

They abused children (but only for research purposes)

Alfred Kinsey revolutionised ideas of sexual development. What he did not reveal is that his data was supplied by paedophiles

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I HAVE, APPARENTLY, developed 'incurable brain damage'. I have also abandoned documentary film-making in favour of 'sensational twistings' and 'cheap controversy', in the company of America's rabid Christian right. My 'sins', I am advised, are 'considerable'.

This enlightening diagnosis is made by Dr Clarence Tripp, psychoanalyst, sometime photographer and close confidant of the world's most famous sex scientist, the late Professor Alfred Kinsey.

My symptoms are simple enough: I have produced a documentary film that dares to challenge the scientific validity and morality of one part of Kinsey's monumental research into human sexuality (*Secret History: Kinsey's Paedophiles* - Channel 4, tomorrow).

Kinsey, a professor of zoology at Indiana University, began his research in the Thirties - a time when, as his colleague Paul Gebhard explained, 'everything was illegal except wet dreams'. Over two decades Kinsey and his team carried out the biggest survey of sexual attitudes and behaviour ever undertaken. Kinsey published the data in impressive scientific detail in two books - *Sexual Behaviour in The Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in The Human Female* (1953).

Each book included separate chapters on child sexuality. Chapter 5 of the 'Male' volume set the tone by concluding that children were fully fledged sexual beings from birth. Kinsey specifically denounced the prevailing Freudian view that child sexuality was latent - and that during this period they needed legal protection.

Kinsey insisted that - with the right assistance - children could enjoy 'orgasms' from the moment they were born.

Curiously no one seemed to question the basis of this revolutionary claim. For almost 40 years it was simply accepted at face value. Then, in the Eighties, Judith Reisman, an American academic researching sex in the media re-examined the seemingly scientific tables and text of Chapter 5. Reisman quickly discovered that up to nine paedophiles had sent Kinsey diaries detailing their abuse of children: he had reproduced their contents as scientific 'proof' of children's sexuality.

Reisman was particularly concerned by four tables in Chapter 5 which described children's capacity for orgasms. Depending on how the tables were interpreted, between 317 and 1,800 boys - from two months to 15 years old - seemed to have been used in experiments designed to discover the precise time it took them to achieve orgasm.

Since the tables showed infants of five months achieving multiple orgasms, it seemed likely that an adult had been involved. Reisman wrote to the Kinsey Institute seeking clarification.

She received a remarkably frank letter back from the then-director - and former colleague of Kinsey - Dr Paul Gebhard. In it he confirmed her suspicions:

Since sexual experimentation was illegal we have had to depend upon other sources of data ... Some of these ... were homosexual males interested in ... pre-pubescent children. One ... had numerous contacts with male and female

infants and children and being of a scientific bent kept detailed records of each encounter.

Gebhard went on to explain that the paedophiles had masturbated the children - manually or orally - to produce the orgasms Kinsey described in Chapter 5.

It was to be the last frank and revealing letter Reisman would receive from the Kinsey Institute. She wanted to know who the paedophiles were - and how they had got access to the children. Instead of receiving answers, she found herself on the receiving end of a hostile press campaign by the new director of the Kinsey Institute. 'I had clearly touched on something they didn't want dealt with in public. I was questioning the unquestionable - Kinsey's research and his reputation as a reliable scientist. And for that they were clearly out to get me.'

Reisman remains a highly unpopular figure with Kinsey's surviving colleagues, and with the Institute he founded. They accuse her of being part of the coalition of groups aligned to America's Christian Right. And it's certainly true that these groups - from Concerned Women Of America to RSVP - Restoring Social Virtue and Purity - have adopted her and her campaign.

But Reisman is her own woman - 'I was born a Jew and raised a Catholic'. And what is beyond doubt is that behind Kinsey's prolix phrasing is something very nasty indeed: the abuse of several hundred children by men who he encouraged to mail their data to Indiana.

When we set about investigating how



such a respected scientist came to publish accounts of child abuse by paedophiles as evidence that children enjoy sex with adults, we discovered that Kinsey's relationships with habitual child molesters was considerably more extensive than had ever been revealed.

Curiously, Kinsey's colleagues did not want to deny his relationships with paedophiles: they wanted to celebrate them. Clarence Tripp - hired by Kinsey to make films of men masturbating - is particularly proud of his mentor's association with a man who abused 800 pre-pubescent boys and girls.

Describing the paedophile - whom we discovered to have been a US government land examiner called Rex King - as 'super-scientific', Tripp insisted his victims 'all thought he was wonderful'. Paus-

ing for a minute, he corrected himself: 'There were two young girls who ... agreed to the sexual contact but then found it very painful. This was because they were very young and had small genitalia and [King] was a grown man with enormous genitalia. And there was a fit problem.'

Paul Gebhard defends Kinsey's use of King's data because it was unique - which is rather the point. If, as the Institute now maintains, much of Chapter 5 of the 'Male' volume was provided by King with no independent verification, in purely scientific terms how can it be relied on?

The current Kinsey Institute director, John Bancroft, somewhat grudgingly accepts that it might be dubious, but has republished both volumes with no qualification or caveat. His predecessor Paul Gebhard insists that King's reporters were trustworthy 'because he reported his failures [children who rejected his sexual overtures] as well as his successes.'

And Clarence Tripp is adamant that King's diaries of sexual abuse contained such precise detail that they were self-evidently scientific - though he concedes that while simultaneously writing them and molesting children, the paedophile was also masturbating himself.

As we laboured on our film I was struck by the seemingly rational way Tripp makes his extraordinary claims. I had to consult the tapes again to be sure we had transcribed them correctly. When I did I came to the reluctant conclusion that it wasn't me who had suffered damage to my mental faculties.

Rex King, who molested at least 800 children, supplied the 'research' that supported Alfred Kinsey's claim that children could enjoy sex from infancy.

Photograph by Mo Palmer/Albuquerque Photo Museum

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