

THE MAN BEHIND BBC/NYT NIGHTMARE

October 17 – When Jimmy Savile died last October, he was mourned by the BBC. Mark Thompson, then the BBC's general director, said he was "very sad" to hear of his death. But many of those who grieved would now like to strangle Savile: BBC figure Jeremy Vine said this week that Savile is "one of the most serious predatory paedophiles in criminal history—and he was on our doorstep."

The flamboyant, cigar-chomping, big-time charitable fundraiser was, in the words of *New York Times* columnist Bill Keller, "a combination of Dick Clark of 'American Bandstand' and Jerry Lewis, maestro of the muscular dystrophy telethon." This is true but incomplete: add Liberace, Michael Jackson and Pee Wee Herman to the mix, and the portrait is complete.

Savile was Britain's first DJ, a TV host, miner, wrestler, dancehall manager, cyclist, marathon runner, book reviewer, Mensa member, and a child rapist. His most popular gig was hosting "Top of the Pops," the legendary U.K. music show. His own program, "Jim'll Fix It," lasted almost 20 years; it allowed him to make promises to kids which he tried to fulfill. Unfortunately, for a lot of these kids, Jimmy fixed them alright—they were used to fulfill his own sick needs. He was an equal opportunity molester who preyed on boys as well as girls (he favored girls), both pre- and post-pubescent.

Everyone knew Sir Jimmy was bizarre, the kind of crackpot that was charming, if not engaging. Many suspected he was a pervert, but no one—not one person over six decades—did anything about it. The question on the table is whether Thompson had anything to do with nixing an investigation into Savile's sordid behavior.