

Victim Statement Regarding Grooming by David Henzie-Skogen

The perverse and revolting actions of David Henzie-Skogen has brought together a group of women who have been preyed upon by him from 2007 and on through this year. In recent weeks, media has begun coverage of the allegations, bringing to light the abuse and manipulation perpetrated by David. In turn, allowing the public an attempt at understanding the gravity of his behavior. Since the October 4th social media statement from Shadow Drum and Bugle Corps, doors have reopened that many of us had shut and never planned to entertain again. However, this recollection of our past experiences has made possible the opportunity to start a conversation about how to move forward.

We are not prepared to have the conversation publicly yet, but we would like to make a few things clear in light of some articles published recently: The relationships David cultivated with us were predatory, sexual, and abusive. These relationships were not in any way romantic, and David took advantage of adolescent girls solely for his personal, sexual gain. His methods were repeated almost exactly for at least 14 years, both in the drum corps and in the high-school marching bands that preceded it, Shadow Armada and Oregon Marching Band. David's actions and words were all premeditated, calculated and exploitative. These were not just text messages, there were various forms of communication and relation, up to and including sexual acts. When we had come together and compared our experiences and interactions with David, we identified that his language and efforts to seduce young women were almost exactly the same across all of his victims.

As for the future of Shadow Drum and Bugle Corps, it is an organization that many of us hold near and dear and we are crushed to know that this situation has affected members, past and present. However, we would like to remind those reading that these effects are not the fault of us as the victims, but rather the fault of David Henzie-Skogen, who repeatedly violated the trusted teacher-student relationship to prey upon adolescent girls under his authority for his own sexual gratification. In the purest form, David is a sexual predator, and he abused his status as an instructor and mentor.

It is also important for the public to know and understand that girls and young women outside of the Shadow organization were preyed upon as well. He reached beyond his pool of prey at the drum corps and marching band and sought out young women and girls on social media. This demonstrates David's true agenda: manipulating and abusing young and vulnerable girls. His mistreatment of young girls was widespread and profuse. He repeatedly used his success and reputation as a positive force in the music industry to draw in victims. He is a danger to any community he is part of, and we believe that no mercy should be had when condemning him now and for the future.

David is still highly regarded by the greater Madison community and beyond, and has yet to be held accountable for his repeated exploitation of vulnerable populations. As for the adults who should have been protecting us as children, who seem to be surprised by his disgusting actions, we demand a reflection on the systems and attitudes that enabled his abuse for so many years. It is certain that David's predatory and manipulative behavior was simply avoided and ignored by observers, as this was someone who preyed upon girls very shamelessly. Furthermore, accountability does not mean simply erasing his history and status in the community. It requires examining the systems that let him victimize us and other girls for so long. We need those reading this to voice their disgust, to act against this behavior, and to hold themselves and those around them accountable to recognize and intervene in actions like this so that no one else's loved ones will suffer at the hands of a sexual predator.

We recognize that these are difficult discussions to have, and it can be all too easy to turn the other cheek when confronted with the need to address such a sensitive subject. However, for the safety and stability of our younger populations, these topics need to be tackled boldly and swiftly to ensure that no one that is like David is able to get away with this heartless mistreatment ever again.

If you or someone you know was made a victim of the actions of David Henzie-Skogen, please understand that you are not alone. There are people and resources available to listen to your story and provide help in grappling with these experiences. The Oregon Police Department has handled the investigation with sensitivity, and treated us with respect as they allowed us the space and attention needed to come forward with our stories. You can report your experiences anonymously; the department's number is (608) 835-3111. Your safety and well-being are of utmost importance, so we encourage you to move forward as you see fit. Regardless, this experience does not define you, you are capable of healing from this, and you can live a full life beyond the damage this individual has caused.