

SECTION II:

PERSPECTIVES ON OFFENDER PROFILING

Section II: Perspectives on Offender Profiling

Offenders profiles can frequently be used as a tool in investigation of crime. Paedophilia and the profile of the paedophile was used as a case study so that the meeting could be made aware of the value of offender profiling in the context of sexual crimes against women and children.

Paedophilia manifests itself in a range of criminal behaviour from using the child as an object of pornography to murdering the child. Paedophilia, an unrecognised, unreported and unaddressed crime, even among police, underpins and is a common theme in child pornography, child molestation and child prostitution. The paedophile is predominantly male, although there are rare cases of female offenders, and falls within three classes:-

- (i) collector/toucher: who collects child pornography and will touch children, in any way
- (ii) collector/abuser: who collects, touches and ultimately abuses children
- (iii) collector/abuser/publisher: who collects pornographic material, abuses children and publishes pornographic material himself.

In terms of offender profiling, the paedophile is an eminently useful case study as he exhibits a long term, persistent pattern of behaviour, the ultimate aim of which is the acquisition of a child victim. In this context, the offender may choose to target single mothers with young children.

A number of factors should alert a police officer to the possibility of a paedophile offender:-

- o convictions for indecency
- o movement within the country or even internationally
- o usually over 25, sometimes married, but more frequently living alone
- o sexual preference for younger persons
- o acquaintanceship with younger persons
- o attraction for professions involving children
- o skill with victims, particularly young people who are neglected or in government care, with whom they can communicate on an equal level
- o although the offender may be a stranger, it is more likely he will be known to the victim, research revealing that this is the case in 75% of cases
- o the offender is skilled in the manipulation of child behaviour, resorting to competition, peer pressure and blackmail
- o most offenders have a preferred child age group

- o almost all offenders have collections of child pornography, which they will show the child to reduce his or her inhibitions and will produce with the help of children attracted.

The paedophile is a particularly insidious offender, usually operating as a part of a 'ring' which at its most basic level is local, but which has national and, ultimately, international, linkage, in that it will subscribe to national and international literature. The 'ring' is very carefully bonded and notoriously difficult to infiltrate, the offence being a way of life for its participants.

The paedophile frequently collects pornography and material, including academic articles, justifying his behaviour. He will also frequently be in possession of letters to and from other paedophiles. These collections serve a number of purposes including provision of sexual fantasy, a means to lower children's inhibitions, blackmail and material for exchange and profit. The collection will often be vast and have been kept for a long period, each item of the collection representing an instance of child sexual abuse.

Often paedophiles were themselves the victims of paedophiles. It is, however, important not to overstate this trend so that it assumes that an abused child will in turn abuse. There are three reasons for this. First, such a suggestion is counter-productive for victims of abuse, who will conclude that their behaviour is predicted for them. Second, it emphasises the victimisation of the abuser and finally, it suggests lower sentencing for abusers who were abused.