

MEMORANDUM TO: GENERAL SMITH

Mr. DeLoach, FBI Liaison Officer to CIA, delivered the attached book review on the Kinsey report together with the report itself which, I believe, Mr. Hoover promised to send you.

Mr. DeLoach requested that the book be returned after it has served its purpose since it belongs to the FBI Library.

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19 Oct 1950

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FBI REVIEW
COMPLETED



BOOK REVIEW
"SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE
HUMAN MALE"
BY ALFRED S. KINSEY, ET AL

The author of this book is a professor of zoology at Indiana University. He and his co-workers spent ten years in collecting the data for this book. He tries to convey the idea, time after time, through repetition, charts and other devices that it is the most comprehensive research study of man's sexual behavior ever compiled.

Dr. Kinsey goes into too much detail concerning his interview technique and conveys the idea that probably his approach to this problem is new to the point of being revolutionary--when in fact he offers nothing new or radical regarding interviews by looking the subject "straight in the eye" to prevent the subject from lying.

The theme of the book is man's basic instinct to reproduce. It covers such intimate details of human relationships that it is questionable whether a zoologist is capable of correctly analyzing such personal data. The validity of his findings obtained from high pressure interviews is questionable.

It is a difficult book to read and a difficult book to review. It is so paradoxical in the fields of sociology and anthropology and its net results so controversial that a number of pro and con reviews have been made of it and a 224-page "symposium on the Kinsey report" was issued by Prentice-Hall on May 1, 1948. The symposium consists of 14 chapters, each written by an outstanding person in a chosen field to report his or her reaction to Kinsey's book from various aspects such as anthropological, religious, sociological, psychiatric, etc.

Dr. Kinsey states that he and his staff interviewed 12,000 subjects representing every level in our social strata--farmers, socialites, bootleggers, businessmen, professors, prostitutes and gamblers. The result--a rocking report of our prejudices, sexual habits, preconceptions, unheard of behavior patterns in various stratas of society, all wrapped up in a cold, analytical, 804-page book bulging with statistical charts.

Kinsey and his associates describe their report as "an attempt to accumulate an objectively determined body of fact about sex which strictly avoids social or moral interpretations of the fact."

Within ten weeks after the publication of Kinsey's report, his name was a byword in the American household. A Gallup poll reflected that within two months after publication one out of every five Americans had either heard of the book or read it. That in itself is a phenomenon in book publishing circles.

This book is the first of a series planned. The complete set is as follows:

1. Sexual Behavior in the Human Male
2. Sexual Behavior in the Human Female
3. Sexual Factors in Marital Adjustment
4. Legal Aspects of Sex Behavior
5. The Heterosexual-Homosexual Balance
6. Sexual Adjustments in Institutional Populations
7. Prostitution
8. Sex Education
9. Other Special Problems

Kinsey states that from the dawn of human history, men have left a record of their sexual activities through drawings, books and other methods and yet, scientists have avoided investigations of human sexuality. He includes a bibliography of over 500 books on the subject to prove that human sexuality is one of the most poorly explored fields in biology, psychology or sociology.

Typical of the data contained in this book is the following:

A number of persons interviewed turned in sexual calendars and diaries showing their day-to-day activities over some period of time. The calendars cover periods which range from six months to thirty-five years; and they clearly indicate the monthly periodicity of sexual responsiveness in the female, and the lack of any such periodicity in the male. Kinsey urges all persons who have kept day by day calendars showing the frequencies and the sources of their sexual outlet, to place the accumulated data at his disposal for further study.

On page 168 he discusses homosexuality and states that "on the whole, the homosexual child play is found in more histories, occurs more frequently, and becomes more specific than the pre-adolescent heterosexual play. . . . In the younger boy, it is also fostered by his socially encouraged disdain for girls' ways, by his admiration for masculine prowess, and by his desire to emulate older boys. . . . About half of the older males (48%) and nearer two-thirds (60%) of the boys who were pre-adolescent at the time they contributed their histories, recall homosexual activity in their pre-adolescent years." But Kinsey fails to state that he talked to any boys--merely to adults who discussed their childhood activities. This would seem to the reviewer as typical of his alleged scientific approach--it appears to be not as scientific as it is prejudicious.

Dr. Kinsey has contributed a study helpful to students of sociology, psychiatry, psychology and anthropology, but its value is limited. His sincerity to do a scientifically important study is not questioned, but exceeds his ability to accomplish the net result. It is conceivable that interested legislators might glean from the book valuable data in forming more effective sex laws, but it is also conceivable that this book could do incalculable harm in the hands of adolescents who read it as a justification for their own sexual habits.

Agent Suttler at the present time is handling sex offender matters. He reviewed the book for any light it might throw on the subject. For this purpose the book has a limited value.