

September 10, 2014

John Fund with background on the vote for Scottish Independence.

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Supporters of independence say that if Scotland goes it alone, British prime minister David Cameron will bear most of the blame. Jim McColl, one of Scotland's wealthiest businessmen and a backer of independence, criticized Cameron in this vein when he spoke recently to the Independent. If Cameron had accepted Scotland's offer to have a third question on the ballot that offered Osborne's latest proposals, McColl said, "then that is what we would have got — everyone would have voted for more powers, but remaining part of the U.K."

But Cameron insisted on a single "yes" or "no" ballot question that would force Scottish voters to make a clear choice, reflecting his belief that most Scots would flinch from a complete break. Indeed, at the time when the referendum was negotiated in 2012, a full 63 percent of Scots opposed outright independence. ...

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That would be an added bonus to Scotland's independence, since increasingly Cameron — with his milquetoast views on the EU and his enthusiasm for climate-change regulation — has less and less of a claim to being a true ally of liberty. His departure would give British conservatives a chance to elect a new leader who might have a chance of limiting the number of votes lost to the thriving United Kingdom Independence Party and keeping Labour out of office. That could be a so-far-unexplored silver lining of Scotland's "yes" vote for independence.

A negative view of the proceedings from **Nile Gardiner**.

Next week's referendum on Scottish independence has largely flown under the radar screen here in the United States. The cable news networks have devoted little attention so far to the issue, as the Isis threat in the Middle East continues to dominate international coverage. There has been no polling conducted on the Scottish question in the US, and it is doubtful that many Americans outside of the Washington policy bubble or the financial milieu of New York are particularly exercised by the outcome of a vote taking place over 3,000 miles away.

They should be concerned, however. What happens in Scotland will reverberate on this side of the Atlantic, and not for the better. Here are five reasons why Americans should be nervous about the outcome of next week's vote if Scotland votes for independence. ...

Paul Ryan gets a look from Matthew Continetti.

"We can fix these problems," Paul Ryan tells me. He's referring to the sluggish economy, the rising cost of living, broken immigration and health care systems, burdensome regulations, and stifling tax code. What would it take? The Republican Party has to win the Senate in 2014 and the White House in 2016.

Easier said than done. Especially when conservatives face an enemy inside their own party: the GOP consultant class.

"Everyone calls it 'the Establishment,'" Ryan says. "That's a loose word." What he has in mind are Republican ad makers, lobbyists, public relations guys, media consultants, speechwriters, pollsters, retired officials, and fundraisers—the hundreds of thousands of Washington operatives who make a living from center-right politics.

Affluent, secure, beholden to the bipartisan conventional wisdom that avoids social issues and ideological fights, they are alienated from and hostile to the conservative base that keeps the GOP in business. These are the real takers (a term Ryan now abjures).

"The consultant class always says play it safe, choose a risk-averse strategy," Ryan says. "I don't think we have the luxury of doing that. We need to treat people like adults by offering them alternatives."

Only by forcing voters to choose, he says, can you "win the kind of mandate you need to fix the country's problems." The alternatives are drift, aimlessness, inertia, and hoping that liberals will somehow doom themselves.

Fat chance. Presidential politics do not favor a GOP that has lost the popular vote in five of the last six elections. Ryan points to other obstacles, such as the rising share of minority voters and the Electoral College "Blue Wall." His conclusion: "We're in a tough place." ...

David Harsanyi says the federal government is the greatest threat to our liberty. Local governments are pocket-sized hotbeds of tyranny. The only way to stop them is by promoting a stronger federal government. [So says Franklin Foer in the New Republic.](#)

Here's the kicker of his piece:

"Centuries ago, in the age of monarchs, the preservation of liberty required constraining the power of the central state. In our era, protecting rights requires the opposite. Only a strong federal government can curb the autocratic tendencies burbling across the country. Libertarians worry about the threat of local tyrants, too, but only abstractly. In practice, they remain so fixated

on the perils of Washington that they rigidly insist on devolving power down to states, cities, and towns—the very places where their nightmares are springing to life."

Nearly everything is wrong with this paragraph.

More on the Rotherham, England story. This time from the [NY Times](#).

It started on the bumper cars in the children's arcade of the local shopping mall. Lucy was 12, and a group of teenage boys, handsome and flirtatious, treated her and her friends to free rides and ice cream after school.

Over time, older men were introduced to the girls, while the boys faded away. Soon they were getting rides in real cars, and were offered vodka and marijuana. One man in particular, a Pakistani twice her age and the leader of the group, flattered her and bought her drinks and even a mobile phone. Lucy liked him.

The rapes started gradually, once a week, then every day: by the war memorial in Clifton Park, in an alley near the bus station, in countless taxis and, once, in an apartment where she was locked naked in a room and had to service half a dozen men lined up outside.

She obliged. How could she not? They knew where she lived. "If you don't come back, we will rape your mother and make you watch," they would say.

At night, she would come home and hide her soiled clothes at the back of her closet. When she finally found the courage to tell her mother, just shy of her 14th birthday, two police officers came to collect the clothes as evidence, half a dozen bags of them.

But a few days later, they called to say the bags had been lost.

"All of them?" she remembers asking. A check was mailed, 140 pounds, or \$232, for loss of property, and the family was discouraged from pressing charges. It was the girl's word against that of the men. The case was closed. ...

National Review

[Britain on the Brink of a Breakup](#)

Most voters polled support Scottish independence, which could have some happy results for British Tories.

by John Fund

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But Cameron insisted on a single “yes” or “no” ballot question that would force Scottish voters to make a clear choice, reflecting his belief that most Scots would flinch from a complete break. Indeed, at the time when the referendum was negotiated in 2012, a full 63 percent of Scots opposed outright independence.

Alex Salmond, the pro-independence leader of Scotland’s government, abandoned having a third choice on the ballot in 2012 in exchange for giving 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote on independence. Even though 16- and 17-year-olds account for only 2.5 percent of eligible voters, they could make the difference in a close vote. Polls show that they are the most eager for independence. For them and many older voters as well, the new British offer on devolution of powers looks panicked, poll-driven, and insincere.

Most conservatives in Britain and the U.S. oppose Scottish independence as dangerously disruptive. But I don’t share some of those fears. I was in the Slovak capital of Bratislava in early 1993 when Czechoslovakia peacefully broke up. The two halves of the country had struggled for three years after the fall of Communism to stay together, but the Slovaks thought the state was too centered on the Czech capital of Prague, and the Czechs resented subsidies and over-representation of Slovaks in key bodies. The same complaints are echoed in Britain, where members of Scotland’s parliament may vote in the Westminster parliament on matters involving all of the U.K., but non-Scottish members of the U.K. parliament are unable to vote on the domestic legislation of the Scottish parliament. In addition, Scotland has more seats in the U.K. parliament than its population would normally be allocated.

There were strains and disputes in the Czech-Slovak divorce, especially over jointly owned gold reserves, but after a few years all was sorted out. Back then, Czechs viewed the Slovaks as more statist and slower to seize economic opportunities than they were. But today, both countries have shown remarkable improvement in the Heritage Foundation’s Index of Economic Freedom; and last year, Slovakia’s economy grew by 2.1 percent — three and a half times faster than it’s grown in the Czech Republic.

“We are doing very well,” Miroslav Lajcak, Slovakia’s deputy prime minister, told the BBC last year. “The Czech republic is doing well, and our friendship is better than ever,” he said. Slovakia’s population of 5.4 million is almost precisely that of Scotland, and its success shows how small countries can do well on their own.

There was also one other tangible benefit of separation to Slovakia, though it’s one many don’t want to discuss. “After we became independent, people couldn’t blame every problem on

Prague anymore or look to it for subsidies,” a former top minister in Slovakia’s government told me. “We had to drop some outmoded socialist thinking and scapegoating and stand on our own two feet.”

Even with its oil revenue, the same phenomenon could occur in Scotland, where the ruling Scottish National party has often pursued foolish economic policies. With independence, a new government might be more realistic. A recent white paper produced by the Scottish government proposes cuts in corporate tax rates to attract business as well as a more skill-based immigration system as new policies to set in place after independence.

Scotland’s separation from Britain could also have other, mostly positive, political effects. Scotland would probably keep using the pound as its currency, which it could do with or without Britain’s permission, much as Panama and Ecuador use the U.S. dollar today. The stringent policies of the Bank of England and the loss of subsidies could push Scotland to become more fiscally responsible. “Scotland would eventually be forced into a more severe form of fiscal austerity than currently applied, giving the lie to Alex Salmond’s promise of a sort of welfare nirvana for all Scots once free of the Westminster yoke,” wrote Jeremy Warner, assistant editor of Britain’s *Daily Telegraph*. “For the rest of the U.K., losing relatively pro-EU Scotland would further raise the chances of eventually leaving the EU from odds on to that of a virtual certainty,” he added. The departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union would be hailed by pro-freedom conservatives and would lead to a government friendlier to U.S. markets and interests.

Scottish independence would also transform the electorate in U.K. elections, with only the remaining 59 million Britons eligible to vote. Scottish voters are currently much more hostile than the U.K. electorate overall to free markets — Scots view capitalism as the basis for the Thatcher government’s decision to close unprofitable Scottish industries in the 1980s. Currently, Scotland sends only one Conservative member of parliament to Westminster. The departure of Scottish MPs from Westminster would be dramatic: If 59 Labour-party and Scottish National MPs from Scotland leave Westminster, Tories in the current House of Commons would go from being 21 seats short of a majority to having an outright 20-seat majority. “It is unlikely that without Scotland the rest of the United Kingdom would elect a majority Labour government anytime soon,” says Eamonn Butler of the Adam Smith Institute.

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That would be an added bonus to Scotland’s independence, since increasingly Cameron — with his milquetoast views on the EU and his enthusiasm for climate-change regulation — has less and less of a claim to being a true ally of liberty. His departure would give British conservatives a chance to elect a new leader who might have a chance of limiting the number of votes lost to the thriving United Kingdom Independence Party and keeping Labour out of office. That could be a so-far-unexplored silver lining of Scotland’s “yes” vote for independence.

Telegraph, UK

The United States should be nervous about the Scottish independence referendum

by Nile Gardiner

Next week's referendum on Scottish independence has largely flown under the radar screen here in the United States. The cable news networks have devoted little attention so far to the issue, as the Isil threat in the Middle East continues to dominate international coverage. There has been no polling conducted on the Scottish question in the US, and it is doubtful that many Americans outside of the Washington policy bubble or the financial milieu of New York are particularly exercised by the outcome of a vote taking place over 3,000 miles away.

They should be concerned, however. What happens in Scotland will reverberate on this side of the Atlantic, and not for the better. Here are five reasons why Americans should be nervous about the outcome of next week's vote if Scotland votes for independence.

1. The Special Relationship will be undercut.

The United Kingdom is far and away America's biggest and most important ally. Anything that weakens Britain, and chips away at the Special Relationship, is a big negative for the United States. This fear has been amply expressed by dozens of members of the United States Congress, both Republican and Democrat, who [are backing a resolution](#) in the House of Representatives declaring that a "united, secure, and prosperous United Kingdom" is vital to US interests.

The Special Relationship is too powerful a partnership to be set adrift by a Scottish vote for independence, but there can be no denying that it will not be the same without the valuable contribution to the alliance made by Scottish soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, as well as statesmen, scholars and entrepreneurs, who helped make it the global force it has been for the last seven decades.

2. Britain's nuclear deterrent will have to be moved

The UK's entire nuclear deterrent is based in Scotland, and all Britain's nuclear bases and warheads will have to be moved out of the country, a huge headache not only for London, but also for Washington. Any threat to Britain's status as a nuclear power is a matter of great concern for the United States. The Nato alliance was originally conceived as a nuclear alliance, one that has been underpinned since its founding by the American, British and (at times) French nuclear deterrents. Anything that undermines Britain's position as an independent nuclear power and weakens Nato is a matter of significant concern to the United States.

3. The coalition against Isil will be weakened

Britain is central to Washington's strategy of building an international coalition to confront and defeat Isil, in Iraq and Syria. The timing of the Scottish referendum could not be worse for the White House, which is depending upon Downing Street to help rally countries in Europe and the Anglosphere to contribute militarily to the air war against Isil. A defeat for the No campaign could dramatically weaken David Cameron's position, making it harder for him to move forward with British military action, especially if there is a leadership challenge within the Conservative Party. The prime minister's ability to win a vote in the House of Commons and take Britain to war again

in the Middle East, would undoubtedly be called into question by defeat in the Scottish referendum.

4. US markets will take a hit

If Scotland votes for independence, expect significant turmoil not just in the City, but on Wall Street as well. 2014 has been a year of significant volatility in American stock markets, driven in part by events in Europe. Fears over the economic fallout from Scotland breaking off from the UK, will spook US markets, frighten investors, and add to an air of uncertainty exacerbated in recent months by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Add to this the prospect of a Scottish economy set adrift from the pound, with potentially huge costs incurred in transitioning to an independent financial system, and you have every reason to fear more market turbulence.

5. An independent Scotland will be an insignificant ally to the U.S.

As part of the United Kingdom, Scotland is a valuable ally to the United States, home to Britain's independent nuclear deterrent and submarine bases, as well as several British military regiments. It is also home to important NATO early warning air defences, increasingly important in the face of Russian aggression. As an independent entity, with a meagre projected defence budget of [just \\$2.5 billion](#), significantly less than the [\\$4.1 billion budget](#) of London's Metropolitan Police (hat tip: [Luke Coffey](#)), and just [15,000 members of the Armed Forces](#), Scotland's role as a US partner would be practically non-existent. Edinburgh would struggle to gain entry to Nato, with countries such as Spain and Italy likely to veto Scottish membership for fear of encouraging nationalist movements within their own borders.

Free Beacon

[Ryan Talks](#)

The Wisconsin Republican on the GOP consultant class, negative campaigns, and what keeps him up at night

by Matthew Continetti



“We can fix these problems,” Paul Ryan tells me. He’s referring to the sluggish economy, the rising cost of living, broken immigration and health care systems, burdensome regulations, and stifling tax code. What would it take? The Republican Party has to win the Senate in 2014 and the White House in 2016.

Easier said than done. Especially when conservatives face an enemy inside their own party: the GOP consultant class.

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Only by forcing voters to choose, he says, can you “win the kind of mandate you need to fix the country’s problems.” The alternatives are drift, aimlessness, inertia, and hoping that liberals will somehow doom themselves.

Fat chance. Presidential politics do not favor a GOP that has lost the popular vote in five of the last six elections. Ryan points to other obstacles, such as the rising share of minority voters and the Electoral College “Blue Wall.” His conclusion: “We’re in a tough place.”

Ryan is promoting his new book, [*The Way Forward: Renewing the American Idea*](#). Part memoir, part policy brief, it is a revealing and thoughtful account of his ascent in the Republican ranks, from intern to congressional staffer to protégé of Jack Kemp and Bill Bennett to congressman to vice presidential nominee. It also shows just how difficult it can be for a politician to ignore the consultant class.

Take Ryan’s experience with the Romney campaign, which [awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses to staff](#), and [millions to outside vendors](#), despite losing the election. Sometime in late 2011, Ryan writes, “someone from Mitt Romney’s team gave an interview and explained that they saw the election as being overwhelmingly about Obama’s economic record.”

Ryan was concerned. He called Boston. “‘Look,’ I said, ‘I have to tell you that when you say things like that it’s like fingernails on a chalkboard to conservatives. This guy’”—he’s talking about President Obama—“is good. He’s gifted. We’re not going to beat him like that.”

The response? “It was fairly silent on the other end.”

By the time Romney won the nomination, Ryan says, the former Massachusetts governor had broadened his argument. And by picking Ryan as his running mate, Romney made the election not only about the economy but also about entitlement spending.

The left pounced, denouncing the ticket for leaving seniors in the cold. Ryan held town hall meetings across the country, explaining his plan for Medicare. He appeared in Florida alongside his mom. It seemed to work: Republicans won [seniors](#) (and [white Millennials](#)).

But the moment when Ryan defined the terms of the election was short lived. The campaign's emphasis returned to the jobless recovery even as the Obama team pummeled Romney on social issues and national security. The election was called for Obama before the 11 o'clock news.

It is not only presidential candidates who are captured by members of the consultant class. They run Congress, too—at least when Ted Cruz is looking the other way.

In his book, for example, Ryan defends his 2003 vote for the Medicare prescription drug benefit and his 2008 vote for money for Detroit. "I just know that in Congress, you have to do the best thing under the circumstances you're in and then be willing to take the heat," he writes.

And continues:

If you can make things better and move the outcome toward conservative principles, then you must have the courage and the wisdom to say yes. You've got to be willing to take criticism—even from your friends—and trust that the people will understand that governing requires trade-offs.

Responsible, prudent, and adult, but also not much different than the message of the GOP leadership and consultant class. Nor does Ryan's position on immigration distinguish him: He is a longstanding supporter of so-called comprehensive reform.

Ryan downplays the GOP rift over immigration. "There is much less daylight between Republicans on this issue than people would like to acknowledge," he says.

President Obama is responsible for the division and bad-feelings. "I think the president's poisoned the well," he goes on. "The border issue and the lack of follow-through and work on the part of the Senate has made it impossible to do anything on immigration."

Indeed, border security is one of the few issues Republican Senate candidates seem to be running on. Scott Brown has become [a border hawk](#). [Tom Cotton](#) is one too.

"Everybody's a border hawk," Ryan says. "Everybody, including myself, has a border-first approach because of ISIL and the cartels. Most Republicans want to reconstitute legal immigration so it's not based on chain migration, but on the economic needs of the country."

I ask Ryan if GOP candidates are seizing the initiative rather than waiting for Obama's unpopularity to carry them into office. He says it is difficult to run full-spectrum, ideological campaigns during off years: "Presidential elections are the best platforms to offer a proactive agenda."

"The left is intellectually exhausted," he says. "Progressivism in practice looks horrible. People see it." Desperate to retain the Senate, Democratic incumbents are using "slash-and-burn tactics" against Republican challengers. And the challengers are on the defensive. "They're reacting."

Ryan's advice: "See it through and don't be intimidated. It's liberating to offer ideas and be yourself. You'll always be advised not to do such things. But, if you lose, at least you'll lose in dignified way. And in my experience, you usually won't lose."

It's not the 2014 election that keeps Ryan up at night, though. What keeps him up is "the real and lasting damage that is being done to our national defense and foreign policy."

I tell Ryan that when I heard Vice President Biden say he'll follow ISIL to "the gates of hell," I was reminded of the 2012 vice presidential debate, when Biden blustered and postured his way to a stalemate. Biden is all talk and no action.

"All talk and no action, but even the talk is bad," Ryan says. "They don't have a policy. 'Don't do stupid stuff.' That basically is their policy, which is no policy."

When Ryan visited Korea, Japan, and China in April, every official had questions for him. They were not asking about the pivot to Asia. "They were asking me about Ukraine and Syria. They were basically asking, where is America? What are you doing? How can we trust you in the future?"

The American economy can bounce back quickly. It's happened in the past: after the Depression of 1920, after the Second World War, after the 1970s stagflation. [Rebuilding deterrence, however, is another matter](#). "It's the trajectory of foreign policy that will take a long time to unwind even if we get the right leadership in place," Ryan says.

How to start? "Don't savage Defense. Play the superpower role that we have traditionally played responsibly, and lead. And that's just not what we're getting. The president doesn't have the ideological disposition for it. He doesn't have the personality for it."

The question on everyone's mind is whether Ryan will run for president. It doesn't seem to be on his mind. He says he will decide in 2015. I don't think he's in a rush. The gavel at Ways and Means beckons.

It helps to have run at the presidential level before. But the record of losing vice presidential nominees is not inspiring. Lieberman ran in 2004 and lost. Edwards ran in 2008 and lost. Palin did not run in 2012. Grown men practically begged Ryan to run that year. He declined.

"The only way we beat an Obama third term is to offer a spirited alternative and bring it up to a crescendo where we're really giving the country a very clear choice of policies and ideas," Ryan tells me. He might not be the person making the offer in 2016. But he'll be responsible for the fine print.

The Federalist

[Actually, The Greatest Threat to Our Liberty Is Federal Government Run Amok](#)

by David Harsanyi

Local governments are pocket-sized hotbeds of tyranny. The only way to stop them is by promoting a stronger federal government. [So says Franklin Foer in the New Republic](#).

Here's the kicker of his piece:

Centuries ago, in the age of monarchs, the preservation of liberty required constraining the power of the central state. In our era, protecting rights requires the opposite. Only a strong federal government can curb the autocratic tendencies burbling across the country. Libertarians worry about the threat of local tyrants, too, but only abstractly. In practice, they remain so fixated on the perils of Washington that they rigidly insist on devolving power down to states, cities, and towns—the very places where their nightmares are springing to life.

Nearly everything is wrong with this paragraph.

The url tells us that the column was initially titled, 'Ferguson's Lesson: Local Government Poses Real Threat Liberty.' Though they are seemingly always preoccupied with Washington, according to Foer, the militarized police crackdown in Ferguson is a real manifestation of the "dark" fears libertarians have been warning us about. Well, the problem with this contention is twofold.

First: most of the cops involved in Ferguson were not "local" in any sense of the word. Nearly the entire Ferguson police department were outsiders who not only lived geographically apart but also in dissimilar social and economic neighborhoods. As Radley Balko points out in [his sprawling piece on Ferguson in the Washington Post](#), one of the complaints locals have is that "the cops and court officers often come not only from different zip codes, but from completely different cultures and lifestyles than the people whose fines and court fees fund their paychecks." If anything, Foer inadvertently makes the case that communities should have stronger localized control over their government, not less.

The second problem with the Ferguson example is that the militarization of local police forces – a development many libertarians have long focused on — was in many ways instituted by the federal government. Since Sept. 11, the Department of Homeland Security has provided over \$70 million in grants and funding to state and local law enforcement agencies in Missouri. [I read all about it in the New Republic](#). It was this policy – enacted and widely supported by both parties for many years – that allowed local police to act the way they did. Local government would have no such weaponry without DC's help.

Beyond that, the idea that libertarians treat local impositions on freedom as an abstraction is simply untrue. Libertarians have fought specific local policies for years. There are groups like The Institute for Justice, which [takes on an array of local cases](#). The Cato Institute and others libertarian groups have participated in the legal fight against Chicago and DC severe gun-control laws – among other local issues. Almost every state has a libertarian-leaning organization that serves as a watchdog. In Colorado, for instance, [a place like the Independence Institute](#) has sued the state numerous times, sponsored and fought ballot initiatives and waged public relations battles on libertarian grounds. These days, though, the intrusion they seem to be battling is federal election law that limits free speech.

None of this is to say local government can't be abusive. I've never met a bunch of bigger tyrants in my life than the ones I encountered covering local politics. But while on the national level voters tend to be idealistic, in local races the impact of policy makes it far less partisan. And if all else fails, a person can pick and choose where they live. Federal impositions are more difficult to undo and impossible to escape.

Foer seems very concerned about rise of one-party government – particularly GOP-controlled states. While it's not ideal, these political monopolies do not inevitably mean less liberty. For instance, if the Libertarian Party ran things, I assume we'd all be free to do whatever we liked. As it stands, locals are impelled to institute individual mandates, bribed to participate in massive welfare programs and impelled to fight drug wars at the DEA's insistence. And I don't think anyone needs reminding that many of these liberty-averse policies have been hatched and supported in bipartisan fashion.

Foer claims that "greatest danger of untrammelled local power is that majorities will use their control of government to stampede the rights of minorities." Indeed. But nothing is more dangerous than the wide-scale reality that allows half the country to dictate what the other half should be doing. But that's exactly why progressives have long supported more robust and centralized federal control. It allows them to impose their agendas on states and municipalities that are holdouts. Which is the point of Foer's piece, I assume.

After all, almost every large scale "reform" libertarians have lived through undermines freedom. From Homeland Security to McCain-Feingold to the Affordable Care Act, these reforms have intruded on the freedom of localities and, more importantly for libertarians, on the freedom of individuals. There are a few instances where federal government has strengthened freedom – the civil rights fight, is one such example – but nearly every other intrusion, including the militarization of local police forces, shows us that the inclination of Washington is anything but libertarian.

But, then again, this entire debate is premised on a false choice, isn't it? There is no reason why a libertarian can't support limiting both local and federal government.

NY Times

Years of Rape and 'Utter Contempt' in Britain

Life in an English Town Where Abuse of Young Girls Flourished

by Katrin Bennhold

ROTHERHAM, England — It started on the bumper cars in the children's arcade of the local shopping mall. Lucy was 12, and a group of teenage boys, handsome and flirtatious, treated her and her friends to free rides and ice cream after school.

Over time, older men were introduced to the girls, while the boys faded away. Soon they were getting rides in real cars, and were offered vodka and marijuana. One man in particular, a Pakistani twice her age and the leader of the group, flattered her and bought her drinks and even a mobile phone. Lucy liked him.

The rapes started gradually, once a week, then every day: by the war memorial in Clifton Park, in an alley near the bus station, in countless taxis and, once, in an apartment where she was locked naked in a room and had to service half a dozen men lined up outside.

She obliged. How could she not? They knew where she lived. "If you don't come back, we will rape your mother and make you watch," they would say.

At night, she would come home and hide her soiled clothes at the back of her closet. When she finally found the courage to tell her mother, just shy of her 14th birthday, two police officers came to collect the clothes as evidence, half a dozen bags of them.

But a few days later, they called to say the bags had been lost.

“All of them?” she remembers asking. A check was mailed, 140 pounds, or \$232, for loss of property, and the family was discouraged from pressing charges. It was the girl’s word against that of the men. The case was closed.

Lucy’s account of her experience is emblematic of what investigators say happened during a 16-year reign of terror and impunity in this poor northern English town of 257,000, where at least 1,400 children, some as young as 11, were groomed for sexual exploitation while the authorities looked the other way. One girl told investigators that gang rape was part of growing up in her neighborhood.

Between 1997 and 2013, despite numerous reports of sexual abuse, only one case, involving three teenage girls, was prosecuted, and five men were sent to jail, according to an official report into the sexual exploitation of children in Rotherham published last week.

Even now, the official reaction has been dominated by partisan finger-pointing and politics. The leader of the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has resigned, and the police chief is under pressure to follow suit. But criminal investigations continue, and more than a dozen victims are suing the police and the Council for negligence.

The scale and brutality of the abuse in Rotherham have shocked a country already shaken by a series of child abuse scandals involving celebrities, public officials, clerics and teachers at expensive private schools. [The Rotherham report](#) suggests that it continues unchecked among the most vulnerable in British society.

It has highlighted another uncomfortable dimension of the issue, that of race relations in Britain. The victims identified in the report were all white, while the perpetrators were mostly of Pakistani heritage, many of them working in nighttime industries like taxi driving and takeout restaurants. The same was true in recent prosecutions in Oxford, in southern England, and the northern towns of Oldham and Rochdale, where nine men of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Afghan origin were given long prison sentences in 2012 for abusing up to 47 girls. Investigators in Scotland have reportedly uncovered a similar pattern of abuse.

Sexual abuse of children takes many forms, and the majority of convicted abusers in Britain are white. But as Nazir Afzal, the chief crown prosecutor in charge of sexual violence and himself of Pakistani heritage, put it, “There is no getting away from the fact that there are Pakistani gangs grooming vulnerable girls.”

The grooming tends to follow a similar pattern, according to Alexis Jay, a former chief inspector of social work who was commissioned by the Rotherham Council to carry out an independent investigation following a series of reports in The Times of London: a period of courting with young men in public places like town centers, bus stations or shopping malls; the gradual introduction of cigarettes, alcohol and sometimes harder drugs; a sexual relationship with one man, who becomes the “boyfriend” and later demands that the girl prove her love by having sex with his friends; then the threats, blackmail and violence that have deterred so many girls from coming forward.

But the report also outlined how those victims and parents who did ask for help were mostly let down by the police and social services, despite a great deal of detail known to them for more than a decade, including, in some cases, the names of possible offenders and their license plate numbers.

“Nobody can pretend they didn’t know,” Ms. Jay said in an interview.

Unimpeded, the abuse mushroomed. Over time, investigators found, it evolved from personal gratification to a business opportunity for the men.

Increasingly, the girls were shared not just among groups of men locally, but sold, or bartered for drugs or guns. They were driven to cities like Sheffield, Manchester and London, where groups of men raped them, sometimes overnight.

When parents reported their daughters missing, it could take 24 hours for the police to turn up, Ms. Jay said. Some parents, if they called in repeatedly, were fined for wasting police time.

Some officers and local officials told the investigation that they did not act for fear of being accused of racism. But Ms. Jay said that for years there was an undeniable culture of institutional sexism. Her investigation heard that police referred to victims as “tarts” and to the girls’ abuse as a “lifestyle choice.”

In the minutes of a meeting about a girl who had been raped by five men, a police detective refused to put her into the sexual abuse category, saying he knew she had been “100 percent consensual.” She was 12.

“These girls were often treated with utter contempt,” Ms. Jay said.

Lucy, now 25 but too scared to give her last name because, she said, the men who brutalized her still live nearby, knows about contempt. During an interview at her home outside Rotherham, she recalled being questioned about her abuse by police officers who repeatedly referred to the main rapist as her “boyfriend.”

The first time she was raped, there were nine men, she said, one on top of her, another to pin her down and force himself into her mouth. Two others restrained a friend of hers, holding open her eyelids to make her watch. The rest of the men, all in their 20s, stood over her, cheering and jeering, and blinding her with the flash of their cameras.

When she went to bed that night, she found a text message from the man who had groomed her for months: “Did you get home all right?”

She hesitated, then texted back: “Yes, I’m fine.”

At that moment, she said, rape became normality. “I thought, ‘This must be my fault, I must have given them a signal,’ ” she said.

Unlike other victims, Lucy came from a stable family. Her parents owned a convenience store and post office. They lived in a middle-class neighborhood. “I had been brought up in a nice world,” she said. “I thought rapists were people hiding in bushes, and pedophiles were people who drive white vans and park outside schools.”

After that first rape, she said, she began to think she had overreacted, and told her friend that she had been upset because she had lost her virginity. After school, they went back to the town center. The leader of the group took her to McDonald's and rolled her a marijuana cigarette, she said. For a week, it was as if nothing had happened.

Then he raped her again, and soon the rules changed. The girls were to speak only when spoken to. They had to sit quietly in town and wait. Taxis would come by and pick them up. They were raped by different men in different places, mostly outdoors.

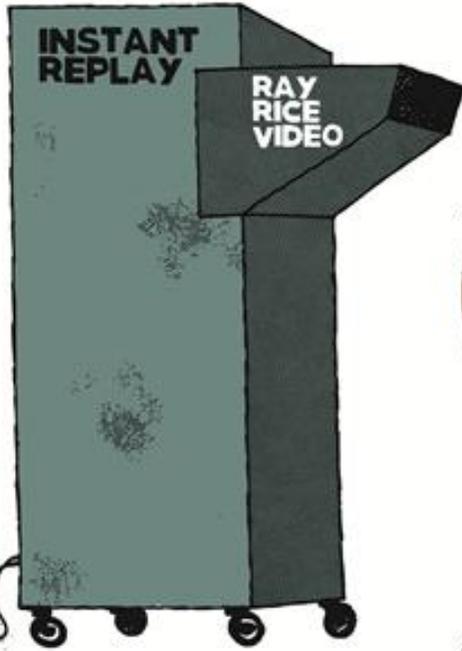
There seemed to be no way out. "They threatened to gang-rape my mother, to kill my brother and to firebomb my house," Lucy said.

Once, she said, when they thought she might go to the police, a man with gold teeth whom she had never seen before dragged her into his car, a dark-green Honda with left-side drive, and put a gun to her head: "On the count of three you're dead," she said he told her. He pulled the trigger on three, but nothing happened. "Keep your mouth shut," he said. "Next time there will be a bullet inside."

Eventually, Lucy's parents sold their business and moved to Spain for 18 months. "It became quite clear that leaving the country was the only way we could save Lucy," said her mother, who participated in parts of the interview.

Lucy experienced years of depression and anorexia, her mother said. She now works as a consultant on child sexual exploitation issues for police departments and charities.

"They say it's vulnerable girls these people are after," her mother said. "Well, of course they're vulnerable. They're innocent. They're children."



AFTER REVIEWING THE TAPE, WOW...I REALLY WISH I HADN'T SEEN THAT...

SMACK!!!



UPON FURTHER REVIEW....



