

JUNE 7, 1999

Chilling warning to parents from a child molester

Dear Ann Landers:

I am your average, everyday child molester. Please understand that I'm not talking about a guy who hides behind bushes or hangs around schoolyards and playgrounds. I could be anyone - your neighbor, your friend, your brother, your father, even your grandfather. I am the guy who becomes your friend so I can get close to your child.

Ann, the best warning I can give your readers is this: If an adult is spending a lot of time with your child, there is a reason, and it's probably a bad one. Why else would an adult want to take your child to the movies, to the mall, to video arcades, to the swimming pool, to car races, to amusement parks, or on overnight camping trips? Be alert to any adult who is giving your child a lot of special attention and is willing to take him or her anywhere. That adult may seem kind and helpful, but believe me, there could be a motive behind the kindness.

If this is happening to your children, you need to start asking questions. And be aware that children

ANN LANDERS

could lie to you about what's going on because they are afraid the molester will harm them or they will get into trouble with you, their parents. I was molested as a child, but I lied to my father when he asked about it because I was afraid he would punish me. Had I told him, the molestation surely would have stopped and I would have received help. Instead, the molesting went on for years. It destroyed my life and the lives of others because I became a molester and did the same things that were done to me.

I prey mostly on the children of single mothers, who welcome someone who will take their child off their hands for a while, and they like the father figure I provide. The children welcome me because I act like a big kid and take them places they enjoy. If your child is lonesome, he is the perfect target for a pedophile.

Whoever is reading this, please think about what is going on in your family. If you are a grandparent, consider your son or daughter's

Be alert to any adult who is giving your child a lot of special attention and is willing to take him or her anywhere. There could be a motive behind the kindness.

household. If everyone would just take the time to talk to their children, thousands of kids could be spared the trauma, heartache, and pain that a pedophile can create. A molester can turn the child into a pedophile, too. A molested kid has a one in four chance of becoming a molester. I know this is true because it happened to me.

Carefully ask your child questions that will get truthful answers, not turnoffs. Don't put any blame on the child. Show children you care about them. And remember this red flag: If an adult is going out of his

way to spend time with your child, find out why. Something may be wrong.

NO NAME, NO CITY

Here is your letter, which is sure to generate some negative response from men who fit your description but will deny there is anything unwholesome about their relationship with the children they befriend. And in most cases, these relationships are perfectly innocent. Denials notwithstanding, you have sounded an alert well worth heeding. Thank you.

...

Gem of the Day: This is from the Curmudgeon's Corner newsletter.

You know you're a loser when:
Dial-a-Prayer hangs up on you.

You get a paper cut from a get-well card.

You're turned down by Cheese-of-the-Month Club.

You dial a porn service and the woman says, "Not tonight, dear. I have a headache."

You retire, and they don't give you a watch - they just tell you what time it is.