

factors in participants' evaluations of the experience. Finally, that the majority of older teenagers of both sexes could consider their incest experience to be positive certainly challenges conventional assumptions.

This study was intended to frame critical issues surrounding contemporary incest practices and to stimulate further investigations. We now know it is possible to locate and study nonclinical, noncriminal incest situations and that, in such populations, not all instances of incest are negative or damaging.

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V

EFFECTS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

PERHAPS the most crucial concern of adults in the area of child sexuality is the effects of early sexual experiences on children—both at the time they occur and in terms of the children's later adult functioning. Eventually it will be necessary to be able to answer the question of such effects in the broadest sense and in the finest particulars of type of experience, antecedents, and context. For now, however, we must be content with research focused on certain "irregular" experiences that have been of principal concern. The first three chapters of this section report new findings on the impact of sexual encounters with adults. Ingram's subjects in Chapter 14 were boys brought for counseling, among whom were many who had had homosexual experiences with adults. The "sexual offenses" are described in relation to the boys' family situations. Bernard, in Chapter 15, has aggregated a sample of sexual autobiographies from people who, as children, had experiences with pedophiles. Chapter 16 describes how Tsai and colleagues advertised for subjects and conducted a comparison study among those

who had been molested as children and had at some time sought psychotherapy or counseling; those who had had such experiences but who had never been in counseling or therapy; and a control group of nonmolested subjects. The section closes with Chapter 17, an extensive review by Constantine of research literature on the social and psychosexual effects of childhood incest experiences or sexual encounters with adults.

PARTICIPATING VICTIMS: A STUDY OF SEXUAL OFFENSES WITH BOYS

MICHAEL INGRAM

IT has been noted in recent years (Gibbons and Prince, 1963; Mohr, Turner and Jerry, 1964; Burton, 1968; and particularly Virkunnen, 1975) that the legal distinction between assailant and victim is not always appropriate in cases of sexual contact between child and adult and that a child may willingly participate in or even invite sexual contact.

* Cases that come to the notice of the police are more likely than not to be cases of forced assault on an unwilling child, and evidence for psychological trauma resulting from sexual contact is almost always drawn from cases where there has been a violent reaction to either the offense, police investigation, court appearance, medical examination, or parental rage or hysteria. My first encounter with cases of boys being 'indecently assaulted' puzzled me as a student of child counseling. I was asked to counsel traumatized children who had eventually a totally different reaction from that of their parents, or the moral welfare committee. They regarded the experience with a certain robustness, if not relish, and that started me thinking about the problem in a new light. Thirteen years later I have collected notes on ninety-two children, and present them here. My collection may not be typical, for reasons given, but I think the conclusions, while needing confirmation by further research, may well be valid.

Literature on this subject is sparse. Usually it is limited to cases drawn from hospital files, and is confusing in that no distinction is

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* made between children who are sexually mature and those who are not. Sexual maturity is, in any case, hard to define precisely. In this paper I have confined myself to cases where the child was without pubic hair, or, in the absence of information about this, was under fourteen and did not have a changed voice.

Fourteen of the ninety-two cases studied (15.2 percent) were referred to me by parents or social agencies because of explicit sexual assault. Fifty-four (58.7 percent) were referred for counseling for other reasons, for instance family problems, school problems, and behavior disorders; but sexual activity was revealed in the course of the counseling. Twenty-four cases (26 percent) were discovered by me or my assistants overhearing conversations in a club or at camp. This study, therefore differs from those that have been drawn exclusively from police or hospital files, but it has a bias in that the children already had problems or came from problem families. In our present society it is not possible to collect a random sample of children and ask if they have had sexual contact with adults. But the evidence adduced by Walters (1974) would suggest both that such sexual contact is not uncommon and that it is not in itself traumatizing. He found also that it is not necessarily confined to children from problem homes. My studies excluded girls, since only six girls were referred to me in this period.

The total number of child-adult contacts studied was 109, but because some of the boys had contacts with more than one adult, and some men were known to have contacts with more than one boy, the total number of contacts among my subjects must have been much higher than that. One man I interviewed had had contacts with over ninety boys, while four of my subjects were either prostitutes or promiscuous. The children came from 77 families, 72 of which were sufficiently known to me to figure in the study.

Fifteen cases were finally excluded from the study either because information about them was inadequate, because it was not certain that the child was telling the whole truth, or because the man, on interview, gave a distinctly different story from the boy. One was excluded because there was some doubt about whether or not he was sexually mature at the time of the contact. That left 74 children from 65 families, and a total of 83 sexual contacts.

THE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

My subjects came from families with an average of 4.2 children (compared to the national average in England of 2.4). There were 2.5 boys to 1.7 girls in these families on the average. The preponderance of

boys over girls is partly explained by the exclusion of families with girls only, but also by the fact that effeminate boys, as well as maladjusted and delinquent boys, apparently tend to come from families in which the number of boys is greater than that of girls; this requires further study.

The large size of the families was at first thought to be due to there being more Roman Catholic families in the study, but when the figures were broken down there was no significant numerical difference between Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic families. It should be noted that many families continued to increase after the study was completed.

* Subjects ranged in age from 6-14 years and were an average age of 9.2 years at the time of their first sexual encounter with an adult. Seven were middle children and more than half were in the younger half of their siblings. Five were only children. Bearing in mind that there would be many younger siblings for whom sexual contact with an adult would be most unusual because of their age, it must be taken as significant that younger members predominate in this sample. Perlman and others (1979) have shown that greater sexual permissiveness was noted in younger siblings.

THE PARENTS

* It is difficult to define what is a "bad parent" or what is a "bad relationship" between parent and child. One is bound to be somewhat subjective; one therefore must speak only with great caution. Some children seem to flourish in the most awful multiproblem families, while others develop problems in what appear to be happy, well-integrated families. Nevertheless, it has to be said that most of these children came from problem families, and had poor relationships with their parents. I have tried to restrict myself to objective criteria, and to judgments that, in my professional opinion, the child's normal development was impaired by intrafamilial relationships. Among the criteria used were the following:

1. The father was habitually cruel and/or violent to the extent that the rest of the family were afraid of him.
2. There was material neglect to the extent that the home and child were perpetually filthy, the child did not receive regular meals, and the child wore clothing that was in a noticeably worse condition than that of other children in the same area.
3. The mother was having medical treatment for depression and/or anxiety.
4. The father took no part in the upbringing of the children, the mother being the sole disciplinary authority.
5. The father was evidently despised by the mother in front of the children.
6. The child stated explicitly that he felt rejected by his mother.

7. The mother was overprotective. This criterion was used only in a few cases, including one where the mother changed the child's underwear twice a day, one where the mother never allowed her children to play with others in the streets or playground, and one where more than one agency complained of the mother's frequent anxious interventions.

Data on the parents are summarized in Table 14-1. In all only ten mothers and ten fathers were "satisfactory," and in only six families were both parents "satisfactory." Two mothers were alternately overprotective and rejecting. One mother, like her husband was weak and ineffectual and the children were disciplined by neither.

TABLE 4-1. Characteristics of the Parents

| | N = 65 |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Father absent | 17 (26.2%) |
| Death | 5 |
| Desertion/divorce* | 7 |
| Unmarried mother | 5 |
| Father drunken and/or violent | 21 (32.3%) |
| Father weak/ineffectual | 17 (26.2%) |
| Father 'satisfactory' | 10 (15.3%) |
| Mother absent | 3 (4.6%) |
| Death | 1 |
| Desertion | 2 |
| Mother rejecting | 31 |
| Mother anxious/depressed | 39 (60%) |
| Mother overprotective | 11 (16.9%) |
| Mother 'satisfactory' | 10 (15.3%) |
| Both parents 'satisfactory' | 6 (9.2%) |

*There was no significant difference between Roman Catholic and other families in this respect.

REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE

In all cases in the study on sexual contact between adult and child, where the child was assaulted by a stranger (thirteen out of the larger group of 92 and two out of the selected group of 74), there were violent family scenes and a general hue and cry. The police were called in with the excuse usually given that they must prevent the same thing from happening to other children. The child was cross-examined by the police, examined by the doctor and so on. Only a woman who has been raped can describe what an ordeal this is, compounding the harm done by the original assault. As a psychiatrist said of one child I re-

ferred to him, "If he had not been buggered by the man, he certainly was by the police and doctor." *

In all six families where both parents were diagnosed as "satisfactory," the child told both parents, but not until some time after the event. The parents took the admission in stride. In one case where the man involved had been working with the boy and others in a local club the parents invited the man back to the house, discussed the event with him, recognized the good work he was doing, allowed him to continue his work in the club, and allowed their son to continue seeing him. In two cases the parents told the boy to discontinue seeing the man, and that was the end of the affair. In three cases the boy was referred to me for counseling, and I judged one session to be quite sufficient. In all six cases there was no lovemaking between the man and boy, only boisterous sex-play.

In all eight families where there was one "satisfactory" parent, the boy told that parent, who did not discuss it with the other (if any other parent was around). Three single mothers referred the matter to a social work agency who referred the boy to me for counseling. The social worker quietly invited the man concerned to resign his post. The other five cases were referred to me by the parent, and in no case did I do more than give the child one session of counseling. The four who were without an adequate father at home did seem to be more prone to sex play, and although they allowed much "caressing," the boys deprived of mother-love seemed to prefer caressing to sex-play. But these are only impressions.

*The remaining eight children who told their parents were among the most disturbed in the group, and their families were the most unsatisfactory. One boy of eleven was never allowed out to play in case he might meet a "dirty old man." A well-meaning social worker persuaded the mother to allow her son to join a local boys' club. On his first night he made sexual contact with the club leader and then went home and told his parents. His mother was obsessional and hyper-anxious, and his father violent and viciously sadistic. It was the only family where I intervened in a parent's behavior with his children, which I did because the man was threatening violence to his son. The club leader said the boy had been affectionate and cuddly and then passionately affectionate. He claimed the boy participated in the sexual activity with great enjoyment.

One mother hated to hear her children giggling, because she was sure that giggling indicated sexual pleasure. Her son also told her about a sexual incident which I am virtually certain he initiated. Another mother gave her son two changes of underclothing each day,

convinced that boys are dirty. Two mothers openly preferred their daughters to their sons because they thought that boys were dirty; the boys experienced their mothers as alternately rejecting and overprotective. They, too, told their mothers about sexual activity which they enjoyed even if they didn't actually invite it. The remaining three boys who told their mothers used to have violent quarrels with them, and they appeared to have wanted to hurt the mother by telling her how much more the men loved them than did their mothers.

That leaves 55 cases which were not reported by the child. Of these, four boys told their parents several years after the events, and four parents were told by social workers, who helped the parents to take it calmly. Guilt and fear of parents' anger seem to be important factors in the child's silence, while undoubtedly the fact that the child has enjoyed forbidden pleasures, and his loyalty to the man are the predominant reasons for a negative parental reaction.

THE MEN

While the context of the act was known in most cases, it was not possible to count accurately the men, as the children were unwilling to give names out of a sense of loyalty, which is in itself significant. Of 37 who were named, I contacted 17 and offered counseling; of these, 11 accepted and in return gave me information. I also obtained a certain amount of information from the others, largely offered in self-defense—the defense usually being something like “the child wanted it.”
 Some of the children in the study had contacts with several of the men, and some of the men had contacts with several of the children.
 * Only two men were strangers to the children, the rest having professional or other legitimate contact with them, or were members of the family and its entourage. I have not included the “pick-ups” of the prostitutes or promiscuous boys.

The eleven men who were counseled showed a striking similarity of family background to that of the children, though they were mostly of the middle and upper classes, whereas the children were mostly from the lower socioeconomic groups. The men viewed their own sexual development with disgust, and thought that childhood was a sort of perfection. They were impotent with men and women alike.

* They were men who loved children, and in most cases were doing a great deal of valuable work in the community. They all suffered much anxiety lest the disclosure of their indiscretions might wreck their careers, but complained that the children were so provocative or seductive that they had found abstinence impossible.

While I have reservations about this for reasons given later, I have to add that since my name figured in the national press in connection with this subject I have been approached by many men from all over the country, and even from other countries, and they all tell of cases where the sexual activity was initiated by the child, the behavior of the child was seductive, or was passionately affectionate. I also have to add that three of these men appeared to have had perfectly normal childhoods, free from any trauma or difficult family life.

* It is easy to see how men deprived of love as children should find in the unhappy children described above, objects of a deep love, and how the deprived children would cling to such men for the love they had to offer. That such relationships should become sexually intimate is not surprising, but I hesitate to agree with those men who claimed that the relationships were *sexually* meaningful, for reasons which, again, I will give later.

But other sexual contacts were of a completely different kind, and these, significantly enough, involved men who refused an invitation to meet me. In these cases the men showed the boys pornographic magazines and boasted of their own often imaginary sexual prowess. This led to sexual horse-play and mutual masturbation, but without any demonstration of affection. Such sessions were normally enacted in groups, and might alternate with affectionate intimacy in private. The boys appeared to regard the men as models of sexual prowess, and only in later years did they realize the true state of affairs and despise them for it. But several children remained in friendly contact with the men, even into adult life. One clergyman was asked to perform the marriages of two of his former associates, and a youth leader attached to a church became godfather to the children of three of his former associates.

THE NATURE OF THE ACTIVITY

The information here may be incomplete, as it is evidently a matter of some delicacy to probe into all the details.

A common game of middle childhood in this area is called “knack-ering,” which involves grabbing or punching one another's genitals. It does not usually entail any form of sexual stimulation. But some of the men in this study found it sexually stimulating and guided it along towards exposure and sometimes masturbation or mutual masturbation.

In some cases the man showed pornographic literature which led to the same end, and often exposed themselves and boasted of their imaginary sexual exploits. When the man was alone with the boy it was