

**James Sanchez, “In Loco Parentis”
Conflict Transformation Research Grant Public Report**

I. Research Report (2 pages maximum)

A. Statement of research question and its importance

The main research questions of this documentary project are twofold: 1) For boarding schools marred by sexual abuse cover-up histories, how can they transform their conflicts with survivors of said abuse? 2) How do legal issues and boards of trustees prevent them from helping—and sometimes acknowledging—previous wrongdoings and how should they reconsider going forward?

Since virtually every boarding school is dealing with the fallout from histories of covering up sexual abuse, we use a case study of two schools in particular to study how survivors feel about this abuse, how and why schools protected their own images instead of children (historically speaking), and ways they can move toward accountability today.

B. List of collaborators and partners

With this funding, I have continued work with the director of the film, Joel Fendelman, my sales representative company, Submarine Entertainment, and a production company out of Austin, TX, Arts+Labor.

These funds also helped us pay for a few different soundpeople to assist us on different documentary shoots in NYC.

C. Summary of research findings

We have started the editing process on this and are currently about 30% of the way through the footage. Since we have about 250 hours of original footage—coupled with about 30 hours of archival—boiling down a narrative to a tight 2-hour window will take time and we hope to have a first full cut in the spring. I say this to say I can't be *exact* yet with what our findings will show.

However, I can highlight some of the key points I believe will end up in the final narrative: 1) Schools still care about their own images over actually doing the work to resolve the harm (as one school built a garden dedicated to survivors of sexual abuse but made survivors pay for half of it). 2) They have yet decided to truly sit down and listen to survivors without thinking about their legal liability first. 3) Arguably, their lack of admission of guilt has led to a pile on of lawsuits. The two schools we have followed have settled cases for tens of millions of dollars since the 1990s, most done with gag orders attached to survivors. 4) A forthcoming, class-action lawsuit against one of the schools will challenge how they represent their histories to the public. 5) Survivors consistently feel that they are not being heard and view every action by these schools as

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acts of self-preservation rather than any form of altruism.

D. Implications for study and practice of conflict transformation

The implications of this research can be generalized to any institution dealing with the fallout of covering up past crimes and wanting to do right by individuals who are harmed, though the specifics are still focused on boarding schools. We argue that until institutions move past thinking about the legal implications and liability first, the conflict will never be resolved. More importantly, I contend (from a research paper that I will eventually publish outside of this film) that truly acknowledging the harms of sexual abuse after they occur could save schools more money (since that is what they care about first) than choosing to cover them up and being sued later.

The implications of this film will also argue that statutes of limitations against childhood survivors of sexual abuse are absurd and should be abolished and that mandatory reporting laws need more oversight and legal ramifications for those who do not adhere to the law.

E. List of publications, performances, media coverage, and other output

Filmmaking is a long, arduous process that takes many years. We are currently in the middle of editing the film, which will have a first cut in the spring that we will take back our to production companies and streamers to be bought. Either way, we believe the film will be on the festival circuit in 2025 and believe it will have lots of screenings and media coverage from there. The CT Collaborative will be in our credits and will be mentioned in the media coverage.