

Digital vigilantism: A conceptual, ethical and policy challenge

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Gary Cleary suicide: Man hangs himself after vigilantes accuse him of being a paedophile

Sep 18, 2013 00:00 | By Martin Fricker

He was arrested after being confronted by the group who lure suspected sex offenders into real-life meetings by posing as young girls online

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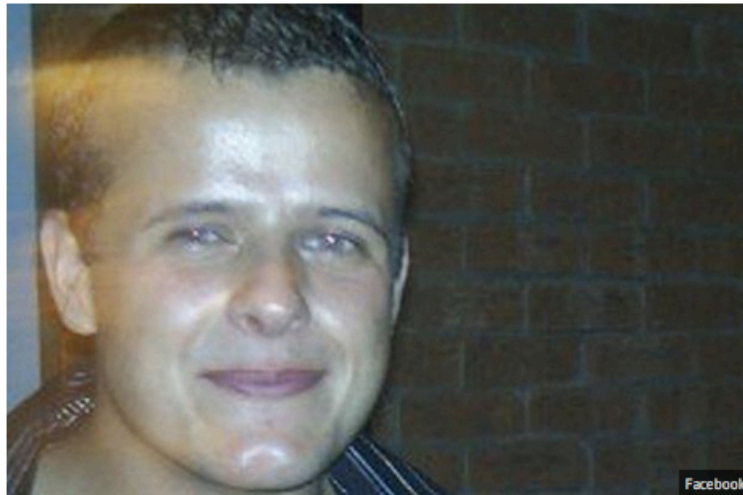
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Hanged himself: Gary Cleary

Rioting teen Nathan Kotylak and family face backlash, forced to leave home

BY DENISE RYAN, VANCOUVER SUN JUNE 11, 2012



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STORY

PHOTOS (4)



Nathan Kotylak, shown here with his parents Joie, left, and Greg, released a statement Sunday regarding his participation in the Game 7 hockey riot in Vancouver. Kotylak was photographed attempting to light a Vancouver police car on fire and Friday sought permission from the court to own up to his actions.

MORE ON THIS STORY

- [Timeline: Anatomy of the Stanley Cup riot](#)
- [Broken glass, messages of hope: What's different in Vancouver one year later?](#)
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- [Photos: Angry Canucks fans erupt in violence on Vancouver's streets](#)
- [The 40 most dramatic photos of Vancouver's 2011 Stanley Cup riot](#)

Digital Vigilantism

- ...is a process where citizens are collectively offended by other citizen activity, and respond through coordinated retaliation
- Includes, but not limited to 'naming and shaming'
- Unwanted, intense, enduring visibility
- Local / national / transnational
- Exclusively online / embodied activity
- Target participation / target exclusion

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DV and Digital Media Culture

- The ability to monitor and intervene in the lives of others
- DV as a communicative/mediated act, and a collective social act
- DV and cyber-bullying
- Convergence of social spheres, complication of online/offline and other spatial boundaries

DV, State Power, Citizens, Violence

- Vigilantism as a kind of private violence
- Challenge state monopoly on violent activity
- Vigilantism, nationalism, and us / them
- Communication counter-power?
- How are police coping with DV?

DV, Surveillance, Privacy and Visibility

- Temporal and contextual gaps in surveillance
- Mutual augmentation of surveillance
- Complex nature of privacy and public space
- Discrimination, lack of professionalism
- How are individuals coping with involvement in or subjection to DV?

Identifying key social actors

- Targets of DV
- Perpetrators of DV
- DV Organisations
- Platform operators
- Police / State
- Press

Research Questions

- (Q1) In what ways does digital media culture foster DV?
- (Q2) How does DV shape theoretical understandings of structural violence, state power and communication counter-power?
- (Q3) How does DV shape theoretical understandings of visibility, and an online private/public paradox?
- (Q4) How does the news media and other public figures render DV meaningful?
- (Q5) What are the motivations for social actors to engage in or respond to DV?
- (Q6) What are the social impacts of DV for targeted victims and participants?
- (Q7) What are the roles, challenges and problems of policing and state power in respect to DV?
- (Q8) What implications does DV have for the relation between users and digital media?
- (Q9) What implications does DV have for citizens in relation to state power?
- (Q10) What implications does DV have for contemporary surveillance and visibility practices?
- (Q11) How can educators and policy makers minimise harm associated with DV?