NAMBLA ARRESTS: THE FACTS

Our first need is to share correct information and combat rumors. The following is a summary of the facts in the FBI and media campaigns to slander and destroy NAMBLA and its members.

In the late evening of July 11, 1981, more than 30 police from the FBI and 8 city, county and state law agencies broke through the locked doors of a cottage in Baldwin Harbor, Long Island.

With guns drawn and flash cubes ablaze, they mashed furniture and seized 4 people who were quietly watching TV. They arrested two NAMBLA steering committee members, Jerry Fox and Martin Swithinbank. They also seized 2 thirteen-year-old boys whom they held by force and interrogated throughout the night. The men were also questioned from 11 PM until about 6:30 AM the following morning. Fox was questioned only by police, while Swithinbank was interrogated by police and by teams of FBI officers who rotated in 2-hour shifts.

Meanwhile, in upstate New York, 2 other men — Karl Ahlers and Hugh Hammill — were similarly attacked by police and FBI as they sat talking with 5 boys, their mother, father, grandfather and an elderly aunt. They were playing whist as the police made the arrests. These boys were taken and questioned by police for 5 hours. Protests by the parents were ignored. One boy fainted. Despite intimidation and heavy-handed police tactics, the boys provided the police with little or no information. The two men were charged with possession of a small amount of marijuana and possession of an allegedly stolen check. The ACLU is considering representing the boys and their family in charges against the police. The boys continue to live with one of the charged men with the permission of the parents.

Jerry Fox was charged with one count of 2nd degree sexual abuse. This is a misdemeanor in New York and generally refers to fondling. The victim involved is the 13-year-old seized with Fox the night of the arrests. This misdemeanor charge carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison and $1,000 fine.

Swithinbank was charged with a so-called Class D sexual felony, sodomy with a person over 11 but under 16. The person was not identified in the warrant and was evidently not the boy present at the time of the raid.

Dillon identified NAMBLA as a group "with the announced purpose of breaking down barriers of sex taboos between men and boys," and as an organization dedicated to eradicating the "extreme oppression" of men and boys involved in such relationships. He and others were also quoted as saying that the men arrested had met the boys at NAMBLA meetings where they also exchanged and sold pornographic films. Dillon also said that boys were transported across state boundaries to NAMBLA meetings for "immoral purposes." Police said "huge quantities" of NAMBLA literature were seized at the Swithinbank home, that names of NAMBLA officers were found in the literature, and that "more arrests are promised." One official made the usual comment that all this was only "the tip of the iceberg."

The literature referred to consisted of NAMBLA brochures which have been mailed to churches, political and gay groups. They have also been distributed at Gay Pride marches. There could not have been many brochures in Swithinbank's home since they are in scarce supply and only a few were given to each steering committee member.

The media also played up the child pornography angle, stating that "... boys were brought on numerous occasions to (Swithinbank's) home under NAMBLA auspices where they were introduced to middle-aged men who sodomized and sexually-abused them while videotape cameras recorded the action. Some 300 videotapes were seized along with 50 reels of 8 mm film..." (News). Other reports insisted that the videotapes and/or films were all "hard-core child pornography."

The implication was that child pornography was made by Swithinbank and others under auspices of NAMBLA.

Swithinbank has told NAMBLA members there was not a single videotape of a sexual nature, that only one or two tapes included some fully-clothed boys in non-sexual situations. He said most of the tapes were full-length classic films, including "King Kong."}

have been a presence in celebrations. All NAMBLA activities have been jeopardized. Nothing has been done.

Distorted news accounts use "a score" of boys "age 8" and the alleged "sex ring."

Swithinbank says the 8-year-old is a boy who is now between the ages of 10 and 11, and knows all of these boys are his "friends" and he never closed his room or his bedroom. Stripped of all the other sources of the alleged information, the 8-year-old is a boy who continues to stay at the home of the rest of the men, along with adults. Several of the boys have indicated total support for NAMBLA and have offered to clear their anger about police raids.

While in police custody, they were questioned repeatedly. Swithinbank said the FBI a) that NAMBLA was a covert criminal conspiracy to promote child pornography as well as to traffic in drugs and prostitution. The FBI never released such information in their official release. Swithinbank told them he was not going to give up his leadership of NAMBLA."

Jerry Fox commented, "I have all this information about NAMBLA and I certainly don't have."

At one point, police told him he could provide a NAMBLA number for Swithinbank if he knew all about NAMBLA. Swithinbank said he knew nothing about NAMBLA. Swithinbank's number of NAMBLA members were mentioned by his police interrogators. These were just in a general context, no specific acts.

The media reported that the FBI agencies had had Swithinbank in their sights for some time. They have been trying to get a hold of him for some time. They have been trying to get a hold of him for some time.