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Penn State Shocker. Really?

Posted by Xtreme Dream Team on Dec 1, 2011 in Blog, Slider | 11 comments



Details of the Penn State sex abuse case have horrified us. And when ongoing Grand Jury probes and many more graphic accounts of a coach engaged in acts of sodomy and oral sex with minors emerge, a collective disgust will once again sweep the nation. The mainline story is a trusted member of the school and neighborhood community criminally misusing his stature to lure underage innocents into acts they find humiliating, confusing, and yet hard to refuse. The attached, secondary, story is the gaggle of authorities who knew some too much of the reality and chose to close their eyes, in deference to protecting their school and for fear of traveling a deeply embarrassing road.

And now, quickly on the heels of the Penn State crisis, a number of once-young individuals are finally revealing the cases of their own sexual abuse at the hands of their own once-beloved coaches. Syracuse University has fired longtime assistant men's basketball coach Bernie Fine as three of his alleged victims come forward with their stories. 1970's tennis pro Bob Hewitt is now being portrayed as

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- LA was once a place I never imagined I would live & now its my 2nd home.
<http://t.co/GZIMvpqn> Have U experienced something similar? [about 17 hours ago](#) from [HootSuite](#)
- I set the fears aside to accomplish a new dream. See my new blog post:
<http://t.co/J28bFXgY> 06:10:06 PM January 15, 2012 from [HootSuite](#)
- Check out my new blog post:
<http://t.co/bb31rD6s> 03:10:03 PM January 14, 2012 from [HootSuite](#)
- [@sportzdragon76](#) Its definitely too long for 140 characters [09:41:34 PM January](#)

a multiple-time sex abuser of his girl students, a story no doubt with legal legs for HBO Sports to have aired it just recently.

13, 2012 from HootSuitein reply to sportzdragon76

The nationwide blogs, television news magazines, morning reports, and sports columns carry the Penn State and ensuing revelations as their headlines. Top story of the day for many days, already worthy of 6 captures
20 Dec 2011 - 18 Mar 2016 of short attention span. Many call the Penn State an outrageous anomaly of

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sociopathology. One columnist ends his incensed diatribe with the words "We are in a place we've never been."

Really? Has nobody out there, except the literally millions of victims of this very same crime, been taking seriously the latest statistics: "One in four girls, one in six boys, in this country do not reach their 18th birthday without being sexually molested by someone they know".

And this stunning stat is based on those brave enough, evolved enough to speak up. What about the thousands, let's underestimate when the numbers are no doubt in the millions, who can't bear the shame of uttering the graphic details of what they endured? What about the millions who were not hit over the head with a sledgehammer in an alley in a one-time rape, but went along with their molestations for three or four years?



I'm here to tell you from first-hand experience, my case occurring in the 1960's, that this is not BY ANY MEANS a place we've never known. We're in crisis and we've been in crisis for a long, long time in this country. Sexual abuse, particularly, by those adults we have held on high on pedestals, preying on the young ones most in need of attention, most vulnerable and thus least likely to tell the sordid tales, is rampant. Not frequent, but uncontrolled, unchecked, widespread, rampant.

I know only too well all the situations, all the phrases, the psychology of con-artistry. "You are special. I've chosen you as the special one." "You must not tell ANYBODY about what we're doing. Your life will be ruined." "I'm an adult and I need this. One day you will understand." "As a straight, adult male, how am I going to admit to homosexual activity as a boy.... there is NO WAY!"

If there are multiple victims in each of these cases, many boys, countless girls, how is it that years can go by without us hearing from any one of them? If the count starts with eight individual victims in the Sandusky case, how is it that not one of those young people has come forth over these years? Easy. These predators are expert con men. My particular molester, who we now know molested many back in my day, and unfortunately probably many more over subsequent years, presented as the most charismatic character you've ever come across. Charming, pathological liar. He knew exactly who the right prey were and he was gloriously successful in targeting us, molesting us, and staying clear of the law.

The system does little to help the victims, a lot to protect the predators, too. Every step of the way, over several incarnations of trying to put my molester behind bars, from attempted phone stings to full-fledged police and USA Swimming investigations, he was protected by Statutes of Limitation, laws

forcing adherence to the non-feminist stance of the 1960's, lack of corroboration in the end by all the victims. Strength in these cases comes in numbers. One lone accuser has no power. And these clever predators can count on the history of rape cases, where one by one the victims who have even given their statements will sheepishly withdraw and leave either nobody or perhaps one lone person to actually attempt justice to be served. Welcome to my world.

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I do a lot of public speaking. Recent case in Salt Lake City, to a group of 700 financial planners, a typical case in point. If I decide to reveal the saga of my childhood molestation, I say to the audience, "I guarantee there are many of you out there tonight who have experienced the very same trauma." In Salt Lake the other night, I said we were next going into the adjacent, beautiful, chandeliered room for champagne and desserts, an elegant and social milieu where confessions of sexual abuse would not be likely. Despite the unlikely scenario, I said, I bet that at least five of them would find me, risk being heard by colleagues, and tell me some extent of their own personal stories. The count that night was twelve. Twelve women strong enough to utter the words, "I am a survivor, too. It was my stepfather. My next-door neighbor, the ice cream vendor, my cousin during Thanksgiving family visits, my after-school counselor." So twelve spoke to me, privately, that night. How many others who just didn't want that kind of semi-public moment? How many others who haven't even come to grips with their early trauma yet? How about the men in the group, perhaps harder for them to speak the devastating words? And so it's been for all the thirty-plus years I've been appearing in front of large audiences.

So, yes, we're appalled and sickened by the Penn State scandal, but what's going to happen? There will be a legal case that we will follow with collective disgust. It will bring robust ratings to the "tabloid" legal shows. Penn State will revamp its rules of conduct and reportage of suspicious conduct. Some other schools may follow suit.

But what of the epidemic? What if I also said to that crowd in the audience at Penn State: "And how many of you out there are predators?" The room can't be filled with victims only. If we have an epidemic in full swing here, and we decidedly do, the number of predators is bound to be shocking.

It seems to me that we need to get beyond simple rules of church and school that don't allow adults to shower with 10-year-olds. We unfortunately need to become a culture that suspects foul play at every week-end soccer tournament, every moment that a young person could be found alone with an adult, no matter how charming and magnetic that individual may seem.

And we need to begin to understand the full-circle psychology of these predators. The sociologists and psychologists looking at the syndrome of sexual predators today guess that 50% of these warped minds became warped by their own victimization years earlier. One of the Bernie Fine accusers, perhaps courageously, discloses that his own molestation by Coach Fine has surfaced in an adult-pattern of "issues setting boundaries with children". He is now under investigation for sexually abusing a 14-year-old, at the very same time he is speaking out about being abused at age 13 by Bernie Fine.

We simply cannot continue to brush this crisis under the rug of protection and embarrassment and fear. We cannot let the Penn State case come and go, fade from the front pages, until we learn of the next shocking incident of long-term, cover-up molestation. These situations are happening everywhere we live. On virtually every block of America's city and suburban neighborhoods.

I'm also here to tell you that the emotional remnants of being thus abused as a young, trusting person, naively believing that the parental figures in your life are preparing you for a life of strength and joy, become an imprint of shame and low self-esteem that is a lifetime sentence. As happy and successful and together as I truly am, at age 62, I must concede that the imprint of the molestation of my innocent 14-to-17-year old being never does disappear.

11 Comments



Laura B.

December 2, 2011

You are a survivor, I can't think of a better person to be a role model for other survivors as well as the general population. What was done to you was vile, life changing and there was nothing you could have done as a child to prevent an

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yet most children think they did something to deserve it, that nobody would believe them if they did say something. That's why they get away with it and sadly, in my opinion, always will. For some reason, the people who could do something about it don't care. Every time you have a great moment in your life, live with passion, takes the power away from him and gives it back to you. It isn't justice, the laws are a joke but maybe it's a small victory. You are a brave, strong and wonderful woman, Diana, try as that coach might he couldn't defeat your spirit! Keep singing and counting!

Reply



Dee Dee

December 4, 2011

I spent all of my summer hoping to have as much training heart as you, or at least a fraction. I kept referring to you as my hero to anyone who would listen, but now it means even more to me (and to many others, I am sure).

There are so many statistics about children of abuse and how we grow up and yet there are always the stories out there of people who go on to not only find personal successes, but also find ways to inspire those around them. Thank you for sharing so much of your personal story with so many of us. I am sure you hear this all the time, but it can't hurt to have one more 'thanks' directed your way.

Reply



Geralynn

December 20, 2011

A porvocaivte insight! Just what we need!

Reply



gvuuks

SqIDM3 zzbtklzdzon

December 20, 2011

Reply



Lorrie

December 5, 2011

Thank you again for being one of the most courageous people on our planet. We do have to be vigilant with our children in this society, AND vigilant to our 6th sense, if we even sense that something is not right, listen! Take action! It may not be the most comfortable place to put yourself in, but we must learn from this. Bully's, molesters, must not feel entitled and safe in our world any longer, and for this to happen, people must admit that it is happening to all sorts of people (even in your own families). Once we admit that this horrific abuse goes on, then we can

act and protect. Thank you again for your strong voice, I am sure it has touched many in deeply.

Reply

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AlwaysLearning

December 5, 2011

"Has nobody out there, except the literally millions of victims of this very same crime, been taking seriously the latest statistics: "One in four girls, one in six boys, in this country do not reach their 18th birthday without being sexually molested by someone they know". Perhaps this is why PENN State students rallied to keep Paterno? Perhaps some, many? of them have already experienced being preyed upon and they had to move forward and they expect those young boys will, too....

Reply



Rick

December 5, 2011

as the survivor of battering, I did a lot of work with children and various agencies working to intervene and prevent child abuse of all times. After speaking of my experiences, within 3 days I could count on 10% of the people in attendance starting a conversation with, "I've never told this to anyone but...."

Reply



Alex

December 8, 2011

So important that you're talking about this!

Reply



Chris

December 8, 2011

Couldn't agree more!

Reply



Chris

December 8, 2011

The other day I listened to the piece that This American Life did on the Penn State abuse scandal. Always insightful and quick witted, I enjoyed the piece until I began to get a queasy feeling. No where was there any real mention of the child(ren) abused. Come to think of it, nowhere in the mainstream media has there been an increase in focus on children who experience this horror.

Its not ok when our media and society spends more time focusing on the perpetrators than on those who were perpetrated against. The victims need our care, our focus and our attention to know that they were not wrong.

Thank you Diana & best of luck with the crossing.

Reply

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Diana Nyad's Xtreme Dream

"Diana is more than a swimmer. She's a beacon of hope to us all that we can dream big, live life large, and look back at all of it with no regrets whatsoever."

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Xtreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian

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