

rence A. Stanley was given the investigative reporting award for his September 1988 *Playboy* article, "The Child-Pornography Myth."

In it, Stanley contends that, as a commercial enterprise, child pornography has been virtually eliminated, so that "anyone looking for a child-porn underground will find only a vast network of postal inspectors and police agents." Under the guise of protecting children, he writes, "Uncle Sam has spent millions of taxpayers dollars to investigate and prosecute would-be consumers of child pornography, many of whom do not pose any immediate danger to children." The article includes several examples of cases in which people whom Stanley portrays as innocent become victims of overly zealous law enforcement agencies.

Playboy did not alert readers to Stanley's personal involvement in this controversial subject. In a recent interview he estimated that 5 to 10 percent of his income is derived from legal work (mainly consulting) he does for individuals charged — or concerned they could be charged — with child-pornography offenses. He has written for and sits on the editorial board of a Dutch journal,

PRIZE: Lawrence A. Stanley receives the 1989 Free Press Association investigative reporting award from 1988 winner Debbie Nathan, one of those who nominated him.

Paidika, that calls pedophilia "the cutting edge of sexual liberation today."

And Stanley is closely associated with a quarterly, *Uncommon Desires*, which is the self-described "voice of an emerging politically-conscious girl-love underground." The publication's post office box is registered in Stanley's name, and a law enforcement agent involved in an investigation of his activities says Stanley has admitted that he publishes the quarterly under the pseudonym N.S. Aristoff. (Asked if that were true, Stanley declined to respond; he did say, however, that his interest in child pornography is purely that of a researcher and that the government investigation is "harassment." He notes that he writes for *The Journal of Homosexuality* as well as *Paidika*. No charges against him have ever been filed.)

Did the Free Press Association know any of this? Charles-Gene McDaniel, a prominent FPA member and chairman of the journalism department of Chicago's Roosevelt University, faults *Playboy* for failing to disclose enough about the author's background. James Petersen, who edited the piece, says no disclosure was necessary since the article appeared in "The Playboy Forum," which represents opinion.

Some of Stanley's background is news to FPA executive director Michael Grossberg, but, on reflection, he says, "the article should stand or fall on its merits, and if it's good enough for *Playboy*, it's good enough for me." He is more troubled by what he views as *ad hominem* attacks on the author. The award, he says, honors the work, not the man.

McDaniel disagrees. Stanley's article never should have been up for an investigative reporting prize, he says, "because it's an advocacy article, and [Stanley] has a conflict of interest. The kind of work that should be rewarded is independent investigation," and independence means "not having a direct interest in the subject being investigated nor in the outcome of the investigation."

David Hechler

Hechler, a free-lance journalist, is the author of The Battle and the Backlash: The Child Sexual Abuse War, and has spoken at conferences around the country. In the interest of full disclosure it should be noted that Stanley reviewed Hechler's book unfavorably in Paidika. Hechler had not read the review at the time he wrote this article.

AWKWARD AWARD

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The Free Press Association is a national network of about 400 journalists and First Amendment absolutists, all of whom are eligible to vote on five annual Mencken Awards — for best book, cartoon, editorial or op-ed column, feature or essay, and news or investigative story. Last year New York lawyer Law-

