

David Suzuki & John Abbott College

February 3, 2013 at 4:46 pm (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/2013/02/03/david-suzuki-john-abbott-college/>)

A Quebec school refuses to say whether David Suzuki's student bodyguards spent time alone with him.

The Scenario:

Let us us imagine that I, the author of a book, am invited to spend a day at a college attended by students as young as 17. Imagine that, a month before my arrival, I tell the school I'm not fond of bodyguards but that it would be OK if I were accompanied throughout the day by a couple of hand-picked students.

Imagine I then say I'd like these students to be male. Why? Because I'm female. I then go on to express definite opinions about what these young men should wear in my presence.

The Response That Didn't Happen:

Surely there would be an adult in the room who'd realize that my interest in these students is both unprofessional and non-academic.

Surely everyone would notice that I am discriminating against all the young women in the school – and behaving as though young men are little more than pieces of meat.

Surely someone would say that I am free to ogle young males on my own time, but no self-respecting school would dream of supplying me with students for that purpose.

Analysis

Sexual predators come in all shapes, sizes, and ages. Sometime they are the last sort of people we'd expect – such as [Catholic priests \(<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Latest-News-Wires/2013/0131/Catholic-church-releases-sexual-abuse-files-relieves-cardinal-of-duties>\)](http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Latest-News-Wires/2013/0131/Catholic-church-releases-sexual-abuse-files-relieves-cardinal-of-duties). Sometimes they are famous individuals who, to quote a UK report released last month, hide “in plain sight” and use “their celebrity status” to “gain access to vulnerable people” (see paragraph 3.7 [here \(\[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/news-and-views/our-news/child-protection-news/13-01-11-yewtree-report/yewtree-report-pdf_wdf93652.pdf\]\(http://www.nspcc.org.uk/news-and-views/our-news/child-protection-news/13-01-11-yewtree-report/yewtree-report-pdf_wdf93652.pdf\)\)](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/news-and-views/our-news/child-protection-news/13-01-11-yewtree-report/yewtree-report-pdf_wdf93652.pdf)).

My point is that it is difficult to know who might, or might not, be a sexual predator. Many people who say sexually inappropriate things are totally harmless. Conversely, many sexual predators are no doubt careful to never say anything that might arouse suspicion.

But the fact of the matter is that leches exist. Sex abuse is real. And schools have a special responsibility to protect the young people in their care.

If a guest invited to a school is requesting the company of particular kinds of students, wearing particular kinds of clothing, everyone's alarm bells should be ringing.

But when David Suzuki visited John Abbott College last October, no one appears to have objected to his request for, as a school official **put it** (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/img272.jpg>),

a couple of ladies (females) that would act as body guards...Why females, you ask? Well, he is a male.

John Abbott College refuses to answer any of my questions about this matter. It has referred me to a **statement now posted on its website** (http://www.johnabbott.qc.ca/public/3a6ce747-8d96-4668-becd-0c6ac17b644a/news/statement_jan_30_2013.pdf) that says, in part:

To set the record straight regarding Dr. David Suzuki's visit to our campus October 24, both male and female students escorted him throughout a full day and evening of activities in order to facilitate his movements throughout our campus.

If the college came to its senses and assigned both male and female students to escort Suzuki, that is good news. But it is odd that the internal e-mails secured via a **SunTV Freedom of Information** (<http://www.torontosun.com/2013/01/28/suzukis-nature-when-he-visited-a-small-college-recently-he-asked-for--female-bodyguards>) request contain no hint of that fact.

The request for "a couple of ladies" appeared in a September 19th **e-mail** (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/img272.jpg>). A full month later – and only five days before Suzuki's visit – the same school official **inquired of a colleague** (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/img269.jpg>):

Have you selected the **female** students To escort dr Suzuki? [sic, bold added]

Contrary to its website **statement** (http://www.johnabbott.qc.ca/public/3a6ce747-8d96-4668-becd-0c6ac17b644a/news/statement_jan_30_2013.pdf), John Abbott College is not an innocent bystander, caught in the crossfire between David Suzuki and his critics. Those are real e-mails. They were written by real school officials.

Moreover, there is another e-mail that raises concern. It was authored by Erich Schmedt, the Academic Dean, and addressed to two female subordinates.

The first is his secretary. The second appears to be an employee so junior that she doesn't even have her own, personalized, e-mail address. According to the college's **Departmental Directory** (<http://www.johnabbott.qc.ca/public/3a6ce747-8d96-4668-becd-0c6ac17b644a/phonedirectory/deptdir.pdf>), she can only be contacted via a generic e-mail address assigned to the Director General's administrative assistant.

Schmedt began his **message** (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/suzukiettes.pdf>) this way:

To my two darling Suzukiettes,

Just a quick note to express my appreciation for the outstanding work you are both doing in bringing the Suzuki event to reality.

I have never been employed in a workplace where addressing female subordinates as “my two darling Suzukiettes” would be considered professional behaviour. Either John Abbott College is an uncommonly sexist workplace, or contact with a green celebrity caused a number of its staff members to totally lose their bearings for an extended period of time.

In that same e-mail, Schmedt talks grandiosely about establishing

a standard of global and environmental responsibility in everything we do academically.

Perhaps this administrator at a small college in a small Canadian town could aspire to meet normal, minimum standards of professional behaviour first.

Schmedt is currently on leave. He has apparently been on leave since **last December** (<http://ca.linkedin.com/pub/gary-johnson/29/a19/b06>). The college refused to tell me whether his absence is connected to the Freedom of Information request concerning Suzuki’s visit. It refused to say when he is expected back.

For the record, John Abbott College has also refused to divulge whether any of the students who served as David Suzuki’s bodyguards that day spent time alone with him.

.
Donna Laframboise holds an undergraduate degree in women’s studies. Her first book was about the women’s movement. She is puzzled by people who obsess over abstract dangers such as climate change, yet remain blind to more immediate dangers such as sexual predation.

.
see also: *David Suzuki, Dirty Old Man* (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/2013/01/30/david-suzuki-dirty-old-man/>) and *Suzuki: Money Doesn’t Matter, Here’s My 30K Invoice* (<http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/2013/01/31/suzuki-money-doesnt-matter-heres-my-30k-invoice/>)

and the latest from Ezra Levant, who broke this story for SunTV: *Double standards: If David Suzuki were a conservative, his career would be over, and his college enablers, too* (<http://www.torontosun.com/2013/02/01/double-standards-if-david-suzuki-were-a-conservative-his-career-would-be-over-and-his-college-enablers-too>)

[About these ads \(http://en.wordpress.com/about-these-ads/\)](http://en.wordpress.com/about-these-ads/)



http://nyamZmZmZmpPwAAAAAAPA_duM4SyQswj8EdcqjG2HFP0fy0pzuGGoEQcF1KZm9BSrGBQ9RA/gDoPAAAG18AAgUCAQUAAIIAHh8StwAAAAA./cnd=%21gQXtLAj1hgsQxONaGMXaCCAC/referjohn-abbott-college%2F/clickenc=http%3A%2F%2Fip.ilivid.com%2F%3Fappid%3D266%26subid%3

Entry filed under: [activist scientists \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/activist-scientists/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/activist-scientists/), [children \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/children/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/children/), [David Suzuki \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/david-suzuki/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/david-suzuki/), [ethical & philosophical \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/ethical-philosophical/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/category/ethical-philosophical/). Tags: [activist scientists \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/activist-scientists/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/activist-scientists/), [David Suzuki \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/david-suzuki/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/david-suzuki/), [Erich Schmedt \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/erich-schmedt/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/erich-schmedt/), [John Abbott College \(http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/john-abbott-college/\)](http://nofrakkingconsensus.com/tag/john-abbott-college/).

[Is Climate Change Like Gravity?](#)



Recent Posts

[David Suzuki & John Abbott College](#)

[Is Climate Change Like Gravity?](#)

[Suzuki: Money Doesn't Matter, Here's My \\$30K Invoice](#)

[David Suzuki, Dirty Old Man](#)

[Pity Poland](#)

[The Sierra Club's Broken Moral Compass](#)

[Meet 'One of the World's Foremost Climate Scientists'](#)

[Al Gore's Travelin' Global Warming Show](#)

[The FoxNews Interview](#)

[Greenpeace's Vision for America: Unemployed, Broke, Miserable](#)

Theme: [Customized Blix](#) by [Sebastian Schmiegl](#) . [Blog at WordPress.com.](#)