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Robert R. Hazelwood *Editor*

# Wives of Child Molesters Within the Family



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## Preface

Crime is a complicated topic. Sexual offending is one of the most complex subcategories of criminal behavior and the sexual abuse of a child is among the most abhorrent and least understood criminal behaviors. The purpose of this book is to provide the reader with a better understanding of the relationship between the inter-familial child molester, the victimized child, and the mothers of those children.

This study came to be as a result of a conversation between Dr. Andi Taroli and myself during a conference at which I presented findings from my interviews of 20 former wives and girlfriends of sexually sadistic offenders. Dr. Taroli, a forensic pediatrician who was at that time the director of the Pegasus Child Advocacy Center in Carbondale, PA, asked if any consideration had been given to conducting similar research on the female partners of child molesters and this project was born. The first task was to form the research group and we invited Dr. Janet Warren (DSW), Jeanne Rosencrance (clinical psychologist), and Mike Napier (retired FBI) to join us and we began to meet and discuss various aspects of the project. Over several months, we developed and refined the interview protocol which eventually reached 82 pages in length and included 379 questions. Over time, and prior to any interviews, Steven Conlon (FBI) and Dr. Vanessa Edkins (PhD) joined our team and Jeanne Rosencrance left.

This project provided the rare opportunity to ask questions of the one person most closely associated with not only the criminal but also the victims. These women were the female partners of the child molesters at the very time of their offending and they were also the mothers of the children who were molested and are reported on in this book. In our discussions, we came to understand that this study provided a wonderful opportunity to cross-culturally compare findings and it was decided to invite Dr. Bram Van der Meer (forensic psychologist) to form a team in the Netherlands and, utilizing a Dutch translation of our protocol, conduct interviews of 20 Dutch women who were partners of the child molesters at the time of their offending. Dr. Van der Meer agreed to join the research and subsequently invited Dr. Anton van Wijk and Ilse van Leiden to work with him.

As mentioned, in an earlier study I interviewed 20 wives and girlfriends of sexually sadistic males. Each of those women reported being physically, sexually, and

emotionally abused by their male partners, and, in five of those cases, the women also participated in the rape and murder of the man's victims. While none of the women in this study reported being involved in criminal behavior with their male partners, all of them suffered either physically, sexually, or emotionally at the hands of the child molester.

This book has five chapters, with the first chapter introducing the reader to the history of the women who were interviewed, their own childhood sexual abuse, and their relationship with the molester of their children. Chapter 2 describes the interview approach, structure, and format utilized in gathering the information reported herein. Chapter 3 deals with the necessity of the examining physician's obtaining complete medical, developmental, and behavioral information about an alleged child victim of sexual abuse. The physician needs to insure that medical and social information about the child's parents and caregivers is captured as well as whether the child's mother was a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the demographics of the child victims, the common behaviors exhibited by the molesters in his interactions with children, and the mother's reactions to learning of the abuse. Chapter 5 presents a comparative analysis of the findings of the US and Dutch teams. The Dutch data were not gathered in the same manner as the US data and some methodological differences surfaced which left us unable to draw true conclusions based on cultural differences. Therefore, it serves as an exploratory study and the findings presented highlight some interesting similarities and differences.

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# Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Andi Taroli for introducing me to the concept of this study. She not only originated the idea, but she was also intimately involved in the development of the interview protocol and she arranged and participated in the interviews of the first two women in this study. I would like to give special thanks to contributing authors Michael Napier and Steven Conlon who made many trips to Florida and Pennsylvania to conduct long and exhausting interviews of mothers of the victimized children. Special thanks also go to contributing authors Vanessa Edkins, who volunteered to take on the responsibility of project statistician and who also led the comparative analysis of the US/Dutch data; Janet Warren, a friend, colleague, and one of my mentors for many years; Bram Van der Meer, a close friend of many years, who coordinated the efforts of the Dutch research team; and Isle van Leidan and Anton van Wijk who identified, solicited, and interviewed the 20 women from the Netherlands. This was a massive undertaking. Also, thanks to Jeanne Rosencrance for her contribution to the development of the interview protocol. Finally, a special word of thanks to Kena Childers, AGI Executive Assistant, without whose invaluable editing assistance, this book would not have been possible.

This project would not have been possible without the participation of four advocacy organizations: Delaware County Women Against Rape in Media, PA; the Pegasus Child Advocacy Center in Carbondale, PA; the Family Learning Program, located on the campus of the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, FL; and the Crime Victim Center in Chester County, PA. The staffs of these groups identified the molester's wives and girlfriends whose children were victims of sexual abuse and acted as intermediaries for the research team. The Family Learning Program and the Delaware County Women Against Rape generously provided interview space. Of special note is the fact that the founder and Executive Director of Delaware County Women Against Rape, Joyce Dale, and her Director of Sexual Assault Services, Candice Linehan, coordinated the interviews of 15 of the 20 women. Joyce, Candice, and other staff members participated in each of those 15 interviews, most of which occurred on a Saturday. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL, for their review and approval of this research study (FL IRB #09-027).



Most importantly, I would like to extend the team's gratitude to the US and Dutch women who agreed to be interviewed about their relationship with the men who molested their children. It was an emotionally difficult event in which they agreed to participate, and while each of the women expressed appreciation for the manner in which they were treated, it was nonetheless a very hard experience for them to re-live their lives with the molester of their children. Thank you, ladies. This book is dedicated to you and your children.

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