



Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis

**For
Law Enforcement
Officers
Investigating
Cases of
Child
Sexual
Exploitation**

In cooperation with the **Federal Bureau of Investigation**

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Child Sexual Exploitation**

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5. Collection of Child Pornography and Erotica

Law enforcement investigations have verified that pedophiles almost always collect child pornography or child erotica. *Collection* is the key word here. It does not mean that pedophiles merely view pornography: They save it. It comes to represent their most cherished sexual fantasies. They typically collect books, magazines, articles, newspapers, photographs, negatives, slides, movies, albums, drawings, audiotapes, videotapes and equipment, personal letters, diaries, clothing, sexual aids, souvenirs, toys, games, lists, paintings, ledgers, photographic equipment, etc.—all relating to children in a sexual, scientific, or social way. Not all pedophiles collect all these items; their collections vary in size and scope. Factors that seem to influence the size of a pedophile's collection include 1) socioeconomic status, 2) living arrangements, and 3) age. Better educated and more affluent pedophiles tend to have larger collections. Pedophiles whose living or working arrangements give them a high degree of privacy tend to have larger collections. Because collections are accumulated over a period of time, older pedophiles tend to have larger collections. Pedophiles with the economic means are converting more and more to videotape systems. They are even converting their books, magazines, photographs, and movies to videotape. For less than \$1,000, a pedophile can have his own video camera and two video recorders, which give him the capability to produce and duplicate child pornography and erotica with little fear of discovery.

Situational Child Molesters might also collect pornography but not with the high degree of predictability of the Preferential Child Molester. In addition, child pornography will comprise a small percentage of the total collec-

tion of the Situational Child Molester. In the child pornography collected by Situational Child Molesters, the children might be dressed up (stockings, high heels, makeup) to look like adults. The morally indiscriminate child molester might collect pornography or erotica of a predominately sadomasochistic theme but probably will not save the same material year after year. The sexually indiscriminate individual is most likely to have an extensive collection; however, the vast majority of it will not be child oriented. His material might display a wide variety of sexual activity and perversions, with child pornography being only one small portion. The law enforcement investigator should always consider the possibility that any child molester might collect child pornography or erotica; however, it is almost a certainty with the Preferential type. Because true child pornography is not easy to obtain, some pedophiles have only child erotica in their collections. Because it represents his sexual fantasies (age and gender preferences, desired sexual acts), the collection of any child molester should be carefully examined and evaluated.

Previous research conducted with Carol R. Hartman and Ann W. Burgess identified four kinds of collectors: 1) "closet," 2) "isolated," 3) "cottage," and 4) "commercial." The "closet collector" keeps his collection a secret and is not actively involved in molesting children. Materials are usually purchased discreetly through commercial channels. The "isolated collector" is actively molesting children as well as collecting child pornography or erotica. Fear of discovery overrides his need for active validation and causes him to keep his activity a secret between only himself and his victims. His collection may include

pictures of his victims taken by him as well as material from other sources. The “cottage collector” shares his collection and sexual activity with other individuals. This is usually done primarily to validate his behavior, and money or profit is not a significant factor. Photographs, videotapes, and “war stories” are swapped and traded with other child molesters (and sometimes, unknowingly, with undercover investigators). The “commercial collector” recognizes the monetary value of his collection and sells his duplicates to other collectors. Although profit is an important motive, these individuals are usually active sexual molesters themselves.

With the exception of technical child pornography (see discussion below), the primary producers, distributors, and consumers of child pornography in the United States are child molesters, pedophiles, and sexual deviants. Child pornography is not a multi-billion dollar industry run by organized crime or satanic cults.

Child Pornography

What the pedophile collects can be divided into two categories: child pornography and child erotica. *Child pornography* can be behaviorally (not legally) defined as the sexually explicit reproduction of a child’s image—including sexually explicit photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, movies, videotapes, and computer disks. In essence, it is the permanent record of the sexual abuse or exploitation of an actual child. In order to be legally child pornography, it must be a visual depiction (not the written word), of a minor (as defined by statute), which is sexually explicit (not necessarily obscene, unless required by state law). Child pornography, by itself, represents an act of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child and, by itself, does harm to that child.

Child pornography can be divided into two subcategories: commercial and homemade. *Commercial* child pornography is that which is produced and intended for commercial sale. Because of strict federal and state laws today, there is no place in the United States where commercial pornography is knowingly openly sold. In the United States it is primarily a cottage industry run by pedophiles and child molesters. The commercial child pornography still being distributed in the United States is smuggled in from foreign countries—primarily by pedophiles. The risks are usually too high for the strictly commercial dealer. Because of their sexual and personal interests, however, pedophiles are more willing to take those risks. Their motive goes beyond just profit. Commercial child pornography is still assembled and is much more readily available in foreign countries. United States citizens, however, seem to be the main customers for this material. Some offenders collect their commercial child pornography in ways (e.g., photographs of pictures in magazines, pictures cut up and mounted in photo albums, names and descriptive information written below, homemade labels on commercial videotapes) that make it appear to be homemade child pornography. If necessary highly experienced investigators and forensic laboratories could be of assistance in making distinctions between homemade and commercially produced child pornography.

Contrary to what its name implies, the quality of homemade child pornography can be as good if not better than the quality of any commercial pornography. The pedophile has a personal interest in the product. *Homemade* simply means it was not originally produced primarily for commercial sale. Although commercial child pornography is not openly sold anywhere in this country, homemade child pornography is continually produced,

swapped, and traded in almost every community in America. Although rarely found in "adult" bookstores, child pornography is frequently found in the homes and offices of doctors, lawyers, teachers, ministers, and other apparent pillars of the community. There is, however, a connection between commercial and homemade child pornography. Sometimes homemade child pornography is sold or winds up in commercial child pornography magazines, movies, or videos. The same pictures are reproduced and circulated again and again. With rapidly increasing frequency, more and more of both commercial and homemade child pornography is in the videotape format. This actually increases the odds of finding child pornography in any investigation.

It is important for the law enforcement investigator to realize that most of the children in prepubescent child pornography were not abducted into sexual slavery. They were seduced into posing for these pictures or videos by a pedophile they probably know. They were never missing children. The children in child pornography are frequently smiling or have neutral expressions on their faces because they have been seduced into the activity after having had their inhibitions lowered by clever offenders. In some cases their own parents took the pictures or made them available for others to take the pictures. Children in pubescent or technical child pornography, however, are more likely to be missing children—especially runaways or throwaways being exploited by morally indiscriminate pimps or profiteers. In contrast to adult pornography, but consistent with the gender preference of most preferential child molesters, there are more boys than girls in child pornography.

In understanding the nature of child pornography, the law enforcement officer must recognize the distinction between *technical* and *simulated* child pornography. The Child Pro-

tection Act of 1984 defines a *child* as anyone under the age of 18. Therefore, a sexually explicit photograph of a 15-, 16-, or 17-year-old girl or boy is *technical* child pornography. Technical child pornography does not look like child pornography, but it is. The production, distribution, and, in some cases, the possession of this child pornography could and should be investigated under appropriate child pornography statutes. Technical child pornography is an exception to much of what we say about child pornography. It often is produced, distributed, and consumed by individuals who are not child molesters or pedophiles; it is openly sold around the United States; and it more often portrays females than males. Because it looks like adult pornography, it is more like adult pornography.

On the other hand, sexually explicit photographs of 18-year-old or older males or females are not legally child pornography. But if the person portrayed in such material is young looking, dressed youthfully, or made up to look young, the material could be of interest to pedophiles. This is *simulated* child pornography. Simulated child pornography looks like child pornography, but it is not. It is designed to appeal to the pedophile but it is not legally child pornography because the individuals portrayed are over 18. This illustrates the importance and sometimes the difficulty in proving the age of the child in the photographs or videotapes. Particularly difficult is pornography portraying underage children pretending to be overage models pretending to be underage children.

Unlike child erotica, child pornography requires a child to be victimized. A child had to be sexually exploited to produce the material. Children used in pornography are desensitized and conditioned to respond as sexual objects. They are frequently ashamed of their portrayal in such material. They must deal with the permanency, longevity, and circulation of such a record of their sexual abuse.

Some types of sexual activity can be repressed and hidden from public knowledge; child victims can imagine that some day the activity will be over and they can make a fresh start. Many children, especially adolescent boys, vehemently deny their involvement with a pedophile. But there is no denying or hiding from a sexually explicit photograph or videotape. The child in a photograph or videotape is young forever and the material can be used over and over again for years. Some children have even committed crimes in attempts to retrieve or destroy the permanent records of their molestation.

Child Erotica (Pedophile Paraphernalia)

Child erotica is a broader and more encompassing term than child pornography. It can be defined as any material, relating to children, that serves a sexual purpose for a given individual. Some of the more common types of child erotica include toys, games, drawings, fantasy writings, diaries, souvenirs, sexual aids, manuals, letters, books about children, psychological books on pedophilia, and ordinary photographs of children. Child erotica might also be referred to as *pedophile paraphernalia*. Generally, possession and distribution of these items does not constitute a violation of the law.

For investigative purposes, child erotica can be divided into the categories below.

Published Material Relating to Children

Examples of this include books, magazines, articles, or videotapes dealing with any of the areas noted below.

Child development	Sexual disorders
Sex education	Pedophilia
Child photography	Man-boy love
Sexual abuse of children	Personal ads

Incest	Detective magazines
Child prostitution	"Men's" magazines
Missing children	Nudism
Investigative techniques	Erotic novels
Legal aspects	Catalogs
Access to children	Brochures

Listing of foreign sex tours, guides to nude beaches, and material on sponsoring orphans or needy children provide them with information about access to children. Detective magazines saved by pedophiles usually contain stories about crimes against children. The "men's" magazines collected may have articles about sexual abuse of children. The use of adult pornography to lower inhibitions is discussed elsewhere in this book. Although the possession of information on missing children should be carefully investigated to determine possible involvement in abduction, most pedophiles collect this material to help rationalize their behavior as child "lovers," not abductors. Personal ads include those in "swinger" magazines, video magazines, and newspapers, and may mention "family fun," "family activity," "European material," "youth training," "unusual and bizarre," "better life," and so on. Erotic novels may contain stories about sex with children but without sexually explicit photographs. They may contain sketches or drawings. Materials concerning current or proposed laws dealing with sex abuse; arrested, convicted or acquitted child molesters; or investigative techniques used by law enforcement are common.

Unpublished Material Relating to Children

Examples include items such as

Personal letters	Telephone and address books
Audiotapes	Pedophile manuals
Diaries	Newsletters and bulletins
Fantasy writings	Directories
Manuscripts	Adult pornography
	Financial records

Directories usually contain information on where to locate children. Newsletters and bulletins are distributed by pedophile support groups, such as the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), the Lewis Carroll Collector's Guild, and any other similar group. Manuscripts are writings of the pedophile in formats suitable for real or imagined publication. Ledgers and financial records might include canceled checks used to pay victims or purchase pornography or erotica.

Pictures, Photographs, and Videotapes of Children Examples include children found in

- Photography, art, or sex education books
- Photography albums and displays
- Candid shots
- Photocopies of photographs or pictures
- Drawings and tracings
- Poster and paintings
- Advertisements
- Children's television programs or videos
- Cut-and-paste pictures
- Digitally encoded images on computer or CD-ROM disks

Cut-and-paste involves creating new pictures by cutting and pasting parts of old ones. Seized videotapes should always be viewed or scanned in their entirety because a variety of material, including hard-core child pornography, could be on any one tape. Some pedophiles cut out pictures of children from magazines and put them in albums as if they were photographs. Visual images of children can be on computer and CD-ROM disks (which resemble audio CDs).

Souvenirs and Trophies Examples may include the mementos of children listed below.

- Photographs
- Articles of clothing

- Jewelry and personal items
- Audiotapes
- Letters and notes
- Charts and records

Photographs collected by pedophiles are often labeled or marked. Charts and records might include astrology or biorhythm charts. Audiotapes, letters, and notes collected for souvenir purposes are usually from past child victims and discuss what the two did together and how much the victims like the offender. Personal items could even include victims' fingernails, hair, or underwear.

Miscellaneous This category can include items used in courting children.

- Computers and peripheral equipment
- Sexual aids
- Toys, games, and dolls
- Costumes
- Child- or youth-oriented decorations
- Video and photography equipment
- Alcohol and drugs

Costumes include those worn by the offender and by the children.

Motivation for Collection

It is difficult to know with certainty why pedophiles collect child pornography and erotica. There may be as many reasons as there are pedophiles. Collecting this material may help pedophiles satisfy, deal with, or reinforce their *compulsive*, persistent sexual fantasies about children. Some child erotica is collected as a substitute for preferred but unavailable child pornography.

Collecting may also fulfill needs for *validation*. Many pedophiles collect academic and scientific books and articles on the nature of pedophilia in an effort to understand and justify their own behavior. For the same reason, pedophiles often collect and distribute

articles and manuals written by pedophiles in which they attempt to justify and rationalize their behavior. In this material pedophiles share techniques for finding and seducing children and avoiding or dealing with the criminal justice system. Pedophiles get passive validation from the books and articles they read and collect.

Pedophiles swap pornographic photographs the way boys swap baseball cards. As they add to their collections, they get strong reinforcement from each other for their behavior. The collecting and trading process becomes a common bond. Pedophiles get active validation from other pedophiles, some victims, and occasionally from undercover law enforcement officers operating “sting” operations. Fear of discovery or identification causes some pedophiles to settle only for passive validation.

The need for *validation* may also partially explain why some pedophiles compulsively and systematically save the collected material. It is almost as though each communication and photograph is evidence of the value and legitimacy of their behavior. For example, one pedophile sends another pedophile a letter, enclosing photographs and describing his sexual activities with children. At the letter’s conclusion he asks the receiver to destroy the letter because it could be damaging evidence against him. Six months later police find the letter—carefully filed as part of the pedophile’s organized collection.

Some of the child pornography and erotica collected by pedophiles is saved as a souvenir or trophy of the relationships with children. All child victims will grow up and become sexually unattractive to the pedophile. In a photograph, however, a 9-year-old child stays young forever. This is one reason why many pedophiles date and label their pictures and videotapes of children.

The need to validate their behavior and have souvenirs of their relationships are the motivations most overlooked by investigators when evaluating the significance of the pornography and erotica collections of pedophiles.

Use of Collection

Although the reasons why pedophiles collect child pornography and erotica are conjecture, we can be more certain as to how this material is used. Study and police investigations have identified certain criminal uses of the material.

Child pornography and child erotica are used for the sexual arousal and gratification of pedophiles. They use child pornography the same way other people use adult pornography—to feed sexual fantasies. Some pedophiles only collect and fantasize about the material without acting out the fantasies, but in most cases the arousal and fantasy fueled by the pornography is only a prelude to actual sexual activity with children.

A second use of child pornography and erotica is to lower children’s inhibitions. A child who is reluctant to engage in sexual activity with an adult or to pose for sexually explicit photos can sometimes be convinced by viewing other children having “fun” participating in the activity. Peer pressure can have a tremendous effect on children; if other children are involved, the child might be led to believe that the activity is acceptable. When the pornography is used to lower inhibitions, the children portrayed will usually *appear* to be having a good time.

Books on human sexuality, sex education, and sex manuals are also used to lower inhibitions. Children accept what they see in books, and many pedophiles have used sex education books to prove to children that such sexual behavior is acceptable. Adult pornography is also used, particularly with adolescent boy victims, to arouse them or to lower inhibitions.

A third major use of child pornography collections is blackmail. If a pedophile already has a relationship with a child, seducing the child into sexual activity is only part of the plan. The pedophile must also ensure that the child keep the secret. Children are most afraid of pictures being shown to their friends. Pedophiles use many techniques to blackmail; one of them is through photographs taken of the child. If the child threatens to tell his or her parents or the authorities, the existence of sexually explicit photographs can be an effective silencer.

A fourth use of child pornography and erotica is as a medium of exchange. Some pedophiles exchange photographs of children for access to or phone numbers of other children. The quality and theme of the material determine its value as an exchange medium. Rather than paying cash for access to a child, the pedophile may exchange a small part (usually duplicates) of his collection. The younger the child and the more bizarre the acts, the greater the value of the pornography.

A fifth use of the collected material is profit. Some people involved in the sale and distribution of child pornography are not pedophiles; they are profiteers. In contrast, most pedophiles seem to collect child erotica and pornography for reasons other than profit. Some pedophiles may begin nonprofit trading, which they pursue until they accumulate certain amounts or types of photographs, which are then sold to commercial dealers for reproduction in commercial child pornography magazines. Others combine their pedophilic interests with their profit motive. Some collectors even have their own photographic reproduction equipment. Thus, the photograph of a child taken with or without parental knowledge by a neighborhood pedophile in any American community can wind up in a commercial child pornography magazine with worldwide distribution.

Characteristics of Collection

Important The pedophile's collection is usually one of the most important things in his life. He is willing to spend considerable time and money on it. Most pedophiles make no profit from their collections. After release from prison, many pedophiles attempt to get their collections back from the police. The new state and federal laws banning its mere possession will most likely prevent the return of the child pornography. But unless denial is made a condition of treatment, probation, or parole, the child erotica may have to be returned.

Constant No matter how much the pedophile has, he never has enough; and he rarely throws anything away. If police have evidence that a pedophile had a collection five or ten years ago, chances are he still has the collection now—only it is larger. This is a very significant characteristic to consider when evaluating the staleness of information used to obtain a search warrant.

Organized The pedophile usually maintains detailed, neat, orderly records. There are exceptions, but the collections of most pedophiles are carefully organized and maintained. As will be discussed, some pedophiles now use computers for this purpose.

Permanent The pedophile will try to find a way to keep his collection. He might move, hide, or give his collection to another pedophile if he believes the police are investigating him. Although he might, he is not likely to destroy the collection: It is his life's work. In some cases he might even prefer that the police seize it and keep it intact in an evidence room where he might retrieve at least some of it when released from prison. One offender is known to have willed his collection to a fellow

pedophile. Another offender knowing he would never get his child pornography back, still went to the prosecutor's office to put his magazines in covers and dividers so it would not be damaged.

Concealed Because of the hidden or illegal nature of the pedophile's activity, he is concerned about the security of his collection. But this must always be weighed against his access to the collection. It does him no good if he cannot get to it.

Where pedophiles hide their collections often depends on their living arrangements. If living alone or with someone aware of his preference for children, the collection will be less well concealed. It might be in a trunk, box, cabinet, bookcase, or out in the open. The child pornography might be better hidden than the erotica. If living with family members or others not aware of his activity, it will be better concealed. The collection might be found behind a false panel, in the duct work, under insulation, and so on. The collection is usually in the pedophile's home, but it could be in an automobile or a camper, at his place of business, in a safety deposit box, or in a rented storage locker. The most difficult location to find is a secret place in a remote rural area. The investigator should search any area that is under the control of the offender.

Shared The pedophile frequently has a need or desire to show and tell others about his collection. He is seeking validation for all his efforts. The investigator can use this need to his advantage by showing interest in the collection during any interview of a pedophile. The offender might appreciate the opportunity to brag about how much time, effort, and skill went into his collection.

Use of Computers There is a modern invention that is of invaluable assistance to the pedophile: the computer. It could be a large computer system at his place of business or a small personal computer at his home. It is simply a matter of modern technology catching up with long-known personality traits. The computer helps fill their need for organization, validation, souvenir records, and to find victims.

Law enforcement investigation has determined that pedophiles use computers to organize their collections and correspondence. Many pedophiles seem to be compulsive record keepers. A computer makes it much easier to store and retrieve names and addresses of victims and other pedophiles. Innumerable characteristics of victims and sexual acts can be easily recorded and analyzed. An extensive pornography collection can be cataloged by subject matter. Even fantasy writings and other narrative descriptions can be stored and retrieved for future use.

Many pedophiles communicate with other pedophiles. Now, instead of putting a stamp on a letter or package, they can use their computer to exchange information. Pedophiles can use their computers to locate individuals with similar interests. The computer may enable them to obtain active validation with less risk of identification or discovery. Like advertisements in "swinger magazines," electronic bulletin boards are used to identify individuals of mutual interest concerning age, gender, and sexual preference. For instance, in the December 1983 issue of the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) bulletin, a member from Michigan proposed that NAMBLA establish its own electronic bulletin board. The pedophile may use an electronic bulletin board to which he has au-