



"FORSAKE THE TROOPS"

MICHAEL CROOK

LEFT FLEET AND WAS DECOMMISSIONED IN 1996 AFTER LAST BUS

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10 Zen Monkeys

a webzine

In the Company of Jerkoffs

By Lou Cabron

September 18th, 2006



As little as we like to encourage these guys, yet another sad member of the "griever community," Michael Crook, is ambushing men with fake sex ads on Craig's List. Like past incidents, the story ultimately reveals a lot about the man behind it. In this case, he's not only pathetic, but a pathetic copycat.

If Jason Fortuny is similar to the "Chad" character from Neil LaBute's *In the Company of Men*, then Crook is the asshole wannabe, "Howard." Not only is his imagination lacking, capable only of putting a slight spin on his hero's methods, but he also possesses a pathological moralism that seems entirely out of place and hypocritical for the behavior he's engaged in.

Clearly following the Fortuny script, Crook pretended to be a 19-year-old female student at Syracuse university with B-cup breasts, looking to hang out "and maybe enjoy a nice, safe sexual encounter." ("I don't care if you're married, single, engaged, whatever. Life is fun. Sex is natural. Friendship is great.") And naturally, when men responded, Michael published their pictures and emails on craigslist-perverts.org — a domain he created Wednesday.

He also visited the "Casual Encounter" listings for five other cities — Las Vegas, Dallas, South Tampa, Phoenix, and Albuquerque.

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He also visited the "Casual Encounter" listings for five other cities — Las Vegas, Dayton, South Jersey, Kansas City, and Anchorage — publishing variations on his original ad. (I'm 19, 5' 4, 108 lbs, brown hair and eyes, and B cup breasts.) And added the responses to his site.

But he also made the additional effort of replying to his respondents to extract even more-embarrassing emails, and sometimes even instant messaging them. He also did online research, looking up their phone numbers and often claiming to have deduced the identities of his victims. "Check out this magazine article from a couple years ago, where he is in a picture with his wife and the guy whose name he used..." He apparently conned the (possibly married) man into sending a photo of his erection — then sent him one last email asking why he was trolling for girls on the internet and cheating on his wife. "What do you think your wife and co-workers' reaction will be when they find out?" he asks. (Adding that their answers, "along with your pics, will be posted for all to see on craigslist-perverts.org.")

The extra cities were apparently necessary because his original prank generated less than 50 responses and received almost no attention. (Just [two comments](#) and [one post](#) in his forum.) He brags that the next day his fake ad got 15 more responses. (*Possibly because no one actually reads his web site* — *Ed.*) He claims he's enjoying "exposing the perverts" and "pathetic men" responding to the ads. "I just wanted to see what kind of people would respond on a site like Craigslist, which is known for carrying ads from prostitutes," he writes. But he's also published the names of their wives, and in one case Googled the name of a respondent, then claimed it appeared on other dating sites "including fag sites."

So who is Michael Crook? His web site describes him as a [former Mormon](#), disillusioned after a dispute about how religious programming was assigned spots on a local cable access show. (And the fact that a flirtatious weather guy was tapped to teach teenaged girls in his ward.) In 1999 he was too underweight to join the army, but even after bulking up was told he was medically unfit for service. Seven years later he composed an essay arguing that members of the military are [overpaid](#). ("Financially speaking, it's the Pacific Avenue hooker of our economy.")

He weasled his way right onto TV in the spring of 2005 for creating a web site called "Forsake the troops," which called attention to his belief that soldiers are over-compensated. It also called soldiers "scumbags" and "prukes," asking

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He weasled his way right onto TV in the spring of 2005 for creating a web site called "Forsake the troops," which called attention to his belief that soldiers are over-compensated. It also called soldiers "scumbags" and "pukes," asking "What idiots risk their life for a country...? Let 'em die in combat - we don't need their ilk in this country!" This led to an appearance on Fox News where Crook's deer-in-headlights performance drew a standard-issue beatdown from Sean Hannity. ("You're ignorant and you're a disgrace... You are heartless, you are soulless, you are mean and you are cruel...") His site later reported he was beaten to death by angry servicemen — though that was obviously a hoax. Instead Crook created related domains like opposethetroops, disownthetroops, and citizensagainsthetroops - although he was apparently trying to auction them off to cash in on their notoriety.

Recently he's registered two more domains — racismworks.com ("Coming soon, a website which will explain why racism is actually a good thing...") and crimigrants.org ("dedicated to exposing and discussing illegal immigrants.") Both sites, though appear to be little more than their taglines, followed by the words "Coming soon!" But at least some of his anger appears sincere. One blogger claimed earlier Michael had cited an affiliation with a group to "preserve the rights of white men and women." Recently Michael also created a web page criticizing a 17-year-old drunk driver who killed her friend in a car accident - including what he purports are her phone numbers and address.

But for all his online activity, Michael remains plagued by obscurity. He grew up in small-town Arizona, southern New Jersey, and Las Vegas, according to his web site, and ran a 300-member fan club for an obscure Dutch Eurodance group. He writes that he manages a sports-clothing store and is "pursuing" a criminal justice degree.

Ironically, just four weeks before his Craig's List prank, he'd sent a spate of letters complaining about copyright infringement. It's possible that this article may only further his goal of online infamy, though it remains to be seen whether he can make a career out of pissing people off.

In April a garage band called Permanent Ascent uploaded a song about him to their MySpace page. Its lyrics?

"He's a dick. (He's a dick!) Fuck him! (Fuck him!) Asshole. (Asshole!) Fuck hi-i-m. Fuck Michael Crook!"

Perhaps Fortuny and Crook take solace in each other, from within the familiarity of their malicious community. I can foresee a day when this

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Perhaps Fortuny and Crook take solace in each other, from within the familiarity of their malicious community. I can foresee a day when this community of nihilistic pranksters hold its first convention, and they spend a week at the Marriott sneaking up on each other, flicking each other's ears and laughing until they drool.

Technorati Tags: [Craig's List](#), [Fortuny](#), [sex-baiting](#), [sexbaiting](#), [craigslist](#), [griever](#), [michael crook](#)



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