

# Blood should be running in the street

written by Sandy | April 8, 2022



By Sandy . . . Sexual crime has always been with us. In ancient Greek mythology, the god Zeus took the form of a swan and raped Leda, the queen of Sparta. The biblical King David saw Bathsheba, desired her, and ordered her to him, an act that today would have women's advocates demanding his removal from office. Throughout history and into modern times, rape was and is used as a weapon during wartime.

In civilized societies, those who are convicted of committing rape and sexual assault and child molestation have been punished and then released into the community.

They were not registered. They did not have to "check in" with law enforcement once they were no longer on probation or parole. Their presence in the community as former sexual offenders was largely unknown. They lived and worked wherever they could with no restrictions on where; there were no imaginary lines drawn around parks or schools, no prohibition against trick-or treat or other Halloween activities, no

requirement to notify law enforcement if their telephone number or place of employment changed.

According to the wisdom of today, reoffense should have been rampant. As each year more individuals, virtually all "first-timers," were released after serving a sentence for a sexual crime, the sheer mass of these felons unleashed on an unsuspecting public, with no one tracking or constantly monitoring them, must have resulted in ever-increasing numbers of victims.

Stranger-rape victims must have been piling up in the streets. Those suffering from sexual assault must have overwhelmed the hospital system. Children must have been kidnapped from schools and parks in record numbers on a daily basis.

But none of those things happened.

Statistics are hard to come by. [A study done in New York City](#) (p.324), the Mayor's Committee Report on Sex Offenses covering the years 1930 – 1939, reports, among others, these findings:

- There was no wave of sex crime in New York City during the 1930's. Although sex crimes receive more public attention than other types of crime, they represent only a small fraction of the sum total coming to the attention of the Police Department.
- Most sex crimes are by first offenders . . . Offenders charged with sex felonies are less inclined to have records than other types of felons.
- Sex crime is not habitual behavior for the great majority of convicted sex offenders. Police Department fingerprint records disclose that only 7%, 40 out of 555 offenders convicted of sex crimes in 1930, were again arrested on the same charge during the period from 1930 to 1941.

[A Bureau of Justice report](#) published in 1997 gives this

information for forcible rape:

In 1976, 53 instances for each 100,000 female victims (Male victims were not counted for a few more years.)

In 1980, 65 per 100,000

In 1988, 66 per 100,000

In 1995, 66 per 100,000

This was all pre-Megan's Law registries. Furthermore, children were not being assaulted or kidnapped from parks or schools. Schools had no security monitors, no screening devices; parents and other members of the public were, for the most part, free to come and go as they wished. Children played in parks, in the streets, in neighbors' yards, unmonitored and unharmed. The rare, rare occasion of a child being taken by a stranger – e.g., – Jaycee Dugard; Elizabeth Smart – was so remarkable that it dominated news cycles for months and even years.

The only recorded instance of a child being abducted and harmed on Halloween by a stranger is the tragic case of Lisa French in Fond du Luc, Wisconsin, in 1973. The man who molested and killed her while she was trick or treating had no record of a previous sexual crime. To this day, in the United States, there is no other reported instance of a stranger molestation of a child during Halloween activities, neither before the proliferation of sexual offense registries and Halloween restrictions nor after.

Those convicted of sexual crimes did what those convicted of other crimes did: They served their sentences, struggled to gain employment on release, and assimilated into society as best they could. The only difference between registrants and those convicted of other offenses is that the reoffense rate for the former was and remains remarkably lower than for the latter.

So what happened?

Jacob Wetterling happened (1987). Megan Kanka happened (1994). And years before them, although never proven to have been the result of a sexual crime, Adam Walsh had happened (1981).

These three children were all tragically murdered. Jacob and Megan were victims of sexual crime. Their cases were rare, horrific, and catalytic.

In the years that followed, we saw the Jacob Wetterling Act (1994) that requires states to implement a sexual offender and crimes against children registry; Megan's Law (1996) requiring law enforcement authorities to make information available to the public regarding those on the registry; and the Adam Walsh Act (2006) outlining a plethora of requirements pertaining to those on a sexual offense registry.

Individual states, not to be outdone by the federal government, rushed to implement further "protections." Restrictions against where a registrant could live, work, or even be were proposed and eagerly passed by the voting public as they were presented as essential to "keep our children safe." A wide variety of Halloween restrictions were implemented; an [informal research project](#) found that such restrictions were non-existent prior to 2003, when there were three articles announcing them. From there they climbed each year, and by 2014 numbered 177. At least [one state makes it illegal](#) for a person on the registry to give candy or a gift at Halloween, Christmas, Easter, or other holidays to any person 17 or younger; the statute makes no exception for one's own children.

And now, fueled by politicians who yearly propose new legislation further restricting the rights and movements of persons required to register and adding new offenses yearly, and by the media, who quickly discovered that "sex offender" in a header is automatic click-bait, the American public is

convinced that the registry and all of the restrictions against and requirements of registered persons are the only things standing between them and wholesale rape and destruction of women and children and blood running in the street.

And thus a vicious cycle was created. The more the public heard from the press, the more it believed that repeat offenders are the biggest threat to their children and the more it demanded protection, thus fueling the politicians to create more laws and the press to report as much as possible about the subject.

Fueled additionally by proliferation of the [“frightening and high” recidivism myth](#) and by a total disregard for studies that debunk essentially everything the public believes about those who commit sexual crime as well as for best practices for managing them, we find ourselves where we are today.

Into this triad of public, politicians, and press entered a new element, what will be called the rational thinkers: legal scholars, researchers and academics, certain journalists, and anti-registry organizations. Their voices grow louder each year, and their determination to influence the other three grows stronger.

It is impossible at this point to know what changes in our society and our relationships with one another will occur. One excellent thing that could come is a broader understanding of the actual and multi-faceted nature of sexual crime and those who commit it and a realization that the myriad of restraints placed on those with sexual crime convictions are not what has kept and will keep us safe.

There will always be sexual offenders. Sadly, that will not change. Those who are convicted will serve their sentences and again become a part of society. An almost minuscule percentage will reoffend. The vast majority will not. And our modern-day

attempts at monitoring and tracking and restricting and controlling every aspect of their lives will have virtually nothing to do with whether they do or whether they don't.