facilitate the sexual exploitation of children.

Mr. Lanning has published articles in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* and other professional journals. He is a chapter author in *Child Pornography and Sex Rings; Pornography: Research Advances and Policy Considerations; Practical Aspects of Rape Investigation; Out of Darkness; Viewing Child Pornography on the Internet; Medical, Legal, & Social Science Aspects of Child Sexual Exploitation*; and the *APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment*. He has authored monographs titled *Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis* and *Child Sex Rings: A Behavioral Analysis* that have been widely distributed by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC). He was the Project Manager for research projects on *An Analysis of Infant Abductions* and *Child Molesters Who Abduct* whose findings were edited by Mr. Lanning and Dr. Ann Wolbert Burgess and published by NCMEC.

Mr. Lanning is the 1990 recipient of the Jefferson Award for Research from the University of Virginia, 1996 recipient of the Outstanding Professional Award from APSAC, 1997 recipient of the FBI Director's Annual Award for Special Achievement for his career accomplishments in connection with missing and exploited children, and 2009 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Service from the National Children's Advocacy Center. He has lectured before and trained thousands of law-enforcement officers and criminal-justice professionals.

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My knowledge and insight concerning this subject matter has been greatly influenced through my interaction and dialogue over the years with law-enforcement pioneers, especially Bill Walsh (retired Dallas [Texas] Police Department), Donna Pence (retired Tennessee Bureau of Investigation), Brian Killacky (retired Chicago [Illinois] Police Department), Toby Tyler (retired San Bernardino County [California] Sheriff’s Office), Beth Dickinson (retired Los Angeles County [California] Sheriff’s Department), Bill Dworin (retired Los Angeles [California] Police Department), Robert Hoever (retired New Jersey State Police), and Rick Cage (retired Montgomery County [Maryland] Police Department); the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit 3 Crimes against Children, especially Supervisory Special Agents Jim Beasley, Jim Clemente, Kathy Canning, and Jennifer Eakin; my colleagues in the old FBI Behavioral Science Unit, especially Roger Depue and Roy Hazelwood; prosecutors, especially Paul Stern (Snohomish County, Washington), Jim Peters (Assistant United States Attorney [AUSA] Boise, Idaho), and Steve DeBrotta (AUSA Indianapolis, Indiana); and noncriminal-justice professionals, especially Park Dietz, MD; David Finkelhor; Bette Bottoms; Ann Burgess, and Lucy Berliner. I would also like to express a special acknowledgment to Jan Hindman who passed away in late 2007 and was a soul mate in my journey of addressing the problem of sexual victimization of children with compassion, professionalism, and objectivity and occasionally by sometimes “rocking the boat.”

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Introduction

Cautions

For emphasis and because I know many individuals will not read this publication cover-to-cover, key concepts described in earlier chapters will be restated, reinforced, or summarized as they are applied in later chapters. In the interest of readability, children alleging sexual abuse or who are suspected of being sexually exploited will sometimes be referred to as “victims” and adults suspected or accused of being perpetrators will sometimes be referred to as “offenders” even though the allegations or suspicions may not have been proven in a court of law. This shorthand should not blur the fact that investigators are expected to keep an open mind and maintain complete objectivity. Although females can and do molest children, offenders will generally be referred to by the pronoun “he.”

The term “child prostitution,” because it implies simply conventional prostitution with child subjects, may not be an appropriate term to describe the true nature and extent of this type of sexual exploitation of child victims. The use of this term in this publication should not be taken to imply children can “consent” to the sexual acts involved. At this point in time, however, it is the term most readily recognized by the public to describe this form of child sexual exploitation. It will be used in this publication to refer to illegal use of children in prostitution under the standards developed by statute, case law, and law-enforcement-agency protocols. It is hoped a more accurate term will be recognized, understood, and accepted for use in the future. The term “stranger” has been over-used when discussing the sexual victimization of children. For many it conjures up the stereotype image of a “dirty old man in a wrinkled raincoat” or an obviously “evil” predator. In this publication the term “stranger” will be used simply to identify those offenders not well known to potential child victims. It will be explained, discussed, and used primarily to distinguish the behavior of such offenders from that of offenders who are family members or acquaintances. Use of this stereotypical and potentially misleading term should be kept to a minimum, especially when communicating with parents/guardians and children.

As will be explained in detail (*see* page 24), the term “compliant” will be used to describe the behavior of certain child victims of sexual exploitation. Because so many nonprofessionals and professionals alike seem to believe that all child victims are forced or tricked into sexual activity with adults and because the lack of understanding of the behavior of such victims creates major problems in the investigation and prosecution of these cases, the significance of this compliance will be extensively discussed. The use of this term, however, should in no way be interpreted by any reader as suggesting or implying that such children are not real victims or should somehow be blamed for their victimization. To the contrary, the reason the term is used and discussed is to emphasize that such children are true criminal-justice victims depending on applicable statutes and to communicate the importance for interveners to recognize and understand their specific behavior patterns.

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