"In his irreverent, hilarious and hard-hitting prose, Mitzel reveals the hypocrisy and cynicism that underlie the current crusade against intergenerational love. This book is a detailed look at the often banal, always ambiguous truth that the sex scandal headlines have masked. I predict that children's liberation will be the next great social movement in North America. This book will serve as a major document in what will turn out to be the most violent and radical debate on human rights we shall witness."

EDMUND WHITE

"Mitzel's book is a brilliant and disturbing piece of investigative journalism. Brilliant because it meticulously documents and spotlights a witchhunt that might otherwise have appeared little more than isolated and accidental incidents. Disturbing because it reveals the ease with which many people — thirty years after McCarthyism — still allow themselves to be seduced by yellow journalism, government inspired hysteria, and antisexual foolishness into turning the victim into the criminal, and the criminal into the victim. This book is a welcome addition to the arsenal not only of men and boys who love each other, but of all those who wish to put an end to the tyranny of fear, stupidity, and the arrogance of the state. Mitzel touches a raw nerve."

DAVID THORSTAD
THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL

by
Mitzel

Glad Day Books
Boston
To All Those Who Resist

THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL
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GLAD DAY BOOKS
22 Bromfield Street
Boston, MA 02108
THE YEAR OF THE WITCHHUNT
THE YEAR OF THE WITCHHUNT

This is the story of a resistance. There are many accounts of resistance by homosexuals in the 1970s, but this one is different and somewhat special. This is a resistance by a group of individuals who for too long have been smeared by police, preachers, District Attorneys, popular prejudice and the press as "child molesters."

This resistance developed in response to a witchhunt. A witchhunt against homosexuals in general and boy-lovers in particular. It'd be foolish to think that there was only one single time when homosexuals were under attack in this society; the forces of liberation and reaction are in constant combat. But the war on homosexuals became overt and national in 1977 with coordinated campaigns by Anita Bryant, Ed Davis, Jerry Falwell, Jan Densinger, the National District Attorneys Assoc., police and press.

Here in Boston, the massive anti-homosexual witchhunt was launched by our 80-year-old D.A., Garrett Byrne, who first took aim at the pedophiles. As the D.A. came to concoct his witchhunt,
he drew from other recent sensations which involved homosexuals and teenagers.

This led him to the matter of Dick Bavely. Bavely had committed suicide in April, 1975 at age 31. Bavely had worked for the Massachusetts Welfare Dept. placing unwanted teenagers into foster care situations. Up through 1975, as well as after, the Welfare Dept. refused to acknowledge the existence of gay teenagers. The Dept. did not understand the special problems and needs of gay runaways (and throw-aways).

As gay men themselves know full well, many gay kids run away from home because of intolerable homophobia on the part of parents, other siblings, teachers and school peers. Their needs are not met by placing them into another oppressive straight foster home where they will probably find the same abuse or in correctional institutions which will only further brutalize them. Dick Bavely knew these kids were getting a raw deal from the state. He chose to do something about it directly.

On 28 August 1974, a 15-year-old gay teenager who had been temporarily assigned to Bavely’s custody and who was staying with him at his family’s home, stole a gun from Bavely’s collection, went to a rooming house on Beacon Hill and blew his brains out. In April, 1975, Bavely took a fatal overdose of drugs. The local papers circulated reports that Bavely had been taking young teenagers and placing them in homes of known homosexuals. They also reported that Bavely had been stealing money from the Welfare Dept. and perhaps using it to run his operation with boys. One lawyer I spoke with who had worked in the D.A.’s office told me he remembered hearing rumors at the time which implicated Bavely as the kingpin in a gay prostitution service which provided runaway boys for the sexual delectation of state officials. This was also the implication from straight press reports.

The truth of the matter was considerably different, but I mention this as a demonstration of how law enforcement people and press react to such a situation, and how their responses reveal ignorance of the lives of gay people. It was such standard suspicions, however, which laid the ground-work for the D.A.’s attack
on the boy-lovers.

A teenager who had also been living with Bavelly, as his foster son, at the time of his suicide was immediately taken into the offices of the Suffolk County (Boston) District Attorney and questioned. He subsequently told a public gay meeting that he spent up to 8 hours in the D.A.'s office looking at snapshots of adult males. He was asked to identify as many as he could. The police also wanted to know how many of the men he knew to be homosexual and how many had sex with minor males. A former Asst. D.A told me that it's customary to have such photos around only if there is some ongoing police investigation in progress. These are not police mugshots, but rather photos taken of police targets without the subjects' knowledge. This youth told us he was shown hundreds of pictures.

News accounts revealed that Bavelly could be traced as holder of a Post Office box which was registered to a Mrs. Mary McGrath. No such person was known to the Welfare Dept., even though an estimated $19,300 had been sent to this box over a period of years.

Gay activists and clergy who had worked with Bavelly told me they have no doubts that Bavelly had resorted to this theft to get money out of the state for the gay runaways. Those who knew Bavelly well are certain he used everything he got through this subterfuge for the housing, food and medical needs of kids the Commonwealth refused to acknowledge existed.

Bavelly collected guns. He often carried one in his car. It was his misfortune that the boy suicide, the 15-year-old who had just been released from psychiatric treatment, had been at his house. And taken one of the guns to destroy himself.

The death of Bavelly and the sensation it created were not forgotten by police or news reporters. But it took a little more stoking of reactionary fires before a full-blown witchhunt was launched.

Two well-financed and well-orchestrated attacks were aimed at homosexuals, both beginning in early January 1977. One was headed by Anita Bryant, the fading pop-star-religiosa, the other by Judianne Densen-Gerber in New York. The short-term success of
both these campaigns demonstrated to elected officials (D.A. Byrne had a history of exploiting popular hysterias in his endless reelection campaigns) the rewards of attacking “gay rights” (or, as Anita Green called them, “special privileges”) under the banner of protecting the little children.
PROTECTING THE LITTLE CHILDREN

It's strange to even contemplate that the official war on "pornography" could escalate in this land littered with churches and born-again religious hucksters. But in the mid-1970s, official attacks on pornography reached new intensity. In the past, anti-porno crusaders were generally drawn from the ranks of the rabid, right-wing, rifle-toting Christians, pale, thin-lipped book-banners, and their ilk. But after the President's Commission on Pornography and Obscenity issued its report (recommending decriminalizing possession and sale of sex pictures and devices for adults), adult theatres and adult bookshops, specializing in all kinds of sex matter, sprang up in many large metropolises.

There was backlash. Retailing of sexually-explicit material was still proscribed by Federal and state laws. Pornography sales were indulged by local law enforcers when it was to their advantage and raids were launched when they, too, were politically convenient. In the realms of progressive law enforcers, prosecutions against pornography outlets became a low priority.

But where reactionary Christians reigned, battles were legendary. In 1976, Larry Parrish, Nixon-appointed U.S. Attorney in Memphis, Tennessee, took to trial just about everybody connected with the film Deep Throat, including the actors, and tried them as part of a "national conspiracy." This was the first time in U.S. history that actors had been held legally liable for any film's troubles. The Deep Throat trial and appeal became an important rallying point. It demonstrated to liberals and those who generally

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supported First Amendment causes that they had to piss or get off the pot — that is, the issue of sexually graphic materials either involved serious matters of Constitutional protections or it didn’t. It also clearly demonstrated that reactionary political forces were going to exploit the porno issue and use it, whenever possible, to revoke or set back many of the progressive social changes which had developed in the past decade and a half.

In the Right’s strategy, porno, like that of recreational drugs, was a perfect issue since no one would come to defend it, and it would give them a likely victory in their struggle to prosecute all “victimless crimes” — a designation they refuse to accept.

1976 also saw the trial of Al Goldstein of Screw on a rap of using the mails to distribute pornography. Goldstein was acquitted. Even though Anthony Comstock had mercifully crapped out in 1915, during the trial of Margaret Sanger’s husband (who was accused of distributing an “obscenity” — birth control information), it was clear that even in the 1970s, his mean spirit still very much stalked the land.

In January, 1977, two new fronts were opened in this war. The first week of the year Anita B. Green, the born-again warbler, announced that she was launching a repeal drive in Dade County, Florida. Her goal? To revoke an amendment to the Dade County Human Rights Ordinance which expanded its jurisdiction to bar discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Bryant was the first to articulate what would become a national campaign against gay people, seeking their murder.

Only days after the Dade County battle began, Judianne Densen-Gerber, founder and topkick of the federally-funded drug rehabilitation center, Odyssey House, in New York City, announced she was launching a campaign against child pornography. Bryant had explicitly stated that homosexuals did not deserve equal protection under law because all homosexual men were child molestors. Densen-Gerber’s rage had a similar theme: homosexual men were, by and large, responsible for child abuse, child prostitution and kiddie-porno.
Judianne Densen-Gerber, founder of the drug-rehab center Odyssey House. She tried to cash in on the panic against "kiddie porno."
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Bryant became a fixture in the public media. The attitudes towards her were mixed. The reactionary press (which is in the majority in the U.S.) treated her and her cause completely uncritically. The big-city newspapers and electronic media switched warm-and-cold about Bryant. Sometimes she was The Battlin’ Mom, other times The Religious Buffoon, sort of a distaff Elmer Gantry with prematurely orange hair.

Homosexuals who were not previously active in gay liberation suddenly stampeded out of the closets in herds. All attacked Anita. “Anita v. Gays” made good copy, and press people know how to exploit The Action.

In the winter and spring of 1977, the media went crazy over the twin “issues” of gay rights and kiddie porn. They were constantly linked by Densen-Gerber and Bryant.

CBS’s 60 Minutes The Chicago Tribune, Phil Donahue, Newsweek, and other property party propaganda outlets exploited these sensitive matters. Self-seekers like Detective Lloyd Martin of the Los Angeles Police Sexually Exploited Child Unit (all of one year old) beat the drums of hysteria. Congress held hearings on kiddie porno. Larry Parrish of the Deep Throat “national conspiracy” fame ran to the nation’s capitol to jawbone solons on Morality & The Family.

As a result of this reactionary and media-flamed panic, virtually every state in the Union, as well as the federal govt., passed tough anti-kiddie-porno laws in 1977 and 1978. The Rhode Island law, for example, mandates imprisonment for mere possession of a sex picture involving a minor. Though American history is threaded with horror stories of panics and hysterias, there was really nothing quite like this kiddie porno panic. What made for a difference here is that the advocates in this panic were not your usual mish-mash of nut right-wingers falling over. Many well-meaning liberals and prominent feminists (who’d never seen any kiddie porn) were caught off-guard by this panic or actually endorsed it. The right-wing had done something they had long dreamed of — they pre-empted the opposition. They took hold of the kiddie-porno-gay-rights befuddledment and steamrolled right
over all opponents. With momentum built up attacking gays and kiddle porn, the Right hoped to move on to kill off the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, and recreational drug use, for starters.

Some middle-class feminists were swept along, and this development pointed out a division between the faggot sex radicals and the middle-class feminists which has only gotten wider as time has passed. There are many middle-class feminists who, in fact, are apologists for nuclear-family breeding, conventional parenthood, and traditional child rearing, as well as state intervention to maintain status quo morality. Some of these women are into worship of the "Mother-Goddess" and the biological superiority of their sex. Others wish to attain Respectability and are willing to sell out radicals to gain it. Many simply want to retain children as property (theirs) and refuse to deal with deep issues, like degrees of exploitation, once they have achieved their narrow middle-class reformist goals. All this group of feminists rejects childhood sexuality, refuses to acknowledge the existence (much less the desirability) of adult-child relations and particularly turns away from any probing of male sexuality in general and faggot sexuality in particular. The reality and metaphor of all male sexuality for them is "Rape."

Susan Brownmiller, alas, set the pace here. Her inaccurate and sensational book, Against Our Will, made rape the issue for middle-class feminists. Child-adult sex and kiddle porn fit very neatly into this world-view of Rape. Brownmiller and her colleagues, at first glance, made odd partners with Bryant and Densen-Gerber, but their support for them was at first implicit and later overt. In 1977, novelist Lois Gould, who later worked with New York women against pornography, suggested in one essay that women such as herself and her friends should join up with Anita and her ilk on issues on which they agree. These invariably centered on theindoctrination of children.

What makes these developments more demonstrably reactionary is this: since 1967, several states (including New York, Hawaii, Illinois, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and South Dakota) have re-written their age of consent statutes, lowering their ages and/or
THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL

making the laws more flexible so that an adult will not automatically have to be incarcerated for any contact with a minor. The current severe Massachusetts statute interprets statutory rape to include even “erotic touching.”

While this Kiddie Porno Panic was under way, two eastern industrial states, New Jersey and Massachusetts, were in the process of revamping their laws regarding age of sexual consent. The Massachusetts bill got scuttled as a result of the furor set off by the Suffolk D.A. with his “Revere Sex Ring” charges. The New Jersey bill, lowering age of consent to 13, almost became law, but the right-wing mounted an hysterical campaign and successfully got the legislature to up the age to 16. (The New Jersey law, actually part of a massive criminal code revision, also decriminalized sex with the dead.)

Many, like Det. Martin of the L.A.P.D.-S.E.C. Unit, want the age of sexual consent raised to at least 18, expressing the wish for state control over adolescent sexuality until it is time for “children” to marry and/or be drafted.

What’s still puzzling is why it was that homosexuals — and particularly homosexual men who had sex with teens — were targetted as the objects of this panic. Suddenly the United States had one overriding concern: homosexuals. Their rights. Their “recruiting.” Their alleged “exploitation” of the little children. Why was this happening?

I have two answers. First, homosexuals were coming out in masses. Gay Liberation became, in the late ’70s, the most significant and threatening social movement in the U.S.* Few could acknowledge or deal with this fact. The befuddled media could only pass along press releases — anybody’s. The organized left-wing parties were ignored in most gay organizing and didn’t know what to do. Several standard left cults are violently homophobic — it’s a “Bourgeois Degeneracy” don’tcha know? — so, despite their

*As the ’70s ended, over a quarter million lesbians and gay men marched through the streets of Washington, D.C., making real a dream of the murdered Harvey Milk. Such a demonstration would have been unthinkable 10 years earlier.
usual hunger to move in and try to take over any mass popular movement, gay lib dumbfounded them. The right-wing, floundering under a world slipping out of their control, finally found an issue around which they hoped to mobilize irrational support, so essential for their ultimate goals. They would Save The Little Children. From The Fags. Homosexuals were people, perhaps the only group left, whose executions the right-wing could demand (with Biblical blessing) and not raise hackles by so doing. The right-wing simply pulled out all the stops against this flourishing and non-traditional social movement which they were too stupid to understand and unable to dominate.

Secondly, America lost its imperial war in Indochina. This fact, now being disguised by imperial reconstructionists who characterize U.S. terror against the Indochinese as just a minor foreign policy “tragedy,” has yet to fully sink into the consciousness of the Amerikan polity. Gay Liberation, after all, took its name from the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.) in Vietnam, celebrating our determination to resist outside (heterosexual) and capitalistic (corporate) control of our destinies. Yet, after Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea were “lost,” somebody had to be blamed. All wars have a dislocating impact on the society, economy and citizens’ lives. Whether the U.S. wins (W.W.II), does OK (W.W.I) or loses (Vietnam), someone must be scapegoated. The price of the war must be taken out on domestic opponents to “patriotism.” As the world order is reshuffled to a new status quo, it is a perfect time to blame, scapegoat and move in. The Palmer Raids kicked off the anti-Red and anti-foreigner terror of the 1920s (that ultimately gave the nation that twisted closet queen J. Edgar Hoover). The Cold War gave us a newly-invigorated Nixon-twisted House Un-American Activities Committee and later Joe McCarthy scapegoating Communists, progressives, “prematurely anti-fascists,” and down-home liberals. The U.S. imperial collapse in Southeast Asia had to have a scapegoat. This time the queers first. New-right organs like Commentary ran serious think pieces blaming the decline of The West on U.S. homosexual writers of the last 20 years.
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Careerists do very well, thank you, in witchhunts. Panics need publicity. Exciting popular prejudices against minorities is a fast way to make a career — especially for yellow journalists. One who began early in the pedo-bait campaign was Marilyn Wright, a scribe for the Traverse City (Michigan) Record-Eagle. Wright did a series on a boy-lover who was arrested in the upper Michigan area. She had access to supposedly confidential police files and wrote lurid stories. An 18-year-old youth who had been a friend of the accused man, after the humiliation of police questioning and Wright’s reporting, went home and blew his head off with a rifle. Counting this as a success, Wright and her paper crusaded against child molesters and kiddie pornographers. Wright got her reward: a promotion, a pay raise, and the honor of having the Governor of Michigan, while sitting in Wright’s very own chair, sign into a law a brand-new anti-kiddie porn law.

Michigan became a hotbed of reaction against kiddie porn. Robert Leonard, a long-time D.A. in Michigan, made the hunt for pedos national. And Dale Kildee, a U.S. Representative, introduced a bill into Congress proscribing kiddie porn.

The Congress rushed this bill, (known as the Kildee-Murphy bill) into immediate hearings. These were held in May and June of 1977.

The Kildee-Murphy bill proposed outlawing the manufacture, possession and distribution of kiddie porn. The hearings were held before Rep. John Conyers’s subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee. Conyers was also from Michigan. Witnesses competed with each other in their fervor denouncing kiddie porn. Densingerber lead the pack, complaining that people were “now” urinating in the streets of New York. Larry Parrish, the former Memphis D.A., who announced he had the “soul of a prosecutor,” didn’t think enough could be done to fight this new menace. Charles Rembar, who usually defends publishers charged with obscenity violations, rolled over and drew the line with kiddie porn. Rep. Barbara Mikulski, whose district includes some of the hottest boy-love sections of Baltimore, appeared in front of her comrade Congresspersons and testified about how she has worked with local
mothers combating this blight. All urged passage of Kildee-Murphy.

D.A. Robert Leonard, a close friend of Michigan Congressman Kildee, a co-sponsor of the bill, was president-elect of the National District Attorney's Association at the time he testified. Leonard told the subcommittee that at the D.A.'s confab in the spring of 1977, he set up a "Task Force on Sexual Abuse of Children." He had urged all D.A.s to go back into their communities and "clean up" the "child molestors" and kiddie pornographers. Leonard repeated the Party Line so quick to fall from the lips of the child savers: sex with a child and photographing kiddie arousal constitute crimes worse than murder. Detective Martin said: "To me a crime against a child has no equal. It's worse than a homicide. A homicide is terrible, but it is over with very shortly. The victim of sexual exploitation has to live the rest of his or her life with memories of what pornography and sexual deviation brings upon them." In a phone interview with me in early 1980, Det. Martin confirmed that he still adamantly believes sex of any kind, if it involves a minor, is worse than murder.

D.A. President-Elect Leonard suggested that homosexual pedophiles formed a "national conspiracy" to recruit boys for sex and porno. This is why he was urging national action.

The only criticism of the proposed federal anti-kiddie porn law came from Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler. Flynt would soon be on trial in Georgia on obscenity charges; during the trial, while standing in front of a sandwich shop on a lunch break, Flynt would be gunned down by an unknown assailant. Also criticizing the Kildee-Murphy bill (its implementation, not its intent) was a staffer from the American Civil Liberties Union who opined that it was a sloppy bill, hastily written, and probably unconstitutional as a result. But the public clamor, whipped up by the yellow press, was an irresistible force. And Congress rolled right over. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Kildee-Murphy bill on a vote of 401-0. The Senate passed it. Carter signed it. It was law.

The salad days of the kiddie-savers did not last long, however.
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Judianne Densen-Gerber was accused in 1979 of having misappropriated many thousands of federal dollars from Odyssey House operations to her own use (parking tickets, hair-dos, home interior decorating, gifts for influential friends). Former employees of Odyssey House detailed horror stories of Densen-Gerber's abuse of drug-addicts at her charity. The New York State Attorney began an official investigation. Indictments may result. Curiously, at the same time as this state investigation began, Densen-Gerber's husband, Dr. Michael Baden, was fired as New York City Medical Examiner by Mayor Koch. It was not clear if there was a connexion.

D.A. Robert Leonard, ex-president of the D.A.s national association, was convicted in federal court in late 1979 of skimming over $100,000 from government funds slated to pay police informers. Leonard used the stolen money to finance a fancy home he was having built on the California Coast.

Congressman John Murphy, co-sponsor of the anti-kiddie porn bill, was indicted in June 1980 in the F.B.I.'s ABSCAM operation. He allegedly took bribes from an F.B.I. undercover agent posing as a representative of an oil sheik. One wonders: is embezzlement a prerequisite for Kiddie-Saver-Crusaders? Or is concern for The Kiddies used to hide the thieving?

Though it cannot be said that District Atty. Garrett Byrne of Boston was in any way an innovator in law enforcement, he was not so slow as to escape noticing a great new pitch when one came his way. Byrne attended the spring 1977 National D.A. Assoc.'s annual confab. At 80, he was the Dean of American D.A.s, and they periodically bestowed honors on him, appreciating his dogged longevity in office. Surely, Robt. Leonard's peroration to go after the "baby-fuckers" and the kiddie pornographers must have sounded like a good move to him.

It was while the Congressional hearings were taking place that Byrne's office arrested Richard Peluso. This was June 1977.

It was as a result of Peluso's arrest — Peluso later admitted in court that he had had sex with perhaps over 200 teenaged boys since 1964 and had taken Polaroids of many of them — that Byrne
Staffers from Toronto's *Body Politic* (l. to r.) Edward Jackson, Gerald Hannon, and Ken Popert, outside courthouse where they and the paper faced obscenity charges for having published Hannon's article about Canadian boy-lovers. At trial, they were acquitted.

pieced together his "Revere Sex Ring." Photos seized in Peluso's Revere apt. were used to identify 64 local youths. All were collared by cops and told to spit out names. As it turned out, only 13 agreed to cooperate, mostly under pressure by police, priests and psychiatrists. But more of this later.

Other arrests were taking place around the country. Similar police dragnets were attempted in Chicago after the scurrilous *Chicago Tribune* ran a 4-part series on child abuse/kiddie porn/homosexual chickenhawks, etc., in May 1977, and police stepped up harassment of gay clubs and cruising areas. This harassment continued well into 1979. Seattle cops tried to use gay hustlers to bust gay bars and arrest the hustlers' clients at this time.

And though not in the U.S., a spectacular raid was launched on Toronto's gay paper, *The Body Politic*, right after Christmas 1977. The paper and its staff were indicted on obscenity charges for having published an article about male pedophiles.*

But the biggest heat came down on the gay men in Boston. The District Attorney and the time-servers in his office were sure they had come up with a sure-fire recipe for a successful witchhunt. They created the Boston Sex Scandal.

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*In June 1977, another gay paper, the *Gay News*, in London, U.K., had been tried and found guilty of an "obscene libel," for having published a poem about the erotic phantasies of a Roman police guard who watched some mad Galilean die on the cross.*
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In June, 1977, while Congress was clucking over the much-publicized evils of sex with children and kiddie porn, a Boston area school bus driver, Frank Damiano, was arrested. He was charged on numerous counts of engaging in sexual relations with males and females under the age of consent. Damiano, a previous offender, was quickly sentenced to 22 life sentences in prison.

Immediately after Damiano’s arrest, police also arrested Pasquale Intraversato and Richard Peluso. Apparently Damiano gave both names to police, even though the cases were unrelated.*

*In April, 1978, Intraversato pleaded guilty to oral sex with 2 teenaged boys in the Italian North End. Originally sentenced to 8 to 10 years for these “sex crimes,” the sentence was later changed by Judge David Nelson after Dr. Donald Allen got probation for his acts of oral sex in Dec. 1978. Nelson altered the sentence to time served. Nelson was then promoted to the Federal District Bench.
TARGET: RICHARD PELUSO

Richard Peluso lived at 242 Mountain Avenue in Revere, Massachusetts. As he later testified (in the trial of Dr. Donald Allen), Peluso had been having sexual relations with teenaged boys for 15 years. Many people knew about this. He had not had legal problems as a result of his activities at any prior time. Revere has the reputation as a "boy-town." It's a place that has all the characteristics of many other boy-towns, as described by Tom Reeves in his essay "The Boys of Baltimore" (published in the "Emergency Supplement" of Fag Rag #21/22). Revere is ethnic, family-centered, with many children, where a Mediterranean cultural-influence is still strong and where sex-aggression in boys is encouraged. Italo-American boys from Revere and other neighborhoods have a noticeably more sex-positive attitude than do their Irish-American fellow citizens.

Peluso's arrest in this highly-charged atmosphere against child-exploitation and kiddie porno made big trouble for him and others. His arrest, like Damiano's, went headlines for days. In Peluso's apartment, police found a number of Polaroid photographs. Curiously, these photos stayed in Peluso's apartment for a day or two after his arrest. People I've talked to in Revere wonder why a Peluso family member didn't come in and clean out the apartment. Peluso's father, with whom he is not on good terms, held the title of Revere's "Official City Greeter" in the administration of Mayor Reinstein. Mayor Reinstein was also indicted by
Garrett Byrne on some kickback scheme.
From the photos, police identified local youths. By the summer of 1977, many of them were well into their 20s. Police tried to get these individuals to appear in front of a grand jury which was preparing many indictments on gay sex-related charges. The D.A. assigned his gilt-edged unit to handle the cases. This was SCIPP — the Suffolk County Investigations and Prosecutions Project.

Garrett Byrne — who liked to be known as “Mister District Attorney” — had been around long enough to know how to exploit a red-hot investigation. It was clear from his actions that he was going to take these “child-rape” charges all the way. It must have looked like a free ride for him. And he needed as much help as he could get. 1978 was election year for the D.A. He was 80 years old and had been associated with the D.A.’s office for 45 years. Many thought he should retire. He promised a hard run to keep his office. The attack on the homosexuals would be the centerpiece of his re-election campaign.

After Peluso’s sensational arrest, police were able to convince and/or coerce 13 of 63 youths identified through photographs to cooperate with law enforcers. Through the testimony of these 13, 24 men were indicted in over 100 felonies: rape and abuse upon a child under 16, sodomy, unnatural acts, open and gross lewdness and indecent assault. All of which sounded very sinister and made fabulous headlines. This was the “Sex Ring,” and in fact what was not learned until much later was that the bulk of all these indictments resulted from the sexual activities of two 15-year-old hustlers in Revere who had been occasionally selling their sex to men they met at Peluso’s apartment, as well as elsewhere in Revere and Boston.

The momentum behind this witchhunt was that of simple Judeo-Christian prejudice shrouded in statutes. There are lots of peculiarities in the laws controlling age of consent. Nowhere is there uniformity in this matter — uniformity in enforcement among the states, between boy and girl “victims,” among nations, or even across time.

In Massachusetts, the age for sexual consent is 16. Anyone
under the age of 16 is regarded by the courts, in sexual matters, as a "child." This does not mean that a person under 16 has no sexual rights. A boy may marry at age 14, a girl at 12. Both may receive contraceptives. Minor females can seek abortions without parental consent. These latter rights were affirmed through the courts, not through legislative enlightenment. But no one under the age of 16 can legally give sexual consent. Therefore, all forms of sexual activity with a "child" are statutorily classified as "rape and abuse upon a child," and it is a felony and can carry up to a maximum sentence of life in prison. The current law does not differentiate between consent and force in sex where minors are involved. There is no incentive for an adult not to use force to obtain sex with a minor. Nor is it permitted in court to say that a youth consented to the sexual activity. Evidence of sexual activity is non-rebuttable under current criminal law in Massachusetts.

As actually applied in the Commonwealth's courts, it's rare that a male accused of homosexual acts with a minor comes to trial. Terribly embarrassed by the situation, adult males have been pressured by D.A.s as well as their own attorneys to plead guilty, with perhaps the promise of a lighter sentence. The trap here is that any person found guilty of a sex crime is, under a 1958 statute, required to be observed by court-appointed psychiatrists for 60 days. If they find him to be a "Sexually Dangerous Person," the felon is then remanded to the Treatment Unit at Bridgewater Correctional Institution where he remains on a day-to-life sentence or until such a time as he is found to be no longer "Sexually Dangerous." This is exactly what happened to Richard Peluso.

The Treatment Unit at Bridgewater is filled with the odd combination of straight men who have committed violent rape on women mixed with homosexual men who have sucked the cocks of teen boys. Recent estimates place the number of non-violent homosexual "sex criminals" in Bridgewater and elsewhere in Massachusetts at close to 100.

To give you an idea of the discrepancy between the way homosexuals and heterosexuals are treated by the law, it was in the midst of the "Revere Sex Ring" witchhunt, that a man was indicted in
neighboring Brookline (in Norfolk County). He was charged with running an actual hetero ring which specialized in selling the sex of young females who were known as "The Sunshine Girls." They engaged their clients in "the sex of humiliation." Police seized documents which revealed that this "ring" had 957 known male clients. As happens in these situations, many were rumored to be prominent in public life. Not one patron of this "sex-ring" had his name released to the press. The Brookline whoremaster pleaded guilty and was given a two year sentence. He served slightly more than one year.

About this same time, in New Mexico, an adult female was charged with corrupting a 15-year-old male by having sex with him. She was acquitted. The judge ruled that such sex was "educational." And in New York City, Judge Margaret Taylor dismissed charges against a teenaged female prostitute (brought by a john who had not got satisfaction) on the grounds that the sex was recreational.
MISTER DISTRICT ATTORNEY

But back to Garrett Byrne. He was the D.A. for Suffolk County, which comprises Boston and three smaller cities: Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere. Revere is heavily populated with second and third generation Italo-Americans. Revere has been a favorite target for Mr. Byrne's periodic dragnets while pursuing his crusade against "organized crime."

Garrett Byrne first ran for public office in 1928. He lost. In 1933, a place was found for him as an Assistant District Attorney. Since 1926, the office of the D.A. in Suffolk County has been part and parcel of the Irish political machine in Boston. Both Senator Edward Kennedy and Mayor Kevin White did stints there. When D.A. Foley (who'd had the job since 1926) finally crapped out in 1952, Governor Dever, himself a cog in the Irish machine, appointed Garrett Byrne to fill out the term. Byrne has run for election seven times since his appointment.

In his various campaigns, he has established a pattern for sensational headline-hunting. In 1954, running for his first full term, Byrne announced that he had discovered a massive communist conspiracy right here in Boston which was corrupting Catholic youth. He has also been fond of discovering drug "rings," gambling "rings," and prostitution "rings." In his 26 years as D.A. he has indicted only one Boston city official on charges of political corruption — this in a notoriously rotten town. But one of the basic rules of political machines is that they look after their own.

This Garrett Byrne has done well. On others he showers indictments, particularly the Italo-Americans who, as a power base, are a
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growing threat to the decaying Irish machine. One of the most remarkable features of local politics is that Mayor White's scandal-ridden administration (he's been Mayor since 1967) has not had to answer to one indictment.

This is a picture of Garrett Byrne. He was Suffolk County D.A. from 1952 through 1978. His tenure is best characterized by loyal service to the Irish-Catholic political machine that runs Boston. Both 4-term Mayor Kevin White and Senator Ted Kennedy began as time-servers on Byrne's bloated staff.
THE YEAR OF THE WITCHHUNT

Which is not to suggest that Mister D.A. was not busy in his time. His tenure was distinguished by these high water marks in law enforcement: indicting a bookseller in 1958 for retailing a copy of William Burroughs’s bestseller Naked Lunch; indicting music impresario Allen Freed for “inciting to riot” after Boston’s first rock-and-roll concert; forbidding the championship Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston fight from being staged in Boston; banning the musical Hair; banning the film I Am Curious, Yellow (whose exhibitors appealed all the way to the Supreme Court and won).

And so, in December 1977, Mr. Byrne launched his “Revere Sex Ring.” This had all the ingredients of a sure-fire zinger — homosexuals, children, bus-drivers, Revere, Polaroids, pot, you name it. Byrne called in his friends in the press and announced the following: 24 men had been indicted on over 100 felony counts involving sex with boys aged 8 to 13 who had been lured to the sex den with promises of drugs, money and games of air hockey. All were then raped by adult homosexuals who photographed them. A detective working on the case told the press that he and his colleagues “as parents became so affected by the sordid details of the alleged operations” they had to seek psychiatric aid. Byrne continued: these 24 men were “just the tip of the iceberg.” Many, perhaps hundreds more, were involved and would be indicted. The investigation had only just begun. More arrests were imminent. No one’s special status would protect him against crimes against children. Even higher-ups might be involved, names everyone would recognize. Byrne promised to clean up the child molesters and make Suffolk County once again safe for the little children.

The D.A. asked the public to help him with this investigation. He announced the establishment of a special “Hotline” phone and asked “outraged citizens” to phone in anonymous tips about homosexuals they suspected of having contact with anyone under 16. He promised each and every tip would be pursued vigorously. Reporters flew from the D.A.’s office to flash the news — THE WITCHHUNT WAS ON!
MEDIA COMPLICITY

Boston has two daily newspapers. (I don’t include *The Christian Science Monitor* as that is an out-and-out organ of religious propaganda — they never carry news of medical improvements against diseases for example.) There is the toney, suburban-liberal, independently-owned Boston *Globe*, and there is the Hearst violence, police-puff, cheesecake-and-sports *Herald American*. Both papers took the D.A.’s line uncritically and banded it on front pages.

*Globe* headline: “24 Men indicted in Child Porn.” This was totally in error as even the D.A. had not issued any indictments on kiddie porn. In fact, kiddie porn, *per se*, did not become a crime in Massachusetts until a few months later. But it demonstrated how clearly the link existed in the headline writer’s mind — and therefore his readers, surely. Not to be outdone in the Drama Dept., the Hearst *Herald* featured a page one photo of five of the indicted men. They were shackled together and being dragged into court for arraignment. Caption: “Who’s Who Among Defendants in Sex Case.” Listed in bold-faced type were the names of the men, their home addresses, their places of employment and some of the charges against them.

Local TV stations ran this same information *in print* on their screens. They along with the radio stations, repeatedly broadcast the Hotline number and urged people to call.

So much for adversary journalism.

The following day, First Asst. D.A. Jack Gaffney told the
Who's who among the defendants in sex case

Arraigned on informations charging sex acts with boys under 16 years of age are:

DONALD M. ALLAN, 32, of 71 Dorrington St., Dorchester, filed by Mary S. Collins, custodian of the Massachusetts Home for Children, and by the School Department of the Commonwealth. 

ROGER E. SPEAK, Jr., 34, of Littleton Road, Welles-ley, grand rapids, by the Massachusetts General Hospital. 

ROBERT C. LANE, 22, of 567 Chestnut St., Springfield, by the University of Massachusetts Springfield. 

EDWARD NOSER, 40, of North shore Road, Framingham, by the Department of Mental Health, Massachusetts. 

MARK DAVIS, 23, of Kirkland Ave., Brockton, by the Brockton Police Department. 

LOU WHITE, 35, of Morton Street, Mattapan, by the Massachusetts Motorists Insurance Corporation. 

The day after the "sex-ring" arrests, the Hearst-owned Boston HERALD-AMERICAN ran this picture on its front page along with the names, addresses and occupations of the accused. On the few occasions heterosexual men are arrested for sex with minor females, they are never subjected to such sensational yellow press. The Hearst press in Boston, as virtually every place else it exists, operates as a puff sheet for police and D.A.s.
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press that the Hotline was being flooded with calls, many of which provided new leads in the probe. Indictments were in the works. He said: "We want to have corroborated testimony before we present any further evidence to the grand jury. The people involved are important, and if we don't have corroborated testimony," Gaffney continued with a patina of false concern covering his glintiness, "lives could be ruined."

Each new name was under investigation. Some tips even came long-distance, according to Gaffney. "A man in Baltimore called to say that a minister was part of the sex ring and used the Revere apartment... Many callers were young boys who told us of similar operations in Greater Boston. Others gave us the names of men not previously suspected of being involved in the sex-ring. One boy said one of the 24 defendants advised him to have a sex-change operation."

Twenty of the 24 men indicted were arrested. Those in the Boston area were picked up at 7 AM Thursday Dec. 8th. Others were arrested in New York City, Baltimore and Atlanta. Massachusetts quickly moved for extradition. The remaining four had fled the jurisdiction. Gaffney suspected they had fled the U.S. and the D.A. had asked Interpol to track them down.

It was a tense time in Boston. Anita Bryant had sown the seeds of overt homophobia at the start of 1977. The D.A. was plucking the crop at year's end. Rumors flew wildly around the city. Not only was a married minister to be arrested but so was someone connected with the New England Patriots (this latter gentleman had been arrested in fact in the spring of 1977 and his name came up in the Congressional hearings).

There was panic in the gay community. Who was being secretly denounced to police? Who would be arrested next and humiliated on the front pages of the press? No one knew.

Not one voice was raised challenging the allegations of the police and the District Attorney. And needless to say, not one voice was raised in concern about the rights of the accused to due process and fair trials. The press had already smeared them as "child molesters." Who would want, given the homophobic Kiddie Porno
This is Elaine Noble. She was a state representative from Back Bay from 1975 through 1979. When the "Revere Sex Ring" was announced by the D.A. and press, Elaine held a news conference, condemned men who had relations with minors, and asked informers to call the D.A.'s illegal Hotline and report gay men. She later referred to those under indictment as "the guilty parties."
Panic, to come to the aid of anyone so thoroughly stigmatized as
untouchable? Certainly not State Representative Elaine Noble.

Rep. Noble, an up-front lesbian activist, had achieved a
national and international reputation when she was elected to the
Mass. State House in 1974. (A headline in a Bangkok paper read:
"Madame Lesbian Elected in U.S.") Though she only served 4
years there, she was a bellweather figure in the gay and lesbian
communities. It was from her that many gays took their cues.

But even Noble, with her many contacts in the gay community,
was caught up in the panic. Without talking to anyone who might
have a different view from that of the D.A. and police, Noble held
a news conference and said: "I have called this news conference as
a legislator and as a concerned citizen to express my deep concern
and outrage regarding the scandalous sexual exploitation and abuse
of young children by adults. ... Gross personal abuse and
affrontery of innocent children is a sacrilege of the highest order.
Adults involved in the corruption of unprotected, impressionable
children by drugs, alcohol and sex must be immediately halted and
reprimanded. We will not tolerate nor in any way condone through
lack of aggressive action the perpetuation of such deviant, defiant
behavior."

Shortly thereafter, appearing on a local TV morning talk
show, Rep. Noble repeated this line and added: "... those people
who manipulate children [should be] pictured as an extremely small
minority within the gay community ... the guilty parties should be
brought to trial and dealt with accordingly" (emphasis added).
Noble urged people to call the Hotline.

Rep. Noble would come to answer to the gay community for
her reckless actions. But at the time, hers was the respectable
response.

State Rep. Barney Frank, long a friend of the gay community,
spoke with the D.A. and told gay leaders that Mr. Byrne had
assured him that the Hotline was in no way intended as a harass-
ment of the gay community.

A local gay man wrote a letter to the Globe and said that
decent gay people in Boston "wish to emphasize that the majority
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of the gay community does not condone the actions of the real
perverts, and we are glad the law was carried out and will be carried
out to the fullest extent. It is one thing to be gay, but totally
another to be sick like these men and we hope sensible people will
not link us to this travesty."

The unwillingness of most gay people to support a group of
homosexuals under official attack was a lamentable comment on
the lack of solidarity in the community. This is how a witchhunt
"succeeds." No one would oppose it until after it has dragnetted
and ruined its victims. When it's all over and done, good-
tentioned folks would regret that no action was taken, but by
then it's too late. The damage is done.

Would anyone call the D.A.'s bluff and support the rights of
gay men accused as "child molesters" in this climate of anti-
homosexual hysteria?

This time, and for the first time, the answer was yes.
FIGHTING BACK

On 9 December 1977, the first day of massive publicity and the press's incitement to call the Hotline, members of Boston's radical Fag Rag staff (Sal Farinella, Charley Shively, Tom Reeves, Michael Bronski, David Eberly and myself) met and decided to do something. We smelled lynching in the wind. No matter what these men were accused of doing (none of us knew any of the accused yet), we decided we had to organize around the issue for two immediate goals: to stop the sinister Hotline which remained a threat to the safety of all homosexual men (and those perceived to be homosexual). And we wanted to work to guarantee that the legal rights of the accused were observed in the midst of this panic. We were aware of similar police dragnets that year in Seattle, Chicago, and in Baltimore (and to be followed in 2 weeks time by the police raid on the Toronto offices of The Body Politic). It has always been the Fag Rag position that an attack on any part of the gay community (particularly one of its "fringes") is an attack on all gay people. In this year of the witchhunt, this analysis proved to be bitterly true. No one, not even the soi-disant Good Gays, is safe.

We formed the Boston/Boise Committee (B/BC). The Committee's name recalled John Gerassi's 1965 book, The Boys of Boise, which detailed a previous anti-gay witchhunt in Idaho in 1955. In Boise, a panic was begun by one faction of the power elite (using the accusation "child molestor") to discredit the head of a newly-emerging financial group. But the witchhunt got out of control, as witchhunts invariably do, and when it started snaring