

no msv Men Speak Out

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON MALE SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION

Stories of Silence: Documentary film begins at the 2001 Conference

BY ETHAN DELAVAN

When I was in college and recovering from incest suffered as a boy, I made two difficult realizations. First, I held the grim but ultimately self-affirming belief that if I could go back and undo what had been done to me, I wouldn't do it. Second, I knew that in some way my life's work would have to do with helping in a public forum to understand sexual abuse. Where these two convictions would lead me, I had no idea at the time. But ten years later I am making *Stories of Silence*, a documentary about recovering from boyhood sexual abuse.

Initially, the project was to be a personal journey, incorporating analysis from therapists and parallel stories from other survivors. However, as I've done more research and interviews, it has become clear that the documentary needn't focus so much on my own experience. So many give such tremendous creative energy to the process of recovery that I will be hard pressed simply to give the public an overview of the recovery experience in an hour's time. The final documentary will chart the process of recovery in a sequence much like the stages of grief, or as Donna Jenson, a sexual abuse workshop leader, has put it: "victim to survivor to voice."

Early in the planning stages, I told others I wanted to make a video about the effects of sexual abuse on boys. After hearing testimony from others, I realized that what is too seldom addressed in mainstream media—notably in the coverage of recent cases involving the Catholic Church—is the act of recovering. Recovery lacks the shock value of statistics or the dramatic flair of civil action, but it is no less important for the public to understand. My first working title was *Code of Silence*, emphasizing the various ways that boys are led to believe that speaking out about pain is not acceptable. I refined the title to *Stories of Silence* not least of all for its similarity to the Simon and Garfunkel song, but primarily because it emphasized the quiet, momentous heroism evident in becoming whole again after secret tragedies.

"I wanted to make a video about the effects of sexual abuse"

I haven't spoken to anyone who would discourage me from making this documentary, which tells me that the time is ripe. I know many therapists and practitioners who are eager to offer their thoughts on camera, and several survivors have come forward to offer their stories. This subject deserves a documentary shot in a modern, elegant style with strong production values, culminating in a crisp, accessible, informative product. I'm ready to begin shooting the main body of the piece, and only two challenges remain.

First, since the recovery process is largely personal, it is hard to capture it on video. Indeed, the very act of recording recovery activities can create an invasiveness and lack of safety that reenacts the abuse. That is the last circumstance I would want to establish. If you know of any public forums where men get together to process their feelings about this issue, and the group would be willing to have me present for recording, I invite you to contact me. In the past I have filmed survivor poetry readings, and I would be happy to record survivor art exhibits, support groups, dinners, press conferences, civil trials or reconciliation meetings. This kind of material is very enlightening to those who haven't suffered abuse and empowering to those who have.

Second, NOMSV has graciously extended their 501(c)(3) nonprofit status to *Stories of Silence*. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. The largest part of my production budget will be travel, since male recovery is a national—if not an international—movement. If you know of foundations, corporations or individuals potentially interested in supporting this effort financially, please send them to my web site at [The site also features a promotional trailer of the documentary in QuickTime video.](http://www.DelevanDramaworks.com) Please visit me there to find out more and pass on your feedback www.DelevanDramaworks.com. I am always eager to broaden the understanding of these issues

Dedicated to a safe world, we are an organization of diverse individuals committed through research, education, advocacy, and activism to the prevention, treatment and elimination of all forms of sexual victimization of boys and men.

A note from the President

With this issue, I welcome Dr. Murray Schane as our new Newsletter Editor. Our previous editor, Peter Dimock, is moving on to new responsibilities as the Conference Chair of the 2003 NOMSV conference, to be held in St. Paul, MN. I thank Peter for all his past work and look forward to hearing how the conference will shape up. Murray comes to this job from working on the 2001 New York Conference Steering Committee, where he worked hard on a number of the difficult tasks that were required to make the conference the success it was. I know he is a talented, dedicated writer and clinician who will have many new ideas for our Newsletter. Please contact him if you are interested in working on it with him.

I also am pleased that the Newsletter has a new name, Men Speak Out, a name that was voted upon by the membership and visitors to our web site.

As we go to press, the world -- at least the U.S. — is suddenly hearing about the sexual abuse of boys in unprecedented numbers. For weeks we have been bombarded with more and more information about priests whose pedophilic crimes were hidden by the Catholic Church. We have heard about a judge in California whose computer was found to contain a great deal of child pornography, and it looks like his reelection campaign has been derailed. There have been news reports about a cantor in New York City who has been accused of molesting his young nephew, just as he had molested his own brothers (including the nephew's father) many years ago. We have also heard about more and more rapes of adult men in South Africa, as well as wartime atrocities involving rape of male soldiers (as well as women and children) in a number of wartorn countries.

Simultaneously, we have heard much about

the priesthood, some of it misleadingly indicating that celibacy is what caused priests' pedophilia, or falsely equating priests' homosexuality with pedophilia. We have heard from all quarters about whether pedophiles can be treated successfully. We have even heard some of the stories of boys who were victimized, and these stories have included moving accounts of how victims of sexual abuse can overcome the secrecy that is forced on them and go on to lead admirable lives.

What we have heard very little about in the news media is how boys and men with sexual abuse histories can be treated and healed. This is a paradox: everyone seems to acknowledge that boys and men are traumatized by their abuse, but the media for the most part has focused on the crimes committed by the Church in covering up the abuse, the possibilities of healing pedophiles, or the monetary amounts that legal settlements will entail, and where that money will come from and whether the settlements will bankrupt Church coffers. Hardly anyone has seemed to notice that the victims need attention as well.

This is where NOMSV must come in. It is our mission to keep the public informed and educated about the aftereffects of male sexual victimization. We have tried to offer our expertise to journalists, attorneys for the victims, and Church officials. In addition, we have been posting as many news articles as possible on the NOMSV web site to keep the general public as informed as possible. Many of us have written letters to the editor, and I encourage readers to do the same in their own towns and regions.

Something has started. We cannot afford to let the public slip back into complacency.

My best wishes to all NOMSV members, friends, and sympathizers.

Richard B. Gartner, Ph.D.

Raped by Two Men BY IVAN

On 28 September 2001, I was kidnapped and raped by two men. During the attack I tried every thing to escape, and when that seemed not to work, I forced my head towards the pistol one of them were holding. For a small period of time I was left alone, and in that time all I could think of was all the dreams I still had to dream, of my loving wife and all the promises we have made to each other. A calmness came over me that I still can not put into words. When the two men got back into the vehicle with me again, one of them pointed the pistol to my head, and asked, "Do you want to die?"

What worried me for weeks, and even now, is that I had to think of my answer!

How could it be that I had so little value to my own life that I would have rather died than to face any one and tell them that I was raped.

My answer to him was NO, please don't kill me. They then forced me to have oral sex with the two of them. They left me at the side of the road, after they poured fuel all over me. I drove to the nearest hospital and reported the rape, something that I never thought I would do. In the months that followed, I went from bad to worst. I did not come out of my house, I had no intention of speaking to any one.

It was only once I started thinking of suicide that I recalled the question that man put to me, and my answer to him. There must be a reason why I chose to live that day. I had to change my attitude towards the rape, I had to realize that I was no longer lying in the back of a vehicle with my hands tied. I started telling people the truth if they asked me where I have been for so long, and it HELPED. I started talking to more and more people about the rape, and the more I talked, the better it made me feel. Once I started research on male rape I realized that I was not the only one, that there are 1000's just like me! This gave me a sense of reality, gave me something to live for, the fact that something had to be done to make people aware of this thing we call male rape.

I was in the right place at the right time (for a change) when I met a journalist and we started talking about the rape. This led to an article in a leading magazine and to an interview on national television. The response was one I never thought possible. Soon I was in contact with men from my own country, men who have kept their rape secret, some for as long as 12-years!

Why were we all ashamed to say we were raped?

Because of all the stigmas about male rape!

I am lucky in that I have a loving wife and am in an environment where I am not judged.

We are busy putting together the basis for an organization in South Africa that will be exclusively for the support and care of male rape survivors. I welcome any input that you might have on male rape, and what needs to be done.

My Abuse Experience: The Green Bicycle

BY MURRAY DAVID SCHANE

*A continuing series of personal accounts
of men speaking out about abuse*

My first two-wheel bicycle was a Schwinn, the 1950's kind with fat tires, chrome fenders front and rear, a chain guard, and a chrome headlight that sat clamped on the handlebars. The bike was painted a shiny spring-leaf green and had one long white stripe. I was seven years old that spring. I had just learned to find my balance by pushing off the curb and peddling fast. I wobbled down the side street, steadying hard as I could not to spill on the ground and gouge that brand new paint.

I lived with my mom and dad and sister and grandmother on a big broad roadway. Bike riding was not allowed there, so I rode out back where there were big empty fields with footpaths and a long stretch of sidewalk that was hardly ever used. Getting onto two wheels was a big deal, a major step up from a three-wheeler. Just riding so much higher made me feel bigger, older, taller. I would pull up to the edge of a group of older boys, careful not to dismount, and hang around the dirt lot where they played ball games, my hands firm on the bike, my left leg over the cross-bar, right foot planted on the ground—an imitation of how those boys would pause casually over their bikes, striking their ready-for-action biker-boy pose. I must have been standing there a while when a boy came over, a boy whose name I cannot remember, whose face I cannot recall. I'll call him Stanley now, today, because I don't like the name "Stanley." I would change it. And I will when I remember.

Stanley must have been about thirteen or fourteen. But that, too, is a guess. I remember he was a lot bigger than me. He was one of the kids in that neighborhood who joined the pickup baseball games that took place on certain afternoons, kids who went in packs to the movies on Saturday afternoons, kids who liked to hang out when the weather was nice. I was too young to play any position, not even outfield, but once in a while I was put up to bat. I held the heavy sloped and rounded baseball bat high-up, then took a swing with all my might at the tennis ball pitched low and underhand. Stanley was one of those boys.

After I got my bike I would ride round and round until I got tired. Then I would watch the ball game, trying to learn how those boys managed to connect bat to ball and crack out a base hit or even a wild foul ball. They let me be or sometimes teased me about my new bike because I was too short to straddle it with both feet on the ground. One afternoon Stanley asked

to have a ride. When I hesitated he started tugging on the handlebars and pulled the bike out of my hands. Then he jumped on and rode off. I started to follow and he yelled back for me to catch him but then he peddled faster and put on speed and tore off toward the big empty lot where construction had just begun. I ran after him. But then I lost him. I walked everywhere looking for him, for my bike. And could not find them. Suddenly it seemed very late, near supper time. I walked home slowly. My eyes were burning and soon I felt tears start to roll down my cheeks. As I turned the corner of my block, heading toward my house, I saw Stanley riding slowly toward me. He got off the bike and walked it to my side and then put his free arm around my shoulder and squeezed my neck in the bend of his elbow. He handed the bike over to me. It was covered with brown road dust but unharmed. I don't know why I felt so grateful, why for that moment I liked Stanley so much, why I was still afraid of him and still angry, still embarrassed because I could not speak and had tears on my face. But I was so happy to have my bike delivered back.

After that day Stanley started calling me over, getting me into conversations on his front stoop. He lived on that side street, just one or two houses off the corner, in a detached four-family house that, like all the rest, had a big brick front porch and a narrow cement walk leading up to a set of stone steps. Stanley liked to sit on the top, leaning on an orange brick pillar that tapered all the way up. He dangled one leg over the thick shrubbery that lined the front of his house. I played in the field across the street from him and that's when he would call my name and wave me over. He asked me if he could ride my bike again and I would always say maybe, maybe. But I kept my bike away from that field and off his street.

Then he started to ask me questions, he wanted to know things. At first it was fun and felt half grown up to be sort

of interviewed, to be treated as though I had some special knowledge, as if I knew stuff he wanted to know about. But I never understood his questions. He asked a lot about my sister, who was eleven then, my sister who did not let me know things, who kept herself apart and above me. I had no idea what Stanley was asking about but I was too embarrassed not to pretend that I knew, not to act as though I understood him.

Stanley also liked to order me around. He liked to take charge. He would take me by the arm and march me around. I did not enjoy that game. But I was intrigued. I was mystified. I wanted to understand. It was all about growing up, about getting to be a big boy. So it seemed. So I thought (without really thinking about it, without thinking it over).

Then something happened.

Something.

Happened.

Here the smooth eidetic run of my memory, this boyhood narrative, gets interrupted and, like a bad videotape, runs blank, tracks badly, throws up no image and no sound. Time turns and twists and slips forward. Then I think: nothing happened.

I remember that Stanley took me by the arm, held me tight above my wrist and walked me toward the back of his house. It was warm and very sunny. The bushes that lined the path along the side of his house grew tall and shaded us. A pair of workmen stopped us and asked Stanley what he was doing or where he was taking me. I can't remember what he said to these men but I knew it was not true. And I said nothing. I thought this was a game, a scary game, a big boy game I was thrilled to be invited into, but uncertain, unsure, afraid. The videotape of my memory runs out as we rounded the back of Stanley's house and headed into the garage. He closed the door, maybe locked it. I was wearing shorts. Stanley still held my arm in a strong grip. He was whispering. I could not understand what he was saying. He reached down and gripped my penis through the cloth of my shorts. He squeezed it. Held it.

I remember nothing more.

I know I went home later. I guess that it was close to dinnertime. I tried to tell my mother that something happened. But by then I had no re-playable memory. I could only tell her that Stanley had taken my bicycle and would not give it back. But that happened days before. I could not make sense. I thought she could. I thought she would.

But she didn't.

I think I tried to tell my sister, but she seemed bored and impatient and wandered off, as though I was trying to rise

to her level, to have an experience worthy of her interest and attention. Probably I made no sense, lacking sufficient words and expressions, being without coherence or meaningful meaning. Possibly she would not have grasped what I was trying to report no matter how well I told it. The memory of what happened never quite got to exist.

By the time my father came home late that evening I was already sleepy and numb and wanting to forget. I could not have told him anyway. It was somehow about being a boy, about being his son, about deep shame and disappointment.

By the next morning the last trace of that memory — a physical feeling? — was gone.

I never went down Stanley's street again. Not a planned avoidance. I only remember staying back. But even this memory, this chilled reminder not to go somewhere, seems dim and uncertain. All memory of the missing "videotape" seems false, erased, un-happened.

Then I had dreams. One dream really. It came in fits and starts. I dreamed it often until I was nine and we moved to new house miles away.

In the dream I seem to be down in the construction site where Stanley had disappeared with my bicycle. I know I had prowled around the site when the foundation had been dug and the basement walls were up. In the dream I am cowering in a dark corner of that basement, crouched with my head down and my arms wrapped around my legs. Stanley is there in the dream but I cannot see him. I think he is behind me. I think I am frightened but I can't be sure that I feel anything. Maybe I want to feel nothing. I can smell the damp odor of newly poured concrete. And I can hear sounds echo around the big empty space, indeterminate sounds. Action and movement and even my breath seem suspended. Then I wake up. Sometimes startled and frightened with the dream image hanging in my mind. Other times I wake up and immediately forget the dream, only to remember it hours later when it pops up like a momentary mental balloon.

Nothing more happened. I moved to that new house and shared a room with my sister until my grandmother was sent to the old folks' home. For several years, probably since that summer when I was seven, I had been having severe stomach aches. I was taken to my doctor many times, but he found nothing. When I was eleven these stomach aches must have become severe because he took an x-ray and then sent me to the hospital to have my appendix out. The post-surgical pathology report said there was nothing wrong with my appendix.

I had never been in a hospital before. In *(continued on page 6)*

The Green Bicycle *(continued from page 5)*

the evening before surgery, after my parents had gone home, an orderly wheeled a draped cart into my room. He then proceeded to administer an enema. Here, too, my memory fogged over. I may have resisted because a nurse suddenly appeared in the room. I cannot remember the insertion of the enema cannula but I remember the profound embarrassment and the sense of utter defeat sitting high up on a bedpan in full view of the nurse and orderly.

The next day I went down to surgery and was given ether. That sharp, penetrating, intolerably sweet odor sent my mind whirling and in my anesthetized dream I too began whirling, spinning with accelerating momentum until my body was a lump of flesh stretched at both ends, pulling apart with tremendous centrifugal force, whirling faster and faster like a tiny wheeling nebula in a blood red universe.

When I woke I was screaming and thrashing so hard my frightened mother could not hold me down and had to call for nursing assistance. I was pinned to the bed by three or four nurses and orderlies. The terror did not leave me for hours, although I did calm down. The worst part of that hospital experience was that it seemed familiar. That it was not the first time. Not my first brush with physical terror. And worse, I could not remember the referent, could not locate the first terror.

A new recurrent dream appeared. This was a re-play of the spinning nebula nightmare, the ether dream, where I have turned into a human whirligig that stretches and elongates so far that I cease to have any human form and cannot stop and feel as though I will be pulled apart.

To this day I have never re-captured the memory I lost, never found Stanley's real name, never been able to imagine his face, never can recall what he did to me or if he did anything. Sometimes I am comforted by this absence of memory, the feeling that all is well, that nothing happened. But often I am plagued with the sense that my whole life was thrown permanently off course, that I had been raped and violated and so terrorized that I had to sacrifice some part of me in order to escape and survive. As though I had surrendered my soul. As though I had to live in secret loathing and eternal fear of what I cannot remember.

In late adolescence, having cruelly ended a series of sexual relationships with girl friends and even more cruelly deceived men I had let lure me toward sexual encounters, I went into therapy and connected up these adventures with that terrible absent memory. Eventually the enticement sadism I had practiced with men ended. Relationships with women became easier and more amiable. My life went on. I finished school. I got married and had two children. I developed a successful career.

But I never remembered.

Yet the memory is there, sealed and empty, a seemingly blank videotape I cannot play and cannot discard. A black hole in my private universe. A wound that secretly bleeds. A speeding bullet I am still waiting to catch. A deep dark enigma.

And Stanley is still out there. Prowling.

It never ends.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Membership Committee is looking for volunteers to help increase NOMSV's visibility and membership. These volunteers will be asked to contact clinicians in their local area (via a pre-written letter) who work with male survivors of sexual abuse. This outreach will target clinicians who may be counselors, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, internists, etc. In the letter you will be inviting these professionals to join NOMSV; then you would make a follow up phone call. Please contact the Chairman of the Membership Committee, Marc Gilmartin, directly at Gilmartin5@aol.com

WEBMASTER NEEDED

Experience with Dreamweaver/UrtaDev4, CGI, SQL, and related technologies. NOMSV needs your experience and help to refine our website and services. Interested volunteers please contact our webmaster at webmaster@nomsv.org for complete information.

about the authors in this issue

THE GREEN BICYCLE

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Dr. Schane is a psychiatrist and writer who lives and practices in New York City.

RAPED BY TWO MEN

IVAN

Lives in South Africa where he has spoken in public about his rape experience and where he is working to build an organization like NOMSV. Male rape is apparently epidemic in that country.

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STORY OF SILENCE

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