

How to Banish Child Sexual Groomers

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By Daniel Pollack

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Cockroaches, those infamous, hearty and adaptable bugs, can withstand hostile temperatures that few other creatures can endure. Chameleons, known for their ability to change their appearance, can effortlessly merge with their environment. In the desert? Go brown. In the

jungle? Go green.

Child sexual groomers are far superior to roaches and chameleons. The challenge to law enforcement and the general public is that groomers hide in plain sight, not by enduring intense scrutiny or by blending in, but by appearing so positively friendly and caring.

The news headlines from just the past few weeks give a vivid picture of the many faces of child sexual groomers:

- “Police investigate 180 new child sex cases”;
- “Casper woman sentenced to up to 20 years for grooming teens to perform sexual acts”;
- “Lesbian games mistress jailed for ‘sexually grooming’ a schoolgirl”
- “Ivor Gifford, 92, jailed for grooming girls for sex in chatrooms”
- “Teen girl posed as boy to groom and sexually abuse underage girls ”



To get rid of roaches there are arsenals of traps and insecticide weaponry from which to choose. Locating an unwanted chameleon may take some subtle patience.

To catch a sexual groomer is much harder. First, is the groomer even there? They appear as do-gooder teachers, friends, scout leaders, coaches, neighbors, foster parents and first cousins.

Thorough background checks are strongly recommended but are not foolproof. Ironically, they may even lull us into a false sense of security. Alternatively, a vetting process that is too widespread and intrusive may cause an unwarranted sense of panic that will result in societal disquiet and fearfulness.

The simple but important response is to let people who interact with children know that sexual grooming is a concern. Human service agencies, schools, sports leagues and other child-serving institutions should have regular in-house trainings.

Child sexual groomers have the instincts of a cockroach and a chameleon, and the craftiness of a fox. Only occasionally do they get caught. When that does happen it's usually because they've left an electronic trail of self-incriminating evidence.

There is assuredly no guaranteed immunization booster against child sexual groomers. What to do? Just like roaches hate the glare of light, child sexual groomers dread being talked about. The job of the real do-gooders: Talk it up.

Because when organizations talk about their awareness of sexual groomers, they may just get scared and run away.

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