

PREFACE

IN RESPONSE TO the obvious need to better equip parents and communities to protect their children from sexual and physical abuse, in February 2005, a twenty-five member clergy group in Rochester held a meeting with representatives from local and state law enforcement, child protective services, and school officials. The group expressed a desire to commence a dialogue and formulate a community-based plan for their mission. They made it clear they wanted to be active participants in this program, and challenged law enforcement to assist them in designing a proactive model for the rest of the nation to follow.

Since I had already spent the better part of twenty years investigating countless crimes against children, many of which were too despicable to describe outside of a courtroom, Sheriff Patrick O' Flynn asked me to attend the meeting and assigned me the task of assisting the men with their publicly declared war on child abuse.

A team of people from the respective agencies was formed to speak to church and community groups. We offered basic information on how to identify, report, and prevent child abuse, and described how each of the respective agencies worked together both to investigate and prosecute offenders and also to provide medical and emotional support to victims and their families. I spoke on the topic of seduction and sexual abuse in most of the presentations. My participation in this program provided me with an opportunity to discover a silver lining inside the dark cloud in which most of my career has existed. God has given me an avenue by which to share my knowledge and experience with the hope of preventing a new generation of children from being seduced and victimized. Another unexpected blessing has been hearing from many former victims who had always lived under a burden of guilt and confusion but were set free after studying the ways in which a predator seduces a

child and then uses guilt as a control mechanism. After having the common seduction tactics explained to them in an objective forum, these former victims finally realized the abuse they had suffered was not their fault as their perpetrators had successfully led them to believe. I personally believe God inspired and designed these meetings, bringing together representatives from both the church and law enforcement to help free many people from the destructive and lifelong effects of the psychological, emotional, and spiritual scars their perpetrators had indelibly etched into their very souls.

When it was first suggested that I memorialize the content of my lectures in writing to serve as a resource for the many families who were unable to attend a presentation, I never really gave it a second thought. I just didn't feel up to the task. The daily grind and lifestyle of a Major Crimes Investigator didn't allow much time or motivation for anything else. Just ask my lovely and patient wife. She would tell you that working in the Major Crimes Unit isn't a career, it's a lifestyle. Then, out of nowhere, I felt like God had spoken implicitly to my heart and inspired me to put pen to paper for the purpose of educating as many parents as possible.

The purpose of this book is to teach all parents and caregivers how to hone their God-given instincts into an effective, knowledge-based tool to protect their children from the child predators who live among us. The source of the material presented here is a composite of approximately twenty years of experience in investigating and arresting child predators. My life experience includes hundreds of interviews of child victims and their non-offending parents as well as interrogations of the perpetrators who offended them. This resource is not based on objective research and statistical analysis. Therefore, it should not be considered a scholarly, academic view of child sexual abuse, nor should it be compared with such publications.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

THIS BOOK REPRESENTS my personal perspective and is intended to offer a practical, simple presentation of how child predators operate in today's society. It will educate concerned parents and guardians about how to recognize when a child predator is in their midst, how to protect their children from predators, how to recognize if a child has already been offended by a predator, and what to do if a child discloses he or she has been offended by a predator. For the adult reader who was sexually molested as a child, it is my hope that this resource may assist you in making some sense out of what happened to you and help you understand it wasn't your fault.

First, I will lay a framework to help parents understand the common tactics a predator uses to gain access to seduce and maintain control of a child. Next, I will discuss specific defensive countermeasures against these tactics. Then, for study purposes, I will present several specific cases that will allow you to apply the principles you are learning to real-life scenarios that unfold every day all around you. Along the way, you will hear my opinion on matters many parents wrestle with, such as a child's right to privacy versus a parent's right to know, children's cell phone and Internet usage, whether victims should fight back against violent attackers, and how to get your teenagers to open up to you. While you may not agree with every opinion I present here, one thing is certain: when you have finished reading this book, you will be far better equipped to protect your children. If you choose to fully educate yourself on this dark, sordid, and difficult topic, you will come away from this experience with more peace of mind and in a much better position to help your children navigate the dangerous waters they might encounter while still in your care.

PATRICK CROUGHT

**And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.
(Mark 9: 42)**