

## **Pedophilia & Trekkies**

**By Lyla Miklos**

**Maclean's**

**June 20, 2005**

### **Lyla's Letter to the Editor as it appeared in the June 20th, 2005 issue of Maclean's:**

Pedophilia & Trekkies

In your crime story on pedophilia by Jonathon Gatehouse ("The Star Trek Connection," May 30, 2005), I read generalizations like, "Investigations have been through so many dwellings packed with sci-fi books . . . and collectibles . . . it's become a dark squad room joke", And, "We always say there are two types of pedophiles: Star Trek and Star Wars." But then there is nothing more about either the TV show or the movie until the second to last paragraph. If several pedophiles owned baseball gloves, would we say pedophiles are baseball fans?

Lyla Miklos, Hamilton, Ont.

### **Lyla's Original Letter to the Editor of Maclean's:**

**May 25, 2005**

Dear Macleans Magazine,

I caught the banner headline "Pedophiles: The Star Trek Connection" on the front cover of your May 30th issue. Later in your content section I read "A surprising number of child sex abusers appear to be Trekkies". Then finally I read the subtitle for the story on page 42 which reads "Trying to figure out what [The Star Trek Connection] means, however, shows how little we really know about pedophiles" accompanied by a 3/4 page photo of a Kirk figurine by a computer monitor on the next page.

I expected to read an in depth examination of the connection between Star Trek and pedophilia only to read sarcastic generalizations of "sci-fi fans" like:

"Investigators have been through so many dwellings packed with Sci-Fi books . . . and collectibles . . . it's become a dark squad room joke."

"We always say there are two types of pedophiles: Star Wars and Star Trek."

"It's the type of oddball coincidence that's difficult to ignore."

And then there is nothing more on this connection throughout the rest of the article, until the final two paragraphs.

If several pedophiles owned a baseball glove would we then say all Pedophiles are baseball fans? If several Pedophiles wore Tommy Hillfiger sweatshirts would we also find that an "oddball coincidence that's difficult to ignore"? If several Pedophiles preferred Coke to Pepsi would we then have a headline that read "Pedophiles: The Coca-Cola Connection"?

This kind of sweeping generalization of such an insidious and hideous crime does a disservice to everyone. Its pure and utter fear mongering. Gatehouse's article is sensational garbage and one step away from tabloid journalism.

And strangely the rest of the article does not continue in any way what so ever to connect Star Trek to Pedophilia.

In fact later in the same article I read . . .

"We've had suspects from age 18-82. People who live in housing projects and in Forest Hill mansions. If there's a common thread, we're missing it."

"Yet with every arrest and prosecution it becomes clearer that we know practically nothing about the uncommon criminals who prey upon them. When it comes to pedophiles, there's more myth and anecdote than hard facts."

So writer Gatehouse and the editors of Maclean's after knowing all of this still decide to demonize a huge segment of the population in one fell swoop based on "anecdotal evidence".

Gatehouse in his article also insults victims of childhood sexual abuse with another remarkably appalling piece of misinformation.

". . . only about half of the men who sexually abuse kids have an actual sexual preference for them. The remaining 50 per cent of molesters have almost-normal, adult-oriented sexual attractions. Their abuse, often against family members, is not the result of a deep-seated preference, but rather a tragic lapse of judgment, frequently abetted by drugs or alcohol . . ."

## A TRAGIC LAPSE OF JUDGEMENT ABETTED BY DRUGS OR ALCOHOL!!!!

Rape and molestation are rarely if ever crimes about sexual attraction. They are about people abusing their power and control over someone weaker than them. How dare Gatehouse give excuses for this behaviour? His comment is tantamount to the rapist who says I didn't know what I was doing because I was drunk.

Throughout the article Gatehouse keeps looking at scientific studies, from as far back as 1886, and possible "cures" that attack the sexual drives of pedophiles and try to control them. He interviews several scientists and researchers who are studying the impulses and motivations of pedophiles from a purely clinical viewpoint. He also interviews several police officers and lists stats on sexual assaults, repeat offenders and the average age of pedophiles.

The reality of those who have lived with the shame and fear of pedophilia isn't even mentioned. Where are the comments and interviews from Rape Crisis Centre Workers? Childhood abuse victims? Molestation Counsellors? Pedophiles who are now released from prison and are now trying to live "normal" lives?

This article left a very bad taste in my mouth. I expect a better level of journalistic integrity from Maclean's Magazine. This didn't give an intelligent and thoughtful look into a horrific crime that few of us can fathom or understand. It just provided shocking headlines, quotes and stats with little context to connect the thoughts together in a cohesive and mature way.

Sincerely,  
Lyla Miklos

### **Jonathan Gatehouse's reply to my letter:**

Monday, May 30th, 2005

Lyla,

Sorry you didn't like the piece. However, I can't change the fact that the cops keep arresting sci-fi fans for kiddie porn. And yes, I do imagine that if the majority of pedophiles played baseball, or wore a particular brand of clothing, that it would be noteworthy as well.

Regards,  
Jonathon Gatehouse  
Maclean's

**The original article as it appeared in Maclean's:**

May 26, 2005

The Star Trek connection

A surprising number of child sex abusers appear to be Trekkies. Trying to figure out what that means, however, shows how little we really know about pedophiles

JONATHON GATEHOUSE

The first thing detectives from the Toronto police sex crimes unit saw when they entered Roderick Cowan's apartment was an autographed picture of William Shatner. Along with the photos on the computer of Scott Faichnie, also busted for possessing child porn, they found a snapshot of the pediatric nurse and Boy Scout leader wearing a dress "Federation" uniform. Another suspect had a TV remote control shaped like a phaser. Yet another had a Star Trek credit card in his wallet. One was using "Picard" as his screen name. In the 3 1/2 years since police in Canada's biggest city established a special unit to tackle child pornography, investigators have been through so many dwellings packed with sci-fi books, DVDs, toys and collectibles like Klingon swords and sashes that it's become a dark squadroom joke. "We always say there are two types of pedophiles: Star Trek and Star Wars," says Det. Ian Lamond, the unit's second-in-command. "But it's mostly Star Trek."

It's the type of oddball coincidence that's difficult to ignore. Even more so when you realize there's virtually nothing else, beyond their shared perversion, that links the new generation of child sex offenders. When the Toronto squad -- which drew international attention this month for its successful efforts to identify a young victim, the so-called Disney World Girl -- first started, investigators could draw a profile of their typical bust. It was the common stereotype of the molester and collector -- an older white male, living alone or with his aged parents, often in squalid conditions. "A loser in a basement wearing track pants," says Lamond.

But as child pornography has exploded on the Internet, and the number of suspects under investigation has mushroomed, that pattern has changed. The

detective points to a white marker board on the wall of the squad's downtown office that lists the names of the two dozen people they've arrested so far in 2005. The surnames are as diverse as the Toronto phone book. So are the professions, educational backgrounds, and income brackets. "We've had suspects from age 18 to 82. People who live in housing projects and in Forest Hill mansions," he says. "If there's a common thread, we're missing it."

The Toronto child-porn squad receives more than 500 tips a year. The RCMP, provincial police and other forces across the country deal with thousands more. Detectives sift through each horrifying image with the sure knowledge that somewhere a child has been violated, by their suspect or someone else down the chain. And as investigations grow, so do our fears. The safety of our children -- in the streets, at school, in cyberspace -- has become one of society's central preoccupations. Yet with every arrest and prosecution it becomes clearer that we know practically nothing about the uncommon criminals who prey upon them. When it comes to pedophiles, there's more myth and anecdote than hard facts. And after more than 100 years of study, the task of separating the science from the fiction has only just begun.

The corner suite on the fourth floor of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health affords a decent view of the University of Toronto campus, but the patient never gets to see it. Inside the laboratory's thick-curtained darkness, from the comfort of a brown vinyl recliner, the man is instead faced with three large white screens. Slide projectors flash medical textbook-style photos of nude men, women and children in carefully timed sequence while the test subject listens to erotic stories via headphones. A pressure cuff and transducers measure even the most minute changes in blood flow to the penis. Established in the late 1960s, based on technology developed in Czechoslovakia a decade before, the CAMH lab and others like it remain the best-established laboratory method to scientifically determine if someone has a sexual preference for children. It is far from foolproof. In tests of men who have three convictions for molestation but deny any attraction to children, the machine is about 60 per cent accurate. In about five per cent of cases it gives a false positive.

Still, doctors find the lab useful in helping them determine candidates for treatment. The CAMH, a world authority on child sex offenders, screens about nine men a week, most of them parolees or on probation. In thousands of tests over the past decades, what its researchers, and others in the field, have discovered is that only about half of the men who sexually abuse kids have an actual sexual preference for them. The remaining 50 per cent of molesters have

almost-normal, adult-oriented sexual attractions. Their abuse, often against family members, is not the result of a deep-seated preference, but rather a tragic lapse of judgment, frequently abetted by drugs or alcohol. They can be punished by the courts, doctors can help them deal with their addictions, but there is no cure for bad choices.

Ray Blanchard, the institute's head of clinical sexology services, has long been looking for clues to what makes molesters tick. Drawing on decades of case files (including the work of Kurt Freund, the pioneering Czech psychiatrist who set up the lab when he immigrated to Canada following the 1968 Soviet invasion), he and his colleagues have uncovered some surprising patterns among molesters. Men with a sexual preference for children are more likely to have suffered head injuries when they themselves were young. As a group, they have slightly lower IQs than the general population -- 90 on average, versus the societal norm of 100 -- and score lower on memory tests. And they are three times more likely to be left-handed. Almost 30 per cent of pedophiles are southpaws, versus eight to 12 per cent of the rest of the male population. The higher rate of left-handedness is important because it strongly suggests that pedophilia may have more to do with nature than nurture. Differences in intelligence could be explained by the simple notion that the smarter pedophiles are less likely to be caught. But a higher rate of left-handedness -- which develops in utero and has already been associated with a variety of neurological problems including Down's syndrome, epilepsy, autism and dyslexia -- hints that their brains may be structured differently.

Blanchard and his colleagues have only just begun to look for the specific differences with MRI scans. And they don't have a ready explanation for why pedophiles' brains might have changed in the womb -- whether it's a matter of genetics, biological toxins, or some outside factor like tobacco or alcohol use. He compares the situation to Plato's parable of the cave -- where bound prisoners sit facing a wall, a fire behind them, able only to guess at what is happening around them. "This is the best information we have, and at this point we're just sitting in the cave looking at the shadows."

It was the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing who first attached the label pedophile to men who are sexually attracted to children. His landmark 1886 study of perversity, *Psychopathia-Sexualis*, remains the foundation for much of our modern understanding of sexual identity. He coined the term sadism, and popularized the idea that homosexuality, rather than being a crime, was a natural and ultimately normal state. But if Krafft-Ebing put a name to the mental disorder that underlies child sex abuse, those who followed have made little progress in

figuring out what to do about it. Castration, the age-old avenging response to sexual crimes, has faded along with our taste for other draconian punishments. The few Western nations that practised castration in the 20th century -- Estonia, Switzerland and Germany among them -- stopped decades ago. (A few U.S. states have recently endorsed the idea of chemical castration, but it has proven difficult to keep offenders on the sex-drive-lowering drugs, which have many side effects.) In Canada, where history has shown that authorities tended to sweep child sex abuse under the carpet at least as frequently as they acted against it, there were few options beyond incarceration.

As attitudes changed in the 1960s and '70s, some doctors began experimenting with aversion therapies: tying sexually arousing images or cues to foul odors, or even electric shocks. Follow-up studies found that patients quickly learned how to suppress their responses during therapy in order to avoid the unpleasant consequences. Psychotherapists focused on a whole range of supposed issues -- conflict with mothers, excessive sexual desire -- but had no real evidence that their approaches were working. "People were trying everything back then," says Howard Barbaree, clinical director of the CAMH's law and mental health program. "But we had no way of measuring outcomes, no easy access to the rates of recidivism."

Since the mid-1980s, pedophilia has most often been treated like an addiction, with the focus on "relapse prevention." Patients are taught to recognize the things that trigger their urges, and avoid situations where they might be tempted. Barbaree believes the approach works well with motivated patients, but acknowledges that statistics suggest pedophiles, like all sex offenders, remain high-risk parolees. A recently concluded eight-year study of California's sex offender treatment program found that child molesters who followed the therapy were just as likely to reoffend as those who didn't. And the danger increases the longer they remain in the community -- the rate of recidivism in Canada after five years is 13 per cent, but by 10 years it has climbed to 20 per cent.

Our understanding of pedophiles has improved over the past decades. We now know they are generally seven to 10 years older than rapists are when they commit their first offence, and that their sexual preferences are as fixed as anyone else's (fewer than 10 per cent of test subjects show strong attractions to both adults and children or pubescents). We are familiar with how they groom their victims, and know that the notion molesters have themselves been abused isn't necessarily true -- just one-sixth report childhood abuse, although among pedophiles who prey exclusively on boys, the proportion climbs to two-thirds.

And some lessons have been learned, says Barbaree. There are now actuarial formulas to help predict how much of a risk a molester is to reoffend. Though to hear him describe the factors considered -- previous convictions, alcohol and drug abuse, access to children -- it sounds more like common sense than science. It's progress, but little comfort to those seeking an answer to the big question -- how society can effectively identify and treat pedophiles before they find their first victim. "People need to be patient," says Barbaree. "We're as affected by the behaviour of these individuals as the public is. We all have children too. It's a difficult field."

Those who like to look eventually want to touch. At least, that's the deeply held belief among the police officers who hunt child-porn users. Ian Lamond, of the Toronto sex crimes unit, says 30 to 40 per cent of the people his detectives arrest have previously been charged with or investigated for child sex abuse. The real number who have molested, he reasons, must be even higher. The case of Holly Jones, the 10-year-old who was kidnapped and murdered in the spring of 2003, has left a profound impression on the force. Her confessed killer, Michael Briere, told officers that he went from viewing child pornography on his computer to committing rape and murder in a matter of minutes. "The more you immerse yourself in a fantasy world where all children are willing and available, the more you feel you are missing out on something," says Lamond.

But verifying the link that police believe exists between viewing and doing is no simple task. Although the current law prohibiting the possession, production and distribution of child pornography has been in place since 1993, most of the arrests have come only within the past five years. And so far, there is little hard evidence that the explosion of child porn on the Internet has created a more dangerous environment for our children. "It's clear that people have much greater access to child pornography than they used to," says Martin Lalumière, a University of Lethbridge psychologist. "But it's also clear that it hasn't led to an increase in assaults." Crime rates, including all types of sexual assaults, have fallen precipitously since their peaks in the early 1990s. In the United States, the number of juvenile rapes reported to police dropped 26 per cent between 1992 and 2001. And the number of substantiated sexual abuse cases reported to child protection authorities decreased by 40 per cent. In Canada, overall sexual assaults fell 36 per cent between 1993 and 2002. Comparable national figures for just child sex abuse aren't available, but a 2002 Ontario study found a 44 per cent drop in reports between 1993 and '98.



In a first-of-its-kind study published this month in the journal *Sexual Abuse*, Michael Seto, a University of Toronto psychologist, and Angela Eke, who works for the Ontario Provincial Police's behavioural sciences section, tracked the records of 201 adult male child-porn offenders over a three-year period. The study found 34 (17 per cent) had reoffended. Among them, the biggest proportion were those with a prior record for molesting. Of the nine new "contact sex offences," just one was committed by a man who had been known only to look at porn in the past. "Our finding does contradict the assumption that all child pornography offenders are at very high risk to commit contact sexual offences involving children," the pair wrote.

Seto and Eke are continuing their research, and will soon start combing through the police files of close to 400 child-porn offenders across Ontario, searching for commonalities and patterns of behaviour. One of the things they will be looking for is reports of suspects with sci-fi collections, especially *Star Trek*. Seto hypothesizes that the pedophiles might be using their toys and memorabilia to groom victims -- a view that Blanchard shares. "They have to adapt their strategies," he says. "Just like a regular heterosexual guy sets up situations to get women in sexual proximity."

To the cops in the Toronto squad room, however, it's all about monsters. Maybe the pedophiles prefer a fantasy world filled with mutants where the everyday rules don't apply. Det.-Const. Bill McGarry, the computer whiz whose dogged work helped track the Disney World Girl and establish that her molester was already in prison, knows he is dealing with something alien to everything he and his colleagues hold dear. "It's quite one thing to listen to a kid describe an attack," he says. "But when it pops up on your computer, and you can hear them screaming, it puts it all in perspective." The dark side doesn't just exist in science fiction.