

Brandon Buchanan

English 1020-32

Cathy Whaley

February 13, 2007

Title

There is much speculation into whether or not Arnold Friedman did it. The topic in question is sexual abuse of many children. In Capturing the Friedmans, many opinions come forth about whether or not Arnold committed the crimes. Testimonies from many different people can make it very difficult for one to make a decision about what actually happened. Despite what many people in the documentary testify, Arnold is not guilty of sexually abusing children in his basement.

The first and foremost evidence that Arnold is not guilty is simply the circumstance under which the kids were thought to have been sexually abused. If many children were being abused, then the chance that not one child would say anything about what was being done to them at the time would be highly unlikely. Parents would even randomly show up at the Friedman's house, but no one suspected abuse of the children in the classroom. There is no possible way Arnold could abuse the children, yet everything look completely fine when parents would come to pick up their child.

If abuse was happening at the Friedman's house, then there was no evidence of it. If the children had been abused, then at least one child at the time would have spoken up about what was happening, even if they did not know what was wrong or right. The children who did not actually speak up would have changed their body language enough that an adult should have picked up on the change. The children were also being reenrolled in classes, however, none

objected to going back. The children would have let an adult know about the reoccurring abuse happening.

Even if no child would have admitted the abuse, the crimes that people claim Arnold committed would have left traces. No blood or semen was ever found by parents of the students. Bruises were never reported on any of the students, and with such physical abuse that was described later in the case, bruises would have shown up.

The police investigation into the accused crime was done with no rationality. The hysteria that the event created fueled the corrupt police investigation. The children were not properly interviewed, which led to incorrect testimonies from the children. Instead asking the children what had happened at the Friedman's house, they demanded the children to tell them what happened. The children could have made up a story just so that they would not be pressured anymore. Even one alleged victim of the crime admits making up a story so that his parents and the police would leave him alone about the issue.

Even some of the students are at fault. The students who say that Arnold did commit the crime often mix up their own stories. However, these same students never said that anything was wrong while taking the classes. Some students even did hypnosis, which has a tendency to implant false memories in children. Now, those same children claim to remember memories that were blocked out by their minds about the times they were abused at the Friedman's house.

Arnold did have a problem, though. He did own the child pornography, indicating that he did have something to hide. However, simply own child pornography is not enough to be convicted of sexual abuse of a child. Perhaps even, he had sexual encounters with some boys at the vacation home. Arnold realized he had this problem, and he was afraid that he may act upon these urges one day. This let Arnold to plead guilty during his trial. Arnold knew that if he went

to prison, then he would not have to worry about controlling these urges because the new environment he would be in would not allow for it.

It may be possible that Arnold had abused boys at the vacation house. Arnold had admitted to Elaine that there were at least two boys, in which he may be referring to boys at the vacation home. However, that would be a totally different case, and does not affect the outcome of the case at his house. This would confirm the problem that Arnold has, although he feels powerless to do anything about. If this is a possibility, no one has come out yet to reveal that Arnold had abused them.

Although it is hard to decipher what to believe when watching the movie, it becomes very apparent what actually took place. Arnold could not have abused the children without being caught sooner. Most evidence brought against Arnold was purely circumstantial, only compounded by the fact that he owned child pornography and hysteria of the middle class community. This case only goes to show how easy hysteria can blow everything out of proportion and can cause such damage to a relatively small case like child pornography.