

Reframing the Non-Offending Pedophile to Combat Child Sexual Abuse:

A Content Analysis of Public Response to Luke Malone's "Help Wanted"

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A Capstone project presented in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Policy Studies

Interdisciplinary Arts and Science

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the existing discourse on prevention of child sexual abuse, determine where the pedophile is situated in the discourse, and examine the potential in reframing primary prevention to include the non-offending pedophile. To identify the terminology, themes, and overall sentiments that emerged in public response to Luke Malone's *This American Life* segment titled "Help Wanted," a Content Analysis of 643 public comments was conducted. Analysis of these comments revealed the presence of sentiments not traditionally associated with pedophilia, including sympathy and the critical distinction between the terms "pedophile" and "child molester." Results suggest that the non-offending pedophile may eventually make a lateral move on Ingram's matrix of Social Construction, moving him or her further away from the negative status of deviant and toward the more positive status of dependent. This study may help policymakers and researchers anticipate the spectrum of public response to future legislation that incorporates intervention resources for pedophiles in the fight against child sexual abuse.

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Chapter 1: Purpose Of Study

Definition of Terms

1. Child Sexual Abuse (CSA): The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend; is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by adults or other children who are--by virtue of their age or stage of development--in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the victim. (World Health Organization, 2003)

2. Pedophilia: The sexual attraction to prepubescent children (generally age 13 years or younger) by an individual who is age 16 years or older and at least 5 years older than the child (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

3. Pedophile: An individual who has the clinical diagnosis of pedophilia.

- *Exclusive:* A pedophile whose attraction is limited to children
- *Non-Exclusive:* A pedophile whose attraction includes both adults and children

4. Child Molester: An individual who has sexually abused a child

5. Sex Offender: An individual who has been convicted of a sex crime

6. Sex Crime: While definitions vary by state, this is a wide array of offenses that involves illegal or coerced sexual conduct against another individual and generally includes:

- *Indecent Exposure:* The exposure of genitals in public
- *Prostitution:* Offering or engaging in sexual acts for payment
- *Rape:* Non-consensual sexual intercourse that is committed by physical force, threat of injury, or other duress.
- *Sexual Assault:* A “catch-all” crime in which a victim is subjected to sexual touching that is unwanted and offensive. Definitions vary considerably by state.
- *Solicitation:* Requesting, encouraging or demanding someone to engage in criminal conduct with the intent to facilitate or contribute to the commission of that crime. Commonly refers to solicitation of prostitution.

- **Statutory Rape:** Sexual relations involving someone below the legal age of consent (Sex Crimes, 2015)

Statement of Purpose

Child sexual abuse affects thousands of children per year in the U.S., and the majority of prevention efforts focus on incarceration, post-offense prevention, or avoidance strategies. These limited strategies make children disproportionately responsible for anticipating and avoiding situations in which they might be abused. In addition, post-offense strategies such as incarceration or enforcement of sex-offender registries are not triggered until after the creation of both a victim and a child molester. Discourse surrounding child sexual abuse prevention includes input from many stakeholders, including victims, victims' advocates, family and friends of victims, law enforcement officials, and registered sex offenders who are treated following an offense. A critically underrepresented group that is rarely mentioned in terms of prevention, however, is the non-offending pedophile who may be seeking help in order to prevent abusing a child. Evidence suggests that the segment of public qualifying as pedophiles far outnumbers those who commit the crime of child sexual abuse, indicating that many pedophiles live with and suppress their impulses with little or no access to critical public resources such as therapists, support groups, or medications. Due in part to the strong stigma surrounding the individuals living with this psychiatric condition, very little is known about the challenges they face in resisting their impulses towards children and in coping with their attractions in order to prevent victimization.

When journalist Luke Malone decided to explore this "reviled" population in 2014, the subsequent story was broadcast nationally to roughly 2.1 million listeners on public radio's *This American Life* and generated thousands of public comments on social media. The story features an audio podcast of a segment titled "Help Wanted" in which Malone interviews a teenage pedophile—a minor named Adam—who started a support group for other self-identified, non-offending pedophiles. Adam, the teenage pedophile, states that he formed the support group because attempts to seek help through therapy were met with hostility, rejection, and misinformation. In the "Help Wanted" segment, pedophilia is given an identity and listeners

are challenged to consider the psychiatric condition from the perspective of the pedophile who wants help controlling his or her attraction(s). Most importantly, Luke's story deviates from the prevalent discourse by asking not "what if your child was sexually abused by a pedophile" but rather "what if your child *was* the pedophile?"

This study fills a gap in current research that was made explicit in a 2014 article by Jahnke & Hoyer. In their article about stigmatization of persons with pedophilia, the authors determined that "there are no studies investigating whether . . . the general public would actually be willing to show pro-social behavior toward people with pedophilia" (Jahnke & Hoyer, 2014). This statement underscores the need to explore the themes and public response generated by a story that explores the intervention of self-identified, non-offending pedophiles. We know much about how the public responds to stories about individuals who have committed an act of sexual abuse, but very little about how the public might react to individuals who—so far--only have the *thoughts*. By examining the responses and themes that emerged in response to Luke's story, policymakers might better anticipate how the expansion of prevention to include help-seeking pedophiles may be received by a growing segment of the public. Luke's story allowed for a self-identified, non-offending pedophile to provide a perspective that is rarely heard outside the walls of therapy offices. This story provided a rare opportunity to observe how the resulting public feedback might deviate from current discourse. If policymakers are going to expand current prevention efforts by providing resources to self-identified pedophiles, they must be able to anticipate how the public will respond to the suggestion that "pedophile" and "child molester" do not always mean the same thing.

Research Questions:

1. When the framing of CSA prevention is expanded to include the intervention of self-identified pedophiles, will public response be mostly positive or negative?
2. What themes will emerge from the responses generated by this type of framing?

Chapter 2: Review Of Literature

According to a report from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), over 61,000 children were victims of child sexual abuse in 2012. A meta-analysis of research on sexual recidivism by Hanson & Morton-Bourgon (2005) shows that a broad range of data strongly supports the presence of “deviant sexual interests” and “antisocial orientation/lifestyle inability” as predictors of sexual offenses, and the strongest predictor of child sexual abuse is pedophilia.

Research by Seto (2012) and Cantor (2004) suggests that, contrary to prevalent public opinion, anyone could be born a pedophile. Cantor’s (2004) work supports the theory that pedophilia—the sexual attraction towards minors—is “linked to early neurodevelopmental perturbations” and may be as innate as heterosexuality or homosexuality (p. 3). He conducted a study of 473 male pedophiles and found that individuals diagnosed with pedophilia have significant negative correlations with “IQ and immediate and delayed recall memory” as well as “non-right-handedness” (Cantor, 2004).” A study by Seto suggests that pedophilia, when viewed through attributes of sexual orientation, has “striking similarities” with the measures by which most people claim sexual orientation defined as hetero- or homosexuality¹ (2012).

A 2014 study by McAlinden explores the archetype of the sex offender and suggests that “the fact child sex offenders may be ‘of us’ rather than ‘other than us’ is a deeply unpalatable truth for society” (p. 188). McAlinden (2014) suggests that, for most, there is a strongly held belief that only a “sub-human, malevolent stranger” could possibly harbor a sexual attraction towards children (p. 188). Seto (2009) suggests that the percentage of U.S. population fitting the diagnosis of pedophilia is between 3% and 5%, meaning there may be 3.8 million to 6.3 million pedophiles living with this attraction (2009).

The age at which a pedophile first realizes his or her sexual attraction towards children is lower than what the public estimates. In one study by Fuselier (2002), a group of college students placed this age at an average of 19.33 years—much higher than what most studies of pedophiles actually report. A study by Finkelhor (2009) showed that 12 is the average age of

¹ Seto uses 1. *Age of Onset*, 2. *Sexual and Romantic Behavior*, and 3. *Stability over Time* as bases for comparison when comparing the pedophilic sexual preference of prepubescent children with the sexual preferences denoted by hetero- and homosexual orientations (Seto, 236).

those *committing* sexual offenses against children, and a study of pedophiles by B4U-ACT (2011) also determined that 12 was the most common age reported by pedophiles when asked the age at which they first realized they were sexually attracted to children. Such studies illustrate the misconceptions held by the general public regarding the age at which pedophilia is first detected.

Although pedophilia is not a disease that can be cured in the traditional sense, treatments are available for individuals who wish to control and cope with their attraction(s). These include chemical interventions, group therapies, and individual therapies. A study by Amelung (2012) suggests that “self-motivated” pedophiles using Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT) may benefit from decreased deviant sexual behaviors and an increase in empathy for potential victims. Research by Brown (2014) shows that the availability and publicity of “help lines” aimed at self-identified pedophiles in the U.K. and Ireland resulted in over 31,000 calls placed over a 10-year period. Over 17,000 of the calls were placed by “adults concerned about their own behavior,” indicating that some pedophiles are willing to seek alternatives to sexually abusing a child (Brown, 2014). Primary prevention organizations such as Stop It Now!, Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), Prevention Project Dunkelfeld (PPD), and B4U-ACT have been responsible for the bulk of prevention-based research during the past decade. A study of PPD by Beier (2009) showed that a concentrated German media campaign consisting of TV commercials, YouTube videos, radio spots, and 200+ print advertisements resulted in 808 calls to a research office (36 months) from pedophiles interested in preventative therapy. While a distinct difference between sex-offender policy in Germany and the United States lies in the U.S. “mandatory reporting” law, there is little research showing the impact of this policy on self-reporting in the U.S. Regardless, countries such as Ireland, Germany, Canada and the U.K. have been markedly proactive in expanding research efforts to the non-offending pedophile while the U.S. focus remains on the criminal aspect of post-abuse consequences.

What do news media sources, policymakers, and the public say about pedophilia and prevention of CSA?

Due in part to media coverage that traditionally focuses only on the criminal proceedings of a sexual abuse trial, the opportunity for national discourse on such abuse as a public health issue is overshadowed by sensationalism and limited framing. In a 2012 study reviewing 260 U.S. news articles about CSA, Mejia et al determined that 80% were episodic and focused almost entirely on the specific crime being investigated as opposed to larger themes of causes and prevention. This study also revealed that only 30% of those articles suggested solutions for child sexual abuse (Mejia et al, 2012). Seto (2008) estimates that pedophiles comprise only 50% of all sex offenders, yet much of the public discourse incorrectly uses the terms “sex offender,” “pedophile,” and “child molester” interchangeably. This tendency to use non-equivalent terms succeeds in stifling efforts to provide pedophiles with the publicly supported resources that may help them cope with and avoid acting upon their sexual desires. Jahnke’s (2013) research supports Seto’s findings, and she states that “pedophilia is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for child sex offenses” (p. 171).

The majority of the public has an extremely negative perception of pedophiles, but some also recognize that pedophiles may be excessively targeted for negative attention by the media. In a study by McCartan (2010), 58% of individuals surveyed “agreed that pedophiles are evil” and only 21% felt pedophiles could be successfully treated—yet 58% also felt that the media had created a “witch hunt” surrounding this group. When respondents were asked about the typical traits they connect to the word “pedophile,” 68.6% of respondents said “sexually abusing children” (McCartan, 2010). Jankne (2013) identifies other common terms to describe pedophiles, including “not normal,” “criminal,” “mentally disordered,” “secretive,” and “disgusting” (p. 174-75). Non-representational media coverage--resources that are focused on victim help and recovery as opposed to prevention, and discourse regarding profiles of “extreme” child molesters--are factors that fuel stigmatization and inhibit pedophiles from seeking help. Cases such as the Jerry Sandusky trial, the long-time cover-ups of abuses within the Catholic Church, and other atypically violent or prolonged incidents of sexual assault

become fodder for front page news while primary prevention and methods rarely emerge in the national discourse (Mejia, 2012). Jahnke (2013) argues that the stigmatization of pedophiles can lead to self-harm, drug abuse, suicidal behavior, reluctance to seek help, and even “higher risks for abusive behavior” (p. 180).). In a survey of self-identified pedophiles conducted by Wilson & Cox (1983), some felt “happy” or “reconciled” about their attractions while most (roughly 75%) described negative feelings like “disturbed,” “sad,” or “angry” (Jahnke, 178).

Despite research indicating potential for intervention of pedophiles, policy and public focus remains on criminal prosecution of child molesters post-offense (and treatment of victims) as opposed to strategies geared towards treating the potential offender before they victimize a child. A report by Goldman (2003) issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services outlines the following *government-endorsed strategies* for protecting children from abuse:

1. increase public awareness of risk factors for child abuse,
2. educate parents,
3. provide skills to children to avoid abuse situations, and
4. initiate home visitation programs.

Like most U.S. strategies, the report focuses on teaching parents and children how to identify and avoid the potential perpetrator as opposed to treating the perpetrator or pedophile before an incident occurs. Hodgson (2002) points out that the criminal justice system characterizes sex offenses as being motivated by factors outside of the individual—culture, social and environmental influences—and that these beliefs are “based on unsupported assertions and fundamental misunderstandings” (p. 7). The lack of pedophilia treatment as a critical prevention priority is reiterated in the document *Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action* issued in January 2014 by the White House Council on Women and Girls. An opening statement by President Barack Obama calls for raising awareness of sexual assault, confronting insensitive attitudes, enhancing training and education in the criminal justice system, and expanding health, legal and protective services for survivors—but there is no mention of how the potential perpetrator, and therefore the victim, might benefit from intervention before the crime occurs (White House, ii). According to McAlinden (2014), policies like these perpetuate the idea that the risk of child sexual abuse “resides largely in the public sphere” and that

policymakers can “readily direct and control” that risk by increasing punishment and warning potential victims” (p. 189).

Signed by 63 Texas legislators, a 2014 Amicus Curiae Brief of the Texas Conservative Coalition opposing gay marriage referred to pedophilia as “a morally reprehensible action.” This statement demonstrates the common confusion of the diagnosis of pedophilia with the action of child sexual abuse (p. 21).

How is misunderstanding of pedophilia detrimental to prevention efforts?

In the 2008 book titled *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Evidence Policy, and Practice*, Smallbone suggests that politicians have incentive for excessive punishment towards sex offenders because “it seems to align with public sentiments and expectations” (p. 217). If “pedophiles” are interchangeable with “sex offenders” in the public eye, they will suffer the consequences meant for offenders without having committed a crime. We know, based on research conducted by Mejia from 2007-2009, that Luke Malone’s “Help Wanted” story was rare in the way it presented child sexual abuse and prevention (2012).

Equating pedophilia with child sexual abuse is detrimental to the prevention of this crime because it discounts the potential of therapies that may help the pedophile cope with their attraction and prevent abuse. It also limits the potential of researching the pedophile to better understand why some abuse and some live their entire lives without abusing. If pedophiles have access to therapies and support groups early in their detection of the sexual preference, they may be more likely to develop coping mechanisms and avoid victimizing a child by acting out on their impulses. These solutions are unlikely to occur when the public receives only sensationalized stories that perpetuate the fallacy of the pedophile as an uncontrollable, unstoppable monster whose sole endeavor is to sexually abuse children (Jahnke, 2013).

Despite the research showing pedophiles realize their attractions at an early age, many are reluctant to seek help due to public perceptions and fear of exposure. In 2011, Maryland-based B4U-ACT conducted a survey of 193 pedophiles. In this survey, 40% of the respondents

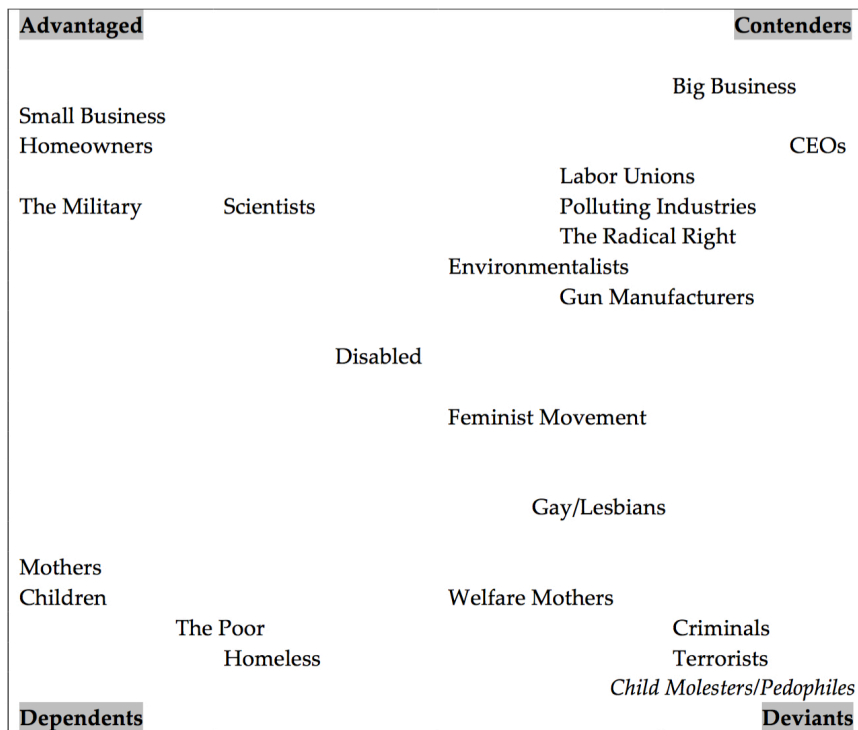
said they have “desired mental health care” for a reason related to their attraction to boys or girls “but did not receive it,” and 82% agreed that minor-attracted people could benefit from mental health services “for reasons related to their attraction other than changing these attractions” (B4U-ACT, 2011). Despite this overwhelming acknowledgement that they could benefit from such care, 88% of the pedophiles surveyed disagreed that professionals in the health care setting had a strong grasp of their diagnosis and 54% disagreed that they would be treated respectfully by health care professionals (B4U-ACT, 2011).

Pedophilia is a strong predictor of an individual committing child sexual abuse, and some will sexually abuse children without ever desiring or seeking help. For others, however, there is a desire for intervention and there may be a window of opportunity between the time he or she identifies the attraction and the decision on whether or not he/she will *act upon* that attraction. This window of time could also be viewed as a policy window for increasing the availability of resources that do not normally flow to deviants. Ingram’s (2007) Social Construction Theory matrix (modified to include “pedophiles” and “child molesters”) offers insight into the way Deviant groups are perceived (p. 102). In Figure 1 (Ingram et al, 2007), child molesters and pedophiles are situated firmly in the “deviants” quadrant with the associated low power and negative perception (p. 102):

+ (HIGH POWER)

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE



- (LOW POWER)

Figure 1: Ingram's Social Construction Theory Matrix

This positioning of pedophiles as equivalent to child molesters, however, might change if those discussing child sexual abuse differentiate between those who have thoughts (pedophiles) and those who have acted upon those thoughts (child molesters). In the current position, pedophiles have virtually no power to fight for the very resources that may help them avoid victimizing a child. Ingram (2007) suggests that negatively constructed groups are “unable to challenge their own situation” and are subjected to punishment by policymakers “under the guise of ‘getting tough’” (p. 107). Smallbone (2008) asserts that the news media’s handling of child sexual abuse stories adds to the public’s perception of such abuse as a “mysterious, inexplicable phenomenon” and leaves many with an increased fear that is compounded by a perceived lack of “any apparent means to protect (themselves)” (p. 203).

Chapter 3: Methodology

To understand how the public might respond to the concept of the self-identified, non-offending pedophile seeking help for his or her attractions, I conducted a Content Analysis of comments that were posted in response to Luke Malone's "Help Wanted" story on *This American Life's* Facebook page². The story originally aired in April 2014, and it was 27 minutes long.

According to Luke Malone, the idea for this story took form in 2012 around the time of 68-year old Jerry Sandusky's conviction on 45 counts related to child sexual abuse (2014). Sandusky's conviction made Luke wanted to understand the age at which a pedophile first realizes his/her attraction, whether some pedophiles wanted to do anything to stop themselves, and who they could turn to for help. Searching online, Luke eventually came into contact with a minor named "Adam" who ran a support group for young adult pedophiles. Adam agreed to be interviewed about his own attraction to children ages 3 through 8, which he claims began when he was 14 years old. In the story, he talks openly about the child pornography he viewed in secret for two years. He soon references the video that made him want to get help, which involved an 18-month old baby being sexually assaulted by an adult male. Adam states: "I remember thinking I wanted to reach through the screen and kill the person. I was just so horrified at what I saw. At that point, I knew something was really wrong" (Malone, 2014).

Adam goes on to discuss his journey to "get clean" of child pornography. He was inspired, in part, by two adult survivors of child sexual abuse he befriended online who urged him to seek help. He stopped viewing child pornography, and soon became depressed and suicidal because he "felt like a monster" for having his attractions. When Adam asked his mother to schedule an appointment because of troubling thoughts, the psychologist refused to

² Founded in 2004, **Facebook** is a social media platform used by 71% of online adults and 58% of all Americans ages 18 and over. According to Pew Research Center, 87% of Facebook users engage with the platform daily (70%) or weekly (17%) (Duggan, et al). **This American Life** is a journalism-based radio show that was founded in 1995 and calls itself "a documentary show for people who normally hate documentaries" and "a public radio show for people who don't necessarily care for public radio." It is produced by Chicago Public Media and airs on over 500 U.S. public radio stations to an estimated 2.1 million weekly listeners ("About Us"). "**Help Wanted**" is the name given to the segment Luke Malone provided to This American Life.

treat him as soon as he admitted the reason for his depression. Following multiple rejections from therapists who “didn’t treat minors” and feared losing their licenses due to mandatory reporting laws, Adam began an online support group for those who do not want to sexually abuse children. He admits to battling his fantasies, but states of the group, “I feel we are better people than those who go out and hurt kids” and says he’s committed to “managing” his attraction (Malone, 2014).

Content Analysis was selected because it enables the researcher to become immersed in the data and develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon taking place. In this case, it was the emotional reaction to a viewpoint (the differentiation between *pedophile* and *child molester*) that is very rarely presented to the public (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For this study, I wanted to understand how public responses might either resemble or deviate from the current rhetoric regarding pedophilia and prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. This method enabled me to examine not only the overall tone of responses as Positive or Negative, but also specific words and phrases that provided insight into patterns of sentiment.

The story was referenced in four “posts” by *This American Life’s* Facebook page in 2014. The posts appeared on April 11, 13, 21, as well as August 11. There were 711 total comments in the four posts. Each individual comment was copied and pasted into its own cell of an Excel spreadsheet. Comments comprised only of a link (to an external source or individual in Facebook) were eliminated for the analysis, leaving 643 comments. For comments that included symbols that were not numbers, letters or punctuation, symbols were removed. Comments that included obvious spelling errors were corrected, and spacing was standardized where needed for clarity and ease of word count.

Following Conventional Content Analysis as described in Hsieh and Shannon’s “Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis,” Inductive Category Development was used to enable “categories and names of categories to flow from the data” (Hsieh/Shannon, 2005). The data was read a total of six initial times, and notes were made as comments were read and themes emerged. Following the sixth reading, all comments were coded into one of the four following categories: Mostly Positive, Mixed (Positive + Negative), Mostly Negative, and Indeterminate.

Once all comments were included in one of the four categories listed above, an additional three readings were conducted to explore prevalent themes. These were coded based on existing research discussed in Literature Review. The themes chosen for discussion include:

- A. Gratitude/thanks**
- B. Use of metaphor or analogy**
- C. Words used to describe Adam**
- D. Comments qualified by “I was abused . . .”**

The comments corresponding to each theme were copied and pasted into separate sheets on a master data list, and excerpts can be found in the Appendices. For each of the four themes above, relevant excerpts of comments were loaded into *wordcounter.com* to generate frequencies. The complete data set of 643 unedited comments is available upon request from the author. Comments can be accessed through the *This American Life Facebook* page, which is a public page.

Chapter 4: Results And Discussion

Results

Frequencies for responses within the four initial categories are shown below:

RESPONSE CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	% OF TOTAL
Mostly Positive	370	58%
Mostly Negative	148	23%
Mix: Pos + Neg	92	14%
Indeterminate	33	5%
TOTAL COMMENTS	643	100%

1. Mostly Positive: 58% of all comments reflected a statement that was completely positive or mostly positive combined with a neutral statement. Typical examples include:

- *This was a very thought provoking segment. I have lots of respect for people like Adam who recognize that their urges are harmful and try to seek help to suppress acting on them. Dan Savage actually has addressed this issue (I'm pretty sure I heard it on his podcast), and it's a horrible situation -- oftentimes you can't reach out and seek treatment because once you do, the therapist is required to report you to the authorities, creating a huge disincentive for people to go seek professional help.*
- *This was an amazing story, I had always thought that a pedophile had been abused as a child for them to go on and abuse. This changes everything (in my mind at least). It is refreshing to see an open discussion; it needs to be out there in the open for change to occur. We all have urges but it's our choices that define us and Adam is making his.*

2. Mixed (Positive +Negative): 23% of comments reflected a statement that was a mix of both positive and negative feedback about some element of the story. Typical examples include:

- *I listen avidly each week to TAL but this one, I just couldn't. I had to switch it off; it made me feel sick. And I deleted the episode from my Library in case I felt tempted to go and listen to the end. It was hearing the age of the youngest child he had viewed in a video. I know it may help me to listen and learn - but this time, it stuck in my throat. Sorry to Adam whom I appreciate is a very brave individual.*

- *Somehow I got through listening to this on TAL, but I don't know that I can go further. I felt sick, plus sorrow, anger, and sympathy for this person who knew he needed help, who knew he was sick. This feature did make you think from the other side--it was scary & hellish. I don't know how someone lives with that.*

3. Mostly Negative: 14% of the comments were completely negative or mostly negative combined with a neutral statement. Common examples include:

- *The people that find themselves sexually attracted to infants, toddlers and children should swallow a bullet and spare the rest of us. This isn't a medical condition or a 'problem' that hopefully we find a "cure" for. These are people who have nothing to contribute to society. Zero. Well, maybe as fertilizer but that's it.*
- *It is sad that we are giving audience to a pedophile and take sympathy on him, which I do not. People who prey on children are the scum of the earth, he is no different. So what, he got help, he is still a pedophile (and) people like that should have no rights.*

4. Indeterminate: 5% of the comments did not relate to the story and were generally a note about how the website functioned, a comment to another Facebook person that did not include a reflection on the story, or a comment for which there was no distinguishable positive or negative leaning. Examples include:

- *You throw yourself into the nearest religion believing that God will fix you if you just devote yourself hard enough. Eventually you become a priest.*
- *This is the article I was talking about.*
- *Umm . . . therapy? Long, intensive therapy . . .*

Once frequencies for the four initial categories were determined, I identified frequencies and examined comments for each of the five themes listed in Methodology. Results are as follows:

A. "Gratitude/Thanks"

102 comments expressed gratitude/thanks towards the author, *This American Life*, or the main interviewee "Adam." Key words are listed in Appendix A.

B. Use of metaphor or analogy

33 comments included the use of metaphor either to describe or compare pedophilia to something else or explain how it was unlike something else (see Appendix B). They including the following:

- *Replace the word pedophilia with gay and you can see how psychologists used to think of the gay population, now you see that acting on any sexual fantasies is a choice . . .*
- *Once you bring the thought to reality you are in essence a terrorist of children . . .*
- *Think of the closing statement as if it were another crime: Adam has an urge to knife someone and we're asking him to never act upon this urge his whole life. Is this fair? YES.*
- *I'm very appreciative of Adam's honesty, but never, ever forget, he's watched child pornography . . . to think that he is innocent of a crime is blatantly wrong. Just say I love marijuana and I've had it in my possession, but never ingested it. I still had it in my possession. And my dealer had to get more to replace what I was dealt so he could have more to supply to others. See what I'm saying?*

C. Words used to describe Adam

147 respondents referred specifically to Adam, the central character in the story, with his name or some other term (see Appendix C).

D. Comments qualified by "I was abused . . ."

24 responses included a statement that the author of the comment was speaking as a past victim of child sexual abuse (see Appendix D).

Discussion

Of the 643 responses, the majority (58%, or 370) were mostly or completely positive. Most of these positive replies included acknowledgement their assumptions about pedophilia had been challenged, and supported the concept of intervention for self-identified pedophiles. 14% (92) of the respondents replied with comments that were both positive and negative, and a frequent criticism was Luke Malone's reference to Adam as a "non-offending" pedophile. 23%, or 148, of the comments were mostly or completely negative.

Based on frequencies of Positive (58%) vs. Negative (23%) responses, it may be tempting to assume that the public will be likely to support the idea of treatment for non-offending pedophiles. However, a closer examination of comments in terms of the themes indicate that prevalent stigma continues to emerge even when the author distinguishes between an individual who has touched a child sexually and one who has only the *thoughts*. This may indicate that, for some members of the public, the very idea of sexual interest towards children is repulsive enough to warrant grouping the thought (pedophilia) with the action (child sexual abuse). This is in line with Jahnke's survey regarding public opinion of pedophiles; while public attitudes on "self-control and motivation for therapy" may affect how pedophiles are viewed, this change can only occur if the public is "well informed about the conceptual differences of pedophilia and child sex offenses and if they are willing to differentiate between the two" (p. 178-179). Results also indicate that some members of the public simply believe that pedophiles are inherently untrustworthy and therefore are always lying when they claim to have the thoughts of touching children without the intention of acting upon those thoughts, as was suggested by many posts accusing Adam of lying about his resistance from contacting a child and the overall inability of pedophiles to be "cured."

Themes

102 comments expressed gratitude for some aspect of the story — this was usually directed at Adam, *This American Life*, or Luke Malone. The root "thank" was used 59 times, and "brave," "kudos," and "applaud" each appeared five times. Gratitude is a sentiment that is rarely heard in discussion around this topic. Most listeners expressing gratitude or support

echoed Luke's closing statement; he implores the listener to imagine a life in which they could "never act out on their attractions" with no help from others, and suggests there should be a "clear path" to help those who are struggling with pedophilia (Malone, 2014).

33 respondents used metaphor or analogy in their comments. The most frequent analogy was homosexuality and gay marriage; this was referenced by six respondents, and most warned of a perceived slippery slope that pending legalization of gay marriage would result in acceptance and legalization of adult-child sexual relationships. Very few used metaphor to support the idea that some pedophiles want to resist acting on their attractions, and some compared pedophiles to "terrorists," "rare unicorns (non-offending)," "murderer(s)," and "self-identified monsters." Some respondents made a point to differentiate pedophilia from less stigmatized psychiatric disorders (bipolar disorder, schizophrenia), while eight respondents sought to distance pedophilia—the perceived "addiction" to children for sexual gratification—from more mainstream addictions such as alcoholism, nicotine, and street drugs. The use of analogy to translate a stigmatized sexual paraphilia might indicate that some are struggling to process the concept of the non-offending pedophile. By comparing the unfamiliar idea of pedophilic interests with something more familiar—homosexuality, drug addiction, mental illness—individuals may be attempting to frame such interests within the "normative dualism" of more familiar concepts (gay/straight, addiction/non-addiction, mental illness/"wellness,") as a way to frame the problem and the solution (Schon & Rein, 1994).

In the 147 comments in which the main character was referenced directly, the most frequent term used to refer to him was his name—"Adam"(61)—followed by "he" or "him" (61), and "young" or "young man" (14). 16 comments used the adjectives "brave" or "courageous" in reference to Adam, terms that are in sharp contrast to words like "monster," "criminal," "disgusting," or "evil" commonly used in reference to pedophiles. The lower frequency of derogatory terms—"deviant," "monster," and "sick" were used three or fewer times each—might indicate that Luke's attempt to humanize Adam and focus on his young age (14) at the time he realized his attraction compelled listeners to view him as a conflicted child.

In 24 comments, the respondent qualified their statement with "I was abused as a child." 16 of these individuals were mostly supportive regarding intervention for self-identified

pedophiles, while eight were mostly skeptical or distrustful of the suggestion that pedophiles could be swayed from abusing. While less than 4% of the total 643 responses included claims that the respondent was a victim of child sexual abuse, we might assume that victims would be the most vehemently opposed to any suggestion of empathy for self-identified pedophiles. Therefore, it is surprising that some victims viewed supporting pedophiles as a way to help prevent the abuse they experienced firsthand. If policymakers are more inclined to listen to victims, and victims are advocating for resources pedophiles need to get help, perhaps victims will be unlikely proponents for interventions that ensure non-offending pedophiles don't create more victims.

As long as the social construction of the pedophile is equivalent to that of the child molester, the non-offending pedophile will remain in the deviant category of Igram's Social Construction matrix and solutions that include intervention of the pedophile will have no logical place in the discussion of child sexual abuse prevention. This is because there is no benefit to the policymaker for making a distinction between the two terms, and conversely there is no penalty for conflating the terms. If a policymaker anticipates that the public will reject policies that benefit a deviant group, he or she will continue to deprive that group of benefits and instead impose burdens that will serve the public's wish to see punishment imposed on powerless and negatively constructed groups (Schneider, 336).

When the pedophile is seen as an unchanging constant—as an entity that will always offend and can never be anything else, our views of prevention are limited to hiding, warning, and consoling the victim after the fact. Seeing the pedophile as an unchanging constant disregards/ignores/rejects the possibility that a solution exists that will both prevent the creation of a new victim as well as the creation of a new prison inmate. Politicians have incentive for excessive punishment towards sex offenders; if pedophiles are interchangeable with sex offenders in the public eye, they will suffer the consequences meant for offenders without having committed any crime.

Finally, Luke referred to Adam as a “non-offending pedophile” but this use of the phrase is technically incorrect because Adam's viewing of child pornography is illegal. At least 30 comments identified this discrepancy. Jahnke (2013) warns about this lack of differentiation

in perpetuating stereotypes, stating that individuals who are asked their opinions about *pedophiles* will often give their opinions about *child molesters* (p. 178). Had Luke referred to Adam as a pedophile who had not committed a *contact* offense against a child, it is possible that more respondents would have focused on the intervention concept rather than commenting only on the discrepancy in terminology.

Limitations

A key limitation to this study is that results are not generalizable. While this study does not measure demographic information about the individuals making comments in the public discussion section of the *This American Life Facebook* page, it is likely that the education level of *This American Life* listeners/*Facebook* users is higher than the general public³. According to Jahnke, research on stigma indicates a tendency for individuals with higher education to have a less extreme view of traditionally stigmatized persons such as pedophiles. She suggests that representative surveys of the general population will reveal “a more severe discrimination of people with pedophilia” (Jahnke, 178). In addition, a 2011 study by Pew Research Center indicates that *Facebook* users are “more trusting,” and “much more politically engaged” than others⁴ (Hampton et al).

Validity

Themes were selected and comments coded based on the interpretation of one individual. It is likely that another coder may have selected a different set of themes and categorized responses differently. The use of an Inter-coder Reliability Coefficient, such as Percent Agreement or Holsti’s Method, would be one way to ensure reliability in coding (Neuendorf, 148-9). For example, a second coder could have been recruited to read through all comments and code into Negative, Positive, Mix, or Indeterminate, and that second coder’s

³ According to a 2014 NPR story by Kamenetz, 62% of adults have “some education beyond high school” or some college but no degree (Kamenetz). Of the online adults with at least “some” college education, 74% use Facebook (Hampton et al). It appears that the average education level of Facebook users exceeds the average education level of the general U.S. public.

⁴ This survey by Pew Research “examined Social Networking Site (users)” and “explored people’s overall social networks and how use (of Facebook) . . . is related to trust, tolerance, social support, community, and political engagement” (Hampton et al)

determinations could have been compared to those determined by the first coder to establish a level of agreement.

Future Research

This data represents just a fraction of the total comments that emerged in response to Luke Malone's story. *Upworthy*, a website that claims to "draw attention to stories that matter," shared Malone's story from *This American Life's* Facebook page onto their own Facebook page on April 21, 2014. As of March 2015, the story had generated 7,245 "likes," 4,779 "shares," and over 2,300 comments on Upworthy—nearly four times the number of responses on *This American Life's* pages combined. A content analysis of the *Upworthy* comments could provide even more insight into how the public might respond to Luke's framing of pedophilia and its role in child sexual abuse prevention. While this data source would still fail to be representative of the general population, it might prove useful if the researcher were to track available demographic information from commenters' pages and include variables such as sex or geographic location (U.S., specific state, other country) in an analysis.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Considerable research over the past two decades suggests that while there is no “cure” for pedophilia, there may be tools to help keep those with sexual attractions to children from committing crimes against children. While pedophiles remain among the most demonized individuals in society, much of this negativity may be based upon the popular public belief that the *thoughts* associated with pedophilia will always result in the *act* of child sexual abuse. Luke Malone’s “Help Wanted” segment not only helps challenge the assumption that all pedophiles will eventually hurt children, it may suggest a future in which those who seek help have the political power and public support they need to cope with their attraction without acting upon it. This, in turn, could prove to be an effective tool in reducing incidents of child sexual abuse.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Frequencies of words that appeared 3 or more times in the 102 comment excerpts that included gratitude/thanks:

Word	Frequency
for	67
thank	59
you	45
to	32
this	28
and	20
adam	18
help	15
share	14
story	13
tal	12
that	12
glad	11
I	11
the	11
a	9
of	8
on	8
is	6
it	6
well	6
do	6
issue	5
brave	5
get	5
but	5
topic	5
kudos	5

done	5
applaud	5
are	5
go	4
bravery	4
into	4
good	4
other	4
his	4
happy	4
be	4
bring	4
appreciate	3
important	3
where	3
in	3
very	3
support	3
back	3
people	3
grateful	3
he	3
episode	3
hav	3
post	3
like	3
fellow	3
they	3
conversation	3
not	3
young	3
difficult	3

Appendix B

Excerpts of all comments that included use of metaphor or analogy to something else:

<i>"addict"</i>
<i>I have an attraction to women, would you imply that makes me a rapist?</i>
<i>If a person said I have a gun and I really want to kill somebody but I haven't and I want to join a support group, they would be turned over to law in a hot second and guns would be taken.</i>
<i>Think of this as if it were another crime; if Adam has urge to knife someone, it's fair to ask him to never act on his urge his whole life.</i>
<i>Let's say I love marijuana and I've had it in my posession but never ingested it--my dealer had to get more to replace--I created demand.</i>
<i>Porn isn't a consumable the way marijuana is</i>
<i>it's like snuff porn, you may not be one in video but if you're (getting off on it) you're a sick piece of shit for watching it</i>
<i>replace the word pedophilia with gay and you can see how psychologists used to think of the gay population, now you see that acting on any sexual fantasies is a choice, I am glad he is giving insight</i>
<i>homosexuality, sexual preference argument, gays are lucky their sexual preference now legal, it's a learned behavior</i>
<i>homosexuality</i>
<i>homosexuality, this one illegal</i>
<i>"rare unicorns" (sarcastic)</i>
<i>If someone is schizophrenic and they are a danger to society, they shouldn't be allowed to roam the streets. Just because it's caused by mental illness doesn't make them safer in society.</i>
<i>Writing story without description of CP would be like writing about life in Auschwitz-Birkenau without mentioning gas chambers.</i>
<i>Story suggests teacher will be interacting with children just as adults socialize with other at gatherings, workplaces, etc.</i>
<i>So a man violating a grown woman, who is not a child, is not inappropriate or potentially damaging? Violating anyone, child or adult, leads to harmful outcomes.</i>
<i>I have never seen a smoker trying to quit smoking by burying themselves with cigarettes.</i>
<i>This is not alcoholism or drug addiction we're talking about. If there were serial killer groups it wouldn't be that reassuring that they were urging each other not to kill again.</i>
<i>Drug trade deadly--all drug users murderer? Someone who buys meat contributing to meat industry that greatly harms animals and environment? Making CP more deserving of prison than viewer.</i>
<i>You compared those who view CP to those who buy burgers and steaks (sarcastic).</i>
<i>What if we had same philosophy (I'll do it because stopping won't make a difference in fate of children) about everything? Welfare, theft, littering?</i>
<i>If my kid viewed CP, authorities--same if he sold drugs out of my house, ran a brothel, or planned a bank robbery.</i>

<i>They don't have control over it (pedophilic urges). This isn't like smoking or overeating where you have your weekly meeting and hope you don't "slip up." Child abuse destroys the innocent</i>
<i>Can only combat through education, study, therapy, deeper investigation. This is a mental disease, think schizophrenia, depression, Tourette, bi-polar, borderline, alcoholism. You can't tell any of those people to just knock it off or hey go kill yourself</i>
<i>Comparing an alcoholic to a pedophile? (Sarcasm)</i>
<i>terrorist of children</i>
<i>Self-identified monsters acting out the part</i>
<i>Is a solution for thousands of gay people who don't feel comfortable with their sexual preferences totally nonexistent? I have considerable number of homosexual friends who need help</i>
<i>First we accept interracial marriage, then same sex marriage, and now we're going to push the pedophile agenda?</i>
<i>I have a bridge for sale, by the way.</i>
<i>Pedophiles are murderers; they kill the very soul of the innocents they abuse. Expressing sympathy is expressing sympathy for murderers. If these people admitted to having a drive to kill people, would you sympathizers still be advocating their presence in society?</i>
<i>Won't use word "pornography" in this context; porn is legal, consensual and for adult and made only with adults. Anything done under threat of violence, dominance, power and abuse can only be called exploitation or abuse that is being recorded for others to view. If a child is involved, you cannot call it pornography.</i>
<i>PTSD, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc. are not disorders that drive sufferers to do disgusting things to innocent children; apples to oranges comparison</i>

Appendix C

Words used to describe Adam; includes only the words that appeared 2 or more times:

Word to Describe Adam	Freq.
Adam	61
he	37
him	24
this	24
man	17
young	14
brave	10
sarcastic	8
kid	8
these	7
guy	6
child	6
courage	6
person	6
pedophile	4
you	3
children	3
bravery	3
courageous	3
old	3
people	3
and	3
men	3
son	3
human	3
offender	3
porn	3
consumer	3

Appendix D

Excerpts/central theme of the 24 comments that were qualified with “I was abused” or “I was a victim” (edited for length; therefore, the section of the statement in which respondent identified as victim is not always listed below but can be found in original comment):

1. *The only way to protect our children is to try to understand what causes people to victimize others and figure out a way to keep it from happening.*
2. *He is helping a lot of people to do the right thing and try to wrestle with some formidable demons/Yes, we need research to determine what makes people turn to pedophilia, which appears to happen as a nascent sexual identity is emerging coincident with exposure to child pornography. But I for one am *always* going to side with the real victim here, the helpless and innocent child.*
3. *This makes way for studies to be done on an entire population where there is little to no information, which could lead to treatment and prevent potential abuse in the future!*
4. *Well done Adam and don't let anyone stop you your battle is a difficult one but nonetheless worthy. As a victim of sexual abuse I am very proud of you. Let's stop treating pedophilia as a taboo because we are not helping anyone by doing so on the contrary it's helping the perpetrators.*
5. *Please pass on to Adam to keep up the support group sometimes when no help is available you just have to find a way to help yourself. I believe your support group can give hope to others and help them.*
6. *I agree with their statement.*
7. *I want to thank him for creating a space where others with an intact moral compass like him can go for support and avoid victimizing children. As hard as it is, more research needs to be done on this very very sensitive topic, but the fact that Adam has offered a different definition from what we all expect a pedophile to be is a great first step.*
8. *I have thought for quite a while that more research needs to be done to find a way to help paedophiles. I would really like to see more help for the sexually confused from a young age, it could prevent a lot of pain.*

9. *I had to stop listening, brought back memories from my childhood.*
10. *I have never hurt a child, nor have thought of hurting a child. Yet by the standards set out, I am a pedophile.*
11. *As long as these people are free they pose a threat to children and I won't apologize for being honest. Yes I'm glad he may not have offended, but come on--how do we really know this? I will not feel bad if he can't rape little kids and they should all be locked up or monitored.*
12. *This story is about as far from pedophile apologism as you can get, and it features a protagonist who understands the potentially catastrophic consequences of his attraction, who wants to find resources for himself, and winds up becoming a resource to many people who have desires they know they need to control in order to protect others. It gave me hope that someday, potential perpetrators won't be left alone with their feelings, which means that fewer victims will be isolated by their trauma.*
13. *I also thought I wouldn't be able to listen as a survivor, but I am very glad I did. This was a very powerful piece of reporting, probably some of the best work TAL has produced.*
14. *People just want to know what they're getting into before they click and the reason my comment was so snide is because I'm a survivor of childhood sexual assault with PTSD, aka someone who is directly affected by trigger warnings and I'm getting very tired of arguing about them with people (not you) who think I'm a wimpy baby because I support them.*
15. *These people will not be cured. This isn't some 12-step disease. This is something much darker.*
16. *If you think science is going to cure-fix-alleviate pedophilia, more power to you. It won't. No such thing as a non-offending pedophile.*
17. *I couldn't even listen to 5 minutes of this. I wish my abuser was dead.*
18. *If these non-offenders are sincere, they have my respect. Do anything rather than touch a child or watch child pornography.*
19. *The failings of all systems (legal/justice, mental health, and my own naïveté) still devastates me whenever I'm reminded how the damage goes on for all (my abuser's) victims (9 confirmed), him, and his future victims.*

20. *The more people get enraged, throw up, cry, and are heartbroken, the more likely the general public will start to demand preventive care for pedophiles. 1 in 4 little girls and 1 in 6 little boys are depending on it.*
21. *I agree; there needs to be more to stop this before it becomes another terrible experience for a kid.*
22. *As a survivor, the assurance that there are professionals actively seeking to prevent abuse is very comforting. I also commend the author for acknowledging that the majority of survivors do not abuse, as opposed to popular belief. This stigma is yet another reason why sexual abuse survivors might be unwilling to disclose.*
23. *This story comes after a child in my community was raped and murdered by a 17 year old pedophile. I'm reeling from that incident; reading this has made me physically ill and I can't stop shaking. This is very personal for me.*
24. *Really thought provoking and, although I'll ALWAYS hate my teacher for introducing me to things I shouldn't have met at 10, to my surprise I ended up feeling sorry for this guy!*