

# Media – Not Sickos – at Fault in Fostering Pedophilia

Let's say you're a 20-year-old guy. You meet a chick who says she's 18. You check out her breasts and think, *Yup, those are 18.* You take her out.

You take her back to your place. You do it (in a protected way, of course). Turns out she's 15. Turns out you're a statutory rapist. How many of you men find Mandy Moore attractive? You wouldn't mind stumbling on some nude photos of her, would you? That makes you a pedophile. She's only 15. On Sunday, MTV premiered "Jailbait," a movie in which an 18-year-old high school senior gets into legal trouble for having sex with an almost 16-year-old high school sophomore (something that violates the statutory rape laws of every state).

Normally, I wouldn't consult a made-for-TV movie, but this one makes a point.

Some chick lies to you about her age and you have no reason to doubt her, and somehow it's your fault?

If 11-year-olds can be tried for murder as adults, then 15-year-olds are mature enough to consent to having sex.

Not only that, but it's hypocritical for American society to condemn men for being attracted to younger women.

We as a society are constantly being bombarded with sexy images of girls too young to consent to having sex.

But when someone finds that attractive, we call him a pedophile. And if he



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acts on it, he's a rapist.

I'm focusing on men and younger women, because women are rarely faced with the same temptation men are.

The Hansons are not supposed to turn anyone on.

At Moore's official World Wide Web site, mandymoore.com, you can find pictures of the 15-year-old in halter tops, midriffs and tank tops with a pouty, come-hither look on her face. While I'm not into the whole someday-I-hope-to-grow-out-of-my-training-bra look, those pictures are definitely sexual.

I'll bet there's at least one man somewhere who is right now jerking

off looking at photos of Moore. And I'm sure a lot of you would call him sick.

But he's not the one who's dressing her up in tight little outfits, having her do a sexy little dance in a music video.

A costume designer, a makeup artist and a choreographer made Moore look like an adult, not the guy who's getting off on it. That makes them the real sickos.

The media present men with these sexy images of young girls, then sit back and watch while people condemn these men for enjoying it.

Hasn't it occurred to anyone that maybe the people we need to be worrying about are the ones turning 15-year-olds into sex symbols, not the ones who buy into it?

Walk into any mall in the United States and I promise you'll find middle school girls in miniskirts and makeup.

They might not even know what sex is yet, but they're trying to make men want to have it with them. And if one does want to, we're quick to label him sick.

But he's not the one letting them leave the house looking like 12-year-old sex objects.

Britney Spears was baring her belly-button to the world before her 18th birthday and no one brought MTV up on child pornography charges.

But a Kansas woman put a photo of her naked toddler taking a bath on her Web site, and got in trouble with her Internet service provider for violating child pornography laws.

So the producers of mainstream pop culture can get away with enticing people to look at some underage piece of ass, but those who want to touch are immediately branded sick pedophiles.

So before she turned 18, Spears

could wear on national television a shirt that covered less skin than some of my bras and no one got arrested, but last month an Internet service provider suspended a woman's Internet access because she posted pictures of her son bathing.

The lesson here is that if you're making money for mainstream, corporate America, your type of child exploitation is OK.

But if you're not, the moral police will cite you for even the smallest infraction.

As long as the mainstream media sells child pornography, everyone else should be allowed to get off on it.

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## Graduate Worker Union Making Inroads at UNC

How ironic that a recent article in The Daily Tar Heel on Illinois graduate employees' efforts to unionize ("TAs Make Push to Unionize,"

April 6) concludes that "labor concerns do not seem to have been a problem for the nearly 5,000 graduate employees at UNC."

The real story is that labor concerns have recently come to the fore for graduate employees at UNC, and the Graduate Employee Union UE 150-A has been actively organizing to address those concerns. In its first two months, UE 150-A already has active members in more than 15 departments – from philosophy to chemistry.

Beyond overlooking the presence of active local graduate employee organizing, this same article included several quotes from former Graduate and Professional Student Federation President Lee Conner that reflected misconceptions about the impact N.C. laws might have on unionizing efforts at UNC. Despite Conner's statements to the contrary, the fact that North Carolina is a "right-to-work" state is by no means an obstacle to effective graduate employee union organizing here.

In 1996, the Campaign to Organize Graduate Students organized to represent 2,600 University of Iowa graduate employees and has since won substantial increases in base pay; a comprehensive health care benefit plan, including dental, mental and family coverage; and an improved grievance procedure. Iowa, like North Carolina, is a "right-to-work" state. These so-called "right-to-work" laws do no more than prohibit contracts that require membership in the unions.

Despite this limitation, COGS has become a powerful force because graduate student employees have become active members of the organization. This law does not mean that organizing would not produce "a lot of benefits at the end of the rainbow" as Conner asserts – after all, look at what COGS has achieved.

Instead, the real legal hurdle for organizing public sector workers in the Tar Heel State is N.C. General Statute 895-98. This law prohibits collective bargaining agreements between any government entity and state employees.

Yet even this law should not be regarded as a barrier to unionization. The statute does not prohibit state employees from joining a union. All working people, including graduate employees and other N.C. public sector workers, can join a union, a right protected by the First Amendment.

North Carolina's anti-union statutes have not stopped other public sector workers from organizing unions to protect their rights and fight for better treatment on the job.

The N.C. Public Service Workers Union UE 150 has been growing rapidly across the state and now has thousands of members at almost all of the 16 UNC-system campuses and several other municipal and state institutions.

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In 1980, the Hickory Firefighters Association Local 2653 vindicated its right to speak on behalf of its employees in front of the Hickory City Council in federal court.

While state law does not allow for collective bargaining contracts with public employees, it does allow state agencies to discuss workplace concerns; reach written or oral understandings; and negotiate pay, benefits, and working conditions with labor unions representing state employees.

Public sector unions can thus be strong and effective even without the ability to enter into collective bargaining agreements.

UE 150-A will have members all over the state, will work closely with its sister union UE 150 and will be an affiliate of a national union that represents tens of thousands of workers across the nation.

Strength in such a union will come from large numbers of active supporters ready to protect the rights of co-workers treated unfairly on the job, willing to fight together to improve working conditions and able to stand in unity to demand a living wage.

As UNC increasingly relies on graduate employees for a cheap and temporary source of labor for easy but essential teaching and research on this campus, teaching assistants, research assistants and graduate assistants are beginning to organize in order to gain a voice in their workplaces.

Organizing is never "totally a legal question of what you can do as a union" as Conner would have us believe.

People everywhere organize around all kinds of issues of common concern – just look at the number of campus organizations on this campus alone.

Graduate employees organizing for (among other things) a fair living wage for all University employees, child-care support, health care benefits on par with other state employees and out-of-state tuition remission are no exception.

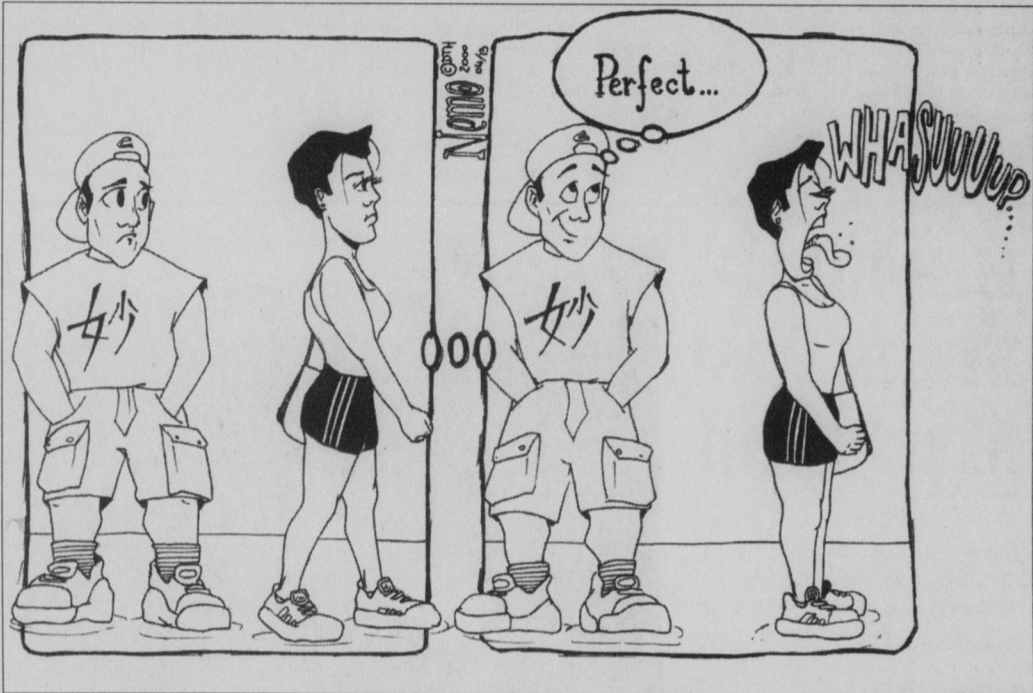
Graduate employees are dedicated to being the best teachers and researchers possible.

As UE 150-A takes seriously the responsibility of its members for contributing to UNC's tradition of being a great educational and research institution, UE 150-A will work to ensure that the University likewise commits itself to creating a respectful and dignified working environment for all of its employees. Such efforts have improved the lives of graduate employees all over the country in spite of restrictive state laws, and they can certainly do the same here at UNC.

All graduate employees are encouraged to come to the next general membership meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday in Dey Hall, room TBA.

For more information, contact Doug Taylor at dtaylor@email.unc.edu or go to <http://www.unc.edu/student/orgs/geu>.

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## Stopping Housing Officials' Lies

I need \$25 – but not if it means helping the Department of University Housing perpetuate its bald-faced lies to thousands of starry-eyed freshmen.

Lies, all lies. Here's the deal: My roommate and I, simply by taking a picture of our Carmichael Residence Hall room, could win \$25 gift certificates to Student Stores. (Not that you'd be able to buy much with the \$25 there, but hey, it's money I don't have.)

All we would have to do is take a picture of our room, showing how it's the pinnacle of residence hall life at UNC.

Housing officials would use the winning snapshots on their Web site and in future publications advertising the department and their collection of slums – ahem, "residence halls."

I figured the competition wouldn't be too steep if I entered. Hell, I live in Carmichael – arguably one of the better halls on campus, behind Old East and Old West residence halls – so I've already got a leg up on all the losers who call Hinton James or Morrison home.

From there, it would be all about keeping up appearances. I thought about all the glitzy photos that caught my attention when I first applied for housing freshman year.

First, I'd have to assemble a multiethnic, multigendered, multiracial, multireed and multiability set of friends. I figure I'll invite a black woman, an Asian man, a woman with

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a handicap, a Hare Krishna and a gay redneck to join me in my room for an impromptu study session. We'll huddle around a stack of chemistry books, earnest and happy in our pursuit of communal knowledge.

Hey, everybody knows how desegregated and integrated Carolina is. Boys and girls, men and women, blacks and whites, Asians and Hispanics all frolic together in egalitarian utopia. There are no dividing lines in Chapel Hill.

Second, I would have to get some corporate tie-ins. The University, after all, wouldn't miss the opportunity to give all their corporate pimps the free publicity.

Too bad I don't have an IBM ThinkPad. I guess I'll have to find a gullible freshman to loan me the laptop he got suckered into buying to "improve" his education.

Then I'd have to trade in my New Balances for a pair of Nikes. I'll also sew a swoosh onto the "Carolina Girls – Best in the World" shirt I'll be wearing.

By the way, my roommate and I will need to get matching aquarium comforters. My girlfriend says that's a surefire way to win it all.

Thank God for Wachovia. I'll be able to buy all that loot with one easy swipe of my

UNC ONE Card. Finally, I'll have to show some school spirit. I'll tack the autographed police mug shots I have of Ed Cota and Terrence Newby prominently on the wall, beside a Carolina pennant sloped upward at just the right angle. Now if only I can get all that done by Tuesday, the deadline.

Then again, it's just not worth it. I don't think I could sleep knowing I had helped mislead thousands of young, impressionable freshmen and their dotting parents.

The housing department, in my opinion, runs a pretty slick operation. Their advertisements – as any good piece of propaganda should – paint a sunny picture of UNC, from images of racial, sexual, ethnic and religious harmony to pictures of dorm rooms across bigger and better lit than mine.

Once you get here, you realize it ain't so peachy keen. Housing officials and workers put you up in a 10-story hell hole that boasts frequent fire alarms but no fire sprinklers, belittle and disrespect you when you have questions about your room assignment, and ignore your repeated requests to get the fluorescent light bulbs replaced when they burn out.

Now if only you could capture all that with a Polaroid.

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## To End Violence Against Women, Men Must Become Allies

So why don't men speak out against rape? Why aren't more guys voicing concerns about sexual assault? Why is it that women, more often than not, are the only ones demanding an end to domestic violence?

The women we care about are continually threatened by sexual violence. Why aren't we men speaking up to stop it?

The answer is pretty simple. Most men, regardless of their private opinions about these issues, go on the defensive whenever men's violence against women is a topic of conversation. "No, not me. Hey, I'd never do that."

Men feel the need to distinguish themselves from those rapists, abusers and wife-beaters. Moreover, many guys would rather back out of a conversation about sexual violence altogether, worrying that a personal defense spiel would make them appear guilty for hidden wrongdoings.

The result is silence. Men too often are choosing to keep quiet. This reac-

tion is understandable. But in the long run, it isn't acceptable.

Men's violence against women is a real problem – on campus, in our hometowns, all over the globe. The job of ending this problem can't be the responsibility of women alone. I believe, or at least strongly hope, that we are beyond any thinking that suggests that "violence against women is a women's problem."

It most certainly is not. But to be able to realize this, we have to reframe the way we talk about the issue.

Men shy away from speaking out because there is a clear innocent/guilty split with this issue. Women are the victims, or the survivors. Men are the perpetrators.

Just think about the issue's name: "men's violence against women." The phrase alone leaves no doubts about who's at fault and who is suffering.

This description is legitimate but unfortunately, as it is often used, too

simplistic. Said alone, it can be misleading. Some men in our society are perpetrators. Some men deserve serious reprimand, imprisonment and rehabilitation.

But many other men do not. Many other men condemn violence against women. Many, many men can be advocates for ending sexual violence. It's time that they were approached as such.

Instead of framing men only as potential rapists, we need to see them also as potential allies. We need to offer men the chance to speak out against violence against women by discussing it in ways that welcome male support.

Men need to examine sexual violence as something that can (and too often has) happened to the women we care about – our mothers and sisters, our wives and girlfriends, our friends and colleagues.

We need to encourage those silent supporters to speak their minds. We

need men's voices to help put an end to this crisis.

When men start speaking, we're going to make a lot of progress. We're going to be able to reach people who have never bothered to listen before.

It's easy for Joe Macho to write off criticism of sexual assault when the cry comes from "some feminist b\*tch." It's easy for him to think sexist behavior is acceptable when he can disassociate himself from the critics.

But when the critic is another male – a brother, a friend, a teammate – the issue is much harder to ignore. When men who condemn sexual violence have the courage to say something about it, and have the guts to challenge another man's sexist behavior, remarks or beliefs, then we'll have a real opportunity to make some change.

This week is such an opportunity. The White Ribbon Campaign is happening on campus for the second year in a row, providing men the opportunity to speak out against violence against women.

Following last year's effort, which

included the collection of nearly 2,000 men's signatures, the campaign will be running all this week to distribute ribbons, collect names and generate discussion.

You will inevitably see a few of the 100 male students and staff who have volunteered to be White Ribbon Campaign members. They can be identified by their campaign T-shirts, and they might be speaking up in your classes, your meetings or in the Pit.

Male friends, please consider wearing a white ribbon this week. Although its overall message is quite clear, it doesn't have to represent just one thing. Wearing a ribbon will inevitably signify whatever you want it to.

Whichever your reasons, please speak about them. Our ideas may not all be the same, but through open debate and dialogue, we'll come closer to an end to this problem.

Only when we join women's lead in voicing concerns and take some responsibility in ending sexual violence will we be able to make significant progress. If nothing else, let the ribbon

symbolize your willingness to talk.

The White Ribbon Campaign seeks to create a space where men can speak out – a chance for men to stand up for an issue that they might have felt uncomfortable about before.

We aim not to accuse, but rather to encourage all men who believe to show their support.

We know there are many.

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