I Saw the Devil- The Need for a Better Abuser List

I saw the Devil. Twice, the first time, I worked at a group home. A small voice, without shaking, said the devil visited him while he slept, and slipped a hand under the covers. That was almost 30 years ago.

Then I saw the devil again.

This time a former resident from the home sent me a facebook picture, the devil was some kind of swimming coach, young boys in Speedos surrounding him in Upstate NY.

I dropped a dime the first time, reported him as mandated.

But it was “unfounded”.

He went back to work there, doing overnights, alone with the kids. Eventually the bosses found out, maybe they couldn’t prove it, but the bosses knew, and he was let go.

Not criminally charged, that would be embarrassing, but let go. Let go, to work somewhere else, and do the same things. Did I mention he was a wrestling coach, something is viscerally repulsive in even typing that.

**Shane’s Story**

“Shane” was a kid from the home, love him, still see him. He is grown with kids now. One time at the home, he came back from a visit to a staff member’s house. Yeah back then you could take the kids to your house when working. “Effing (derogatory term for a gay man)” he was muttering with increasing volume.

I knew something was up, didn’t want to punish him, but he wouldn’t say what was going on. Asked him to just go to his room and he did.

15 years later, I see Shane. I still remembered that day, and asked him about it. The staff member had put his hand on Shane’s leg and moved it up. Shane was one of those kids who really didn’t take shit, he was a fighter. And it stopped.

This guy too, eventually, was found out, let go, not charged, in the wind, somewhere else.

I really thought they had caught the devil. I didn’t think he could still be around kids. With tears of frustration I called the State, and a couple of other numbers. Unless I had the kid (probably dozens) who were the victims, I couldn’t complain. He wasn’t on “the list.”

**We need a better list**

USA Today, ran an [article](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/02/15/why-us-doesnt-have-government-database-disciplined-teachers/80220534/) showing how abusive teachers can move state to state after being dismissed for misconduct and often evade suspicion. But in reality they often don’t even have to move.

You see, it sadly is in everyone’s (except the kids) interest for folks to just move on. You may not be able to legally prove what you know, you might get sued, and it’s embarrassing (to say the least) for the organization who put the likely pedophile with your kids. So employer and employee both call it a day, and abusers move on to new hunting grounds.

Similar story in NYC, the Department of Education has an “ineligible list” folks suspected of nefarious activities, or even those caught, where it’s not really a crime. They were ineligible to work in the district schools. The list was not shared.

A real example, a teacher had sex with a student who was over 18, the guy was put on this list. However, back then, not sure of now, the list was not shared with charters or other districts, so this same teacher taught at two other charters, that I know of, probably other districts etc.

These folks just keep shuffling on, so we need a better list.

I personally think that sex offender lists are over inclusive, and potentially overly punitive. But we need a list, a national list, where folks can lodge official suspicions, and maybe as 3 of those pile up, then your name gets a yellow flag on the background check. 6 or more, red flag. Making this up as I go. It’s not that simple, but it’s not unduly complicated either.

Yes this will hurt the employment prospects of some folks unfairly, but I see the costs of our inaction. And in the tradeoff between some folks can’t work with kids and fewer kids will get hurt. I weigh in on the latter.

I still see the devil, and right now, short of beating his ass, there is nothing I can do.

He is coaching swimming, adorned by young boys in Speedos.