

WE ARE ALL VICTIMS

The murder of teenager Grant Hussey and subsequent suicide of Stephan Eastburn, the man who sexually abused and then killed him, is a tragedy of monumental proportions. Yet without true understanding of how and why it happened, all of society will continue to be victimized.

Grant was a victim, of Stephan on the one hand and of our culture on the other. I strongly suspect that he was also a victim partly because he was such a nice kid that he had trouble believing anything bad about anyone.

Stephan was a victim of previous abuse, which produced warped sexual memories. Even when sexuality is being misused, there is a remnant of the beauty it was intended for it to carry. This is confusing to many people, who may say things like "how can anything be bad if it feels good?"

But, of course, sexuality is an area of life that is very prone to rationalizations. A person who is clearly abusing another will rarely admit it at the time. Even a rapist may claim that "there was consent."

Also, along with abuse, there may also be the simultaneous meeting of a legitimate need. A clue to understanding the abuse suffered by Stephan as a youngster comes from the reports of a very poor relationship with his own father. This would have made him more vulnerable to sexual abuse because he may have been so hungry for a father figure.

Homosexual men take advantage of boys and young men who have a legitimate need and longing for attention, love and acceptance. These men sense the need and may also truly want to be of help, but they reinterpret the basis as sexual. They may actually meet some of the legitimate needs but move beyond that to a seduction, although usually rationalizing it as something that the victim really wants.

Those who accept the homosexual lifestyle as normal will find nothing wrong with this sort of relationship taking on a sexual dimension. To them it is natural and normal. If they have a concern, it will concentrate only on "was there consent?" Some dispense with that aspect as superfluous, such as the North American Man Boy Love Association which states that all boys need sex and it is unloving to withhold it from them.

But consent is also a nebulous concept. What is really being said even if the words or actions imply agreement or at least acceptance of a sexual advance? Often it is simply, "I want you to care about me," or, "I trust you," or even, "I am confused."

I suspect that most probably there was pornography involved in this story. Stephan was almost certainly a user of pornography and I would not be at all surprised if he tried to share it with Grant at some point in the seduction, whether or not Grant agreed to look at it. The media will not look for nor report this because they believe that pornography is OK, but sexual assaults and sexual abuse nearly always involve pornography.

After getting worked up and acting out his fantasies, Stephan obviously was ambivalent about what happened because he called Grant's parents and confessed. After that, he may have decided that by abusing him, he had doomed Grant to become an abuser like himself. Then it would be "logical" to plan a murder/suicide as the solution for both of them, supposedly to destroy two monsters and save the world from what both of them would do in the future. It would also be a melodramatic and bittersweet end, a bit like a fairy tale.

At this point in time, the latest media revelations of the story indicate that Grant was frightened of Stephan and did not want to see him again. The focus has been on the failure of the psychiatric and legal systems to hold Stephan and even to keep him from retrieving his guns after they were turned into the police. There was indeed a senseless series of mistakes and inefficiencies that must be analyzed to prevent future repeats.

There is one very big point, however, that the media failed to mention in regard to whether the police, courts and mental health system acted responsibly. It is that crime statistics clearly show homosexuals to be 25 times more likely than heterosexuals to commit suicide. They also show homosexuals 15 times more likely to commit murder. These numbers ought to be considered very significant in the handling of this case and others involving a homosexual.

Yet nothing at all was mentioned in the newspaper accounts about this aspect of the case. The truth is that police are actually afraid of dealing realistically with homosexual cases for fear of being accused of discrimination. This was almost certainly the reason that Jeffrey Dahmer was not arrested when he was seen chasing a naked, incoherent, injured teen aged boy out of his Milwaukee home. Dahmer said the boy was his homosexual lover and the police let them go. The boy was later killed.

Yet focusing only on the legal and psychiatric failures tends to perpetuate the myth that these sorts of situations are only violent and coercive. In Grant's case, he was apparently kidnapped at gunpoint for the last ride to his death. Yet in similar situations, a teen may actually go willingly with the abuser.

But would this be? Often the victim really cares about the abuser. He may feel, as victims often do, partly responsible for what happened. This guilt and embarrassment may be mixed with a tainted pleasure. There would usually be great confusion about what it all means. The abuser may even be heartbroken and ask for help and comfort from the victim. The victim may actually think he can provide help.

If Grant had indeed spoken to someone from Alternatives (the gay support organization which created such a flap by making this claim), it would have fit completely with this kind of scenario. According to their accounts, Grant's contact with them predated the actual sexual abuse. If it were really true, it may have been because Stephan was already overtly or covertly pushing towards a sexual relationship which Grant was sensing.

If Grant truly liked Stephan and enjoyed being with him, he may have felt, or even been told, that this indicated homosexuality. If Stephan had previously attempted to introduce a sexual element into the relationship, this would have made it more difficult to consider it a simple friendship. Of course, that is actually what it was from Grant's side of the story, but nowadays, it seems to be quickly reinterpreted as a homosexual inclination. Also, if Stephan had showed Grant homosexual pornography and Grant found it exciting (which would not be uncommon), Grant would have also been likely to consider this a sign of homosexuality.

Because of this faulty analysis by essentially our entire culture, Grant's feelings would have become confusing to him. He may then have believed he would get honest and competent advice from an organization whose stated purpose is to help kids with questions.

In fact, the Alternatives organization probably believes that they are indeed helping youth with questions. But because people in this sort of work usually do not understand the dynamics and are mostly homosexuals themselves who think that the way they were drawn into the lifestyle is part of normal development, they end up being homosexual recruiters. And if Grant actually talked to them, it is no mystery to me what he would have been told. The standard line is, "Yes, you're gay, but it's OK."

What killed Grant? Pornography is not a "victimless crime" as the media portray it. "Reaching out to gay youth" is not a humanitarian venture. Sex, outside of the boundaries God set for it is a powerfully destructive force.

This news, combined with that of former priest Porter confessing to sexual abuse of children, as well as the accusations against Michael Jackson, has yet another effect that is even more insidious and far reaching in its effects. It inhibits the healthy and necessary interaction between adults and children. Coaches, teachers and sometimes even parents already feel inhibited in touching kids because of the concern about the possibility of accusations or even the actuality of sexual abuse.

Touch is not limited to sexual behavior, but is a separate and distinct need. Yet this distinction is being blurred, by some who are genuinely confused and by some who deliberately want to confuse the issue. Hugs and pats and other expressions of affection are necessary for mental and physical health and are also important means of communication. Babies whose other needs are met, but without touch, do not do well. People who are not touched are very prone to depression. This is not a sexual need. An infant snuggling is not asking for sex. And how in the world can you comfort a toddler without touching him?

Our society gets caught between the idea that all relationships are sexual and the mindless reactionary view that nobody should touch anybody else. The resulting damage is incredible. If a teen feels the need to be touched and understands that to be a sexual need, he may well act on the basis of that information.

Then, having gotten involved in some sort of sexual activity, there is nearly always guilt -- unless the conscience has been scarred. This guilt is actually supposed to turn a person away from destructive behavior, but is nowadays often interpreted as an effect of outmoded morality or society's intolerance. Then all those confusing feelings associated with misdirected sexuality can flood in, pleasure mixed with regret, bonding with the other person regardless of their worthiness, and the unleashing of a powerful habituating force.

The final analysis is that we are living in a dangerous world. Society wants a simple solution, like locking up all the monsters or "getting them into therapy." It oscillates between saying everything anybody wants to do is OK, and recognizing that there are problems. It usually does not see the connection between those two poles, however.

There is a set of standards, passed on since ancient times, designed to protect us if we follow them. And for those who are tripped up or pushed into the ditches of life, for those who stumble along the way and even for those who jump of their own accord, there is always a way out for the one who calls for help.

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