

# The Link Between Pornography And Violent Sex Crimes

By: Robert Peters  
President of Morality in Media  
March 24, 2004

## Table of Contents

Introduction—page 1
NYPD detective (retired) Raymond Pierce—page 2
NYPD lieutenant commander (retired) Vernon Geberth—page 3
Scientific data—page 5
‘Causative factor’—page 6
News reports of violent sex crimes—page 8
Other law enforcement personnel—page 12
Clinical data and common sense—page 17
‘Cathartic effect’—page 19
Sexual violence against prostitutes—page 23
Ted Bundy—page 27
‘Prohibition’—page 29
Burden of proof—page 31
Not all are convinced—page 33
Final thoughts—page 33

## Introduction

What prompted this article was the publication in 2003 of the book, “Sex-Related Homicide and Death Investigation” (CRC Press), by Vernon Geberth, a retired NYPD Lieutenant Commander of the Bronx homicide squad who is a nationally renowned homicide investigator.

I learned about the book through an article by David Marzulli, “Ex-cop’s gloomy on crime – Serial slays rising” (*N.Y. Daily News*, 10/15/03). What caught my attention in Marzulli’s article were his observation that “Geberth argues that the Internet plays a significant role in the proliferation of...attacks” and these quotes from Geberth’s book:

“The sex-related cases I am encountering today [as a consultant] are more frequent, vicious and despicable than what I ever experienced as a homicide cop.”

“There are more serial killers today. In my opinion, we have had a proliferation in serial murder events, as well as sex-related homicides”

No mention was made in Marzulli’s article about the role that pornography might play in all of this, but that was also true of another article, “Finding the Criminal Who Fits the Crime,” about the work of retired NYPD detective Raymond Pierce that appeared in the *N.Y. Times* (3/29/00).

According to the *Times* article, Mr. Pierce founded the NYPD's Criminal Assessment and Profiling Unit and was trained in psychological profiling by the FBI.

Since I was aware of an FBI study of 36 serial killers conducted in the 1980s, which revealed that 29 of these killers were attracted to pornography and incorporated it into their criminal sexual activity, including serial rape-murder, I wrote to Mr. Pierce, asking if he had "observed a frequent connection between pornography (including stripping) and sexual crimes" and if he would be willing to share his observations in an interview.

### **NYPD detective (retired) Raymond Pierce**

Mr. Pierce responded affirmatively. The resulting interview appears on Morality in Media's Web site, [www.obscuritycrimes.org](http://www.obscuritycrimes.org), on the **Porn Problems and Solutions** page, under the title, "The sexual criminal's relationship to porn."

Here is an excerpt from that interview:

**MIM:** What are your definitions of "pornography," and related terms like "soft-core pornography," "hard-core pornography," "violent pornography"?

**RMP:** I have no need to differentiate between "soft core," or "hard core" pornography. I know what the media defines as "soft core" and "hard core." For me it's anything written, spoken, printed, photographed or videotaped to elicit a sexual response from an individual. What the general public may consider soft-core pornography, that's enough stimulation for a criminal. It depends on what goes on in the individual's mind. If there's enough stimulation for a criminal to use to fantasize before committing a crime; sometimes they use it during a crime and many times they use it afterwards.

**MIM:** So pornography is one word, essentially, for you.

**RMP:** For me it is yes.

**MIM:** Do you believe, from your experience, that there's a greater consumption of pornography among sex offenders in contrast to non-offenders?

**RMP:** In my experience, offenders in general have a heavy exposure to pornography. I cannot tell you what the general population's exposure is, but it's available for them in different forms.

....

**MIM:** How many criminal cases involving sexual murders, rapes, or assaults on adults have you consulted on or investigated, and in what percentage of those was there evidence that the perpetrator was a user of pornography?

**RP:** I've investigated somewhere between 750 and a thousand cases, but was I looking for it all the time? No, I wasn't. But my estimation would be that pornography is expected by the police in those cases. It's expected that they [the suspects] read pornographic literature and magazines. Anywhere between 60 and 80 percent of the cases, if I were looking for it, I would have found it. But realistically, well over 80 percent.

**MIM:** What were the percentages of finding porn involved in serial sexual murders, rapes and assaults, in your estimation?

**RP:** Almost always. . . . Quite frequently, particularly with serial killers, they have a great problem with power and control. Many times they have hidden away storage areas...

### **NYPD lieutenant commander (retired) Vernon Geberth**

There was no need to interview Vernon Geberth, because he wrote an 800-page book to assist law enforcement officers in investigations of sex-related homicides. He said it all in the book. And I had a hunch his book would show a connection between pornography and sex crimes.

Having purchased a copy and quickly looked through it for passages that mention pornography, I can say that I was not disappointed in my expectations.

Here are excerpts from Geberth's book that link pornography to violent sex crimes.

“In one case on which the author consulted, the victim was an attractive middle-aged single woman . . . . The suspect, who was a fetish burglar, . . . acted out his most perverse fantasies with her body. . . . The suspect made multiple 1-900 sex-line phone calls throughout the day and night from the victim's residence...He also brought pornographic magazines into the scene and a list of 1-900 numbers, which were matched to his calls from the victim's residence by detectives. He engaged in sadistic sexual activities with the victim's body. . . .” [pp. 16-17]

“Sadistic fantasies or acts may involve activities that indicate the dominance of the person over the victim...as in the case depicted in *The Perfect Victim* (McGuire & Norton 1988). This case involved Cameron Hooker and his wife Janice. Cameron Hooker's fantasy was to dominate and torture nude women who were bound and helpless. His fantasies were fueled by an extensive collection of hard-core pornography that featured bondage, leather and handcuffs, and whips...At one point during this torture, [a victim] was able to see through the bottom of her blindfold. She saw a picture of a naked woman hanging in much the same position that she was hanging. Apparently, Cameron was using this sadistic pornography to script his fantasy into reality.” [p. 23 and p. 741]

“Fantasy plays a major role in everyone's sexual behavior. . . . The contrast of these normal fantasies would be the aberrant development of bizarre sexual images involving grotesque unnatural distortions of sexual imagery. . . . The individual becomes aroused by thoughts and fantasies of sexual aggression. . . . This paraphilic lovemap is then reinforced through repetition, illustrated by the use of sadistic pornography and fantasy stories featuring sexual

sadism...In Chapter 9, the author presents an offender who fantasized and enhanced his pornography by adding bindings to the female models. . . . He then posed the body [of a victim] at the scene with her legs spread apart and held in that position with a vine from the trees. This pose was the same as his pornography with the added bindings.” [pp. 36-37]

“Some samples of actual writings of sexual sadists [in order] to present how significant these fantasies become in the actual analysis of the crimes presented here...**Reinforcement of the Fantasy: Case 4 continued.** . . . ‘When I got to Denver there were a lot of sex shops. There I found bondage magazines and videos. Magazines of beautiful women and young girls tied, bound and gagged in just about every way possible. I was in heaven. I bought lots of mags and videos. After a year or so of watching I wanted the real thing. I wanted a woman bound up and sexually abused. . . . I didn’t want a willing partner as (name withheld) had been. I wanted an unwilling partner. I would go out and walk the streets and visit clubs looking for the right woman or girl.’” [Following the quote, Geberth comments, “In many cases, the offenders used girlfriends or prostitutes to act out their sadistic fantasies. . . . [F]rom an investigative perspective, the sexual crimes committed by the offenders and the activities they engaged in with consenting partners were almost mirror image scenarios.”] [pp. 44-45]

“**Case 5: Serial Rapist’s Diary**...[T]he sexual bondage and discipline magazines he purchased were reflected in his behavior with consenting partners as well as his victims. . . . My review of the [perpetrator’s journal] indicated a progression of activities, as the offender repeatedly acted out the scenarios depicted in the magazines and incorporated the pictures of the bound women into his fantasy system. . . .” [p. 45]

“**Case 9.** . . . This subject. . . . worked in his mother’s clothing store. As the young mother and her daughter walked toward the back of the store, the offender quickly began ushering other customers out of the store. . . . He was unable to complete the rape, but he did involve himself in sexual conduct with the woman’s body. . . . During a search of the clothing store, police located . . . a VCR and three pornographic videos in the backroom of the store. Apparently, he would entertain himself by viewing these tapes. . . . The police executed a search warrant of his residence. A search of his room revealed obsessive interest in pornography. . . . The significance of his obsession with pornography, coupled with his previous behavior [sex-related incidents], as well as the triggering mechanism . . . are excellent examples of fantasy-driven expression.” [pp. 51-52]

“**Case 11.** . . . The offender [a serial killer] focused his attacks on specific body regions, particularly the breasts. . . . Investigation revealed that the offender had an intense interest in bondage and total control and submission of his victims. . . . When the authorities in this case executed a search warrant at the subject’s home, they discovered that he maintained a private room in the house. . . . Among the many items recovered in this room was an extensive collection of B&D [Bondage & Discipline] materials and other pornography, which indicated the subject’s intense interest in sadomasochistic activities. . . .” [pp. 57-58]

“**Case 12.** . . . This case involved a serial killer who was killing prostitutes. . . . Once he completed the sex act, he stripped and tortured them for hours. . . . The significance of

fantasy in this case was graphically revealed when . . . detectives went to the killer's home and retrieved a number of items, including one pornographic videotape. . . . This videotape contained a number of scenes that were similar to what the offender was doing to his victims. The breast assault and paddling activities appeared to be based upon this sadomasochistic videotape, which seemingly fueled his increasingly sadistic activities. . . .” [pp. 61-62]

**“Case History.** . . . This case presented a murder/suicide. . . . Susan’s body was in a supine position. . . . She suffered a number of stab wounds into her chest and breast. The stab wounds continued down her chest into her pubic and pelvic area, and her throat was cut. Telephone cord had been wrapped tightly around her neck . . . and it was apparent that Frank had positioned his wife’s body in a pose similar to some of the drawings police recovered. . . . The police discovered 115 drawings and 105 photographs of nude women. There were also 83 men’s magazines, including *High Society*, *Gallery* and *Penthouse*. Many of the magazines had pages removed, including pictures of centerfolds with stab marks. Frank also maintained an extensive collection of . . . pornographic videotapes. . . . The numerous photographs of nude women from magazines with knife holes and simulated bullet holes through the pictures displayed his obsession with sexual mutilation of women. [pp. 68-83]

**“Danielle van Dam Kidnap and murder** Seven-year-old Danielle van Dam disappeared from her family home in the middle of the night on February 2, 2003. . . . Within 2 days of the abduction, a neighbor of the van Dam family, [defendant], became the prime suspect in the case. The little girl’s body was not discovered until February 27. . . . The trial lasted 2 ½ months. . . . The prosecution stressed the DNA evidence and forensic evidence. . . . The authorities also seized thousands of computer files filled with child pornography from [defendant’s] computer, including a cartoon video of the rape of a young girl. The prosecutor said, ‘The video represented [defendant’s] sexual fantasies and inspired the abduction, rape and murder of Danielle.’” [pp. 602-604]

There is more, but for the purposes of this article, enough is enough.

I would make three general observations about Vernon Geberth’s book. First, Geberth didn’t write the book to prove a causal link between pornography and violent sex crimes. He wrote the book to help law enforcement investigators solve violent sex crimes.

Second, while Geberth has much to say about the role of pornography in the lives of violent sex offenders, he could have said more. He discusses the case of serial killer Ted Bundy, but doesn’t mention Bundy’s experience with pornography. Geberth also discusses the cases of serial killers John Wayne Gacy and Jeffrey Dahmer, both of whom murdered other men, without any mention of pornography. From reports that I have read, both were into pornography.

### **Scientific data**

Third, while Geberth is, in my opinion, a credible expert witness, his observations and opinions about the role of pornography in violent sex crimes do *not* constitute “scientific data” that conclusively prove that pornography is connected to such crimes. But they don’t have to.

Those who defend pornography often make the argument (in so many words) that there is no conclusive scientific proof that pornography causes sex crimes. Their argument is flawed for two reasons. First, it implies that we cannot come to a valid conclusion without “conclusive scientific proof.” Second, it implies that government must have “scientific proof” in order to act.

Here’s how Nadine Strossen, president of the ACLU, responded to the question, “How can you defend pornography? Isn’t it harmful to women?” (“In Defense of Pornography: A conversation with Nadine Strossen,” *New York Native*, 1/23/95):

“The pro-censorship feminists claim that pornography causes direct harm to women is unsupported by the facts. In writing this book [“In Defense of Pornography”] I searched the social science literature for evidence that exposure to sexually explicit pornographic material causes . . . violence against women. But I discovered that a causal connection has *never* been established.” [Underlining mine; italics in the original]

Now, had Ms. Strossen been searching the social science literature “for evidence” of a causal connection between pornography and sexual violence, she would have found it. *See, e.g.*, the analysis of social science research in the *Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography: Final Report* (U.S. Department of Justice, 1986, at pp. 901-1035); an abridged version of the *Final Report* (Rutledge Hill Press, ISBN 0-934395-42-X) is available from Morality in Media.

But Ms. Strossen wanted more than *evidence of* a causal connection – she wanted research that *establishes* a connection. Here’s how the Supreme Court (*Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton*, 413 U.S. 49) responded to a similar demand:

“But it is argued that there are no scientific data which conclusively demonstrate that exposure to obscene material adversely affects men or women or their society... We reject this argument. . . . We do not demand of legislatures ‘scientifically certain criteria of legislation’ . . . . From the beginning of civilized societies, legislators and judges have acted on various unprovable assumptions.” [413 U.S. at 60-61]

The *Paris* Court went on to say [413 U.S. at 63]:

“If we accept . . . the well nigh universal belief that good books, plays and art lift the spirit, improve the mind, enrich the human personality, and develop character, can we then say that a state legislature may not act on the corollary assumption that commerce in obscene books, or public exhibitions focused on obscene conduct, have a tendency to exert a corrupting and debasing impact leading to anti-social behavior? ‘Many of these effects may be intangible and indistinct, *but they are nonetheless real.*’” [Emphasis mine]

### **‘Causative Factor’**

One reason why the *Paris* Court wisely did not demand of the Georgia legislature that it demonstrate with “scientifically certain criteria” a connection between antisocial behavior and obscene material is because human behavior cannot easily be studied in a laboratory. There are

too many variables to determine to a scientific certainty what role any one variable (for example, pornography) plays in a particular behavior (for example, rape).

Here is how Nadine Strossen responded to the question, “*What about convicted criminals who claim that viewing pornography led them to crime?*” (“Porn’s Great Defender?”, *Gadfly*, 7/97):

“Given all the complex factors that make us...behave as we do, I don’t understand how we can single out one and say it is *the* causative factor.” [Emphasis mine]

I am not sure what Ms. Strossen means by *the* causative factor. If she means a *sufficient* cause, I would agree because I don’t think pornography is ever the *sole* cause of a violent sexual crime. If she means a *necessary* cause (i.e., a factor without which the behavior would not have occurred) I would again agree—because we do not possess the means to single out one factor and know to a certainty what influence it had. Unlike Ms. Strossen, however, I think there is ample evidence to support the conclusion that many violent sex crimes would not have occurred (in whole or part) if the perpetrator had not been exposed to or become addicted to pornography.

For a perspective on “causation,” see Diana E. Russell, Ph.D., *Against Pornography: The Evidence of Harm*, pp. 113-148, (Berkley, CA: Russell Publications 1994). Both the book itself and an essay, “Pornography as a Cause of Rape,” are available at [www.dianarussell.com](http://www.dianarussell.com). Dr. Russell is Professor Emerita of Sociology at Mills College.

In her article, “When Words Are Not Enough: The Search for the Effect of Pornography on Abused Women,” (*Violence Against Women*, Vol.10, No.1, Jan. 2004, pp. 56-72), Janet Hinson Shope [Associate Professor, Goucher College] analyzes in detail a study conducted from 1988 to 1991 at a New York program for battered women. The study found that 46% of the battered women “reported that they had been sexually abused,” and that “30% of the abusers reportedly used pornography.” In her analysis, Hinson Shope said in part (at pp. 88-89):

“Although we may not be able to marshal the evidence needed to constitute ‘causal proof,’ an elusive criterion for social scientists, we certainly have enough evidence to warrant identifying pornography use as a risk factor, much like alcohol consumption, associated with sexual violence among some populations. . . . In our attempt to empirically validate the harm of pornography, we have also silenced women’s voices. . . . Women’s accounts, such as the ones below, on the effects of pornography are minimized and/or ignored. . .

“A woman who was raped by her partner recalls:

‘He was really into watching porno movies, and he tried to make me do all sorts of things. And I [didn’t] like it. He hurt my stomach so bad because I was pregnant, and he was making me do these things.’ (Bergen, 1998, p.242) [Bergen, R.K., “The reality of wife rape: Women’s experience of sexual violence in marriage.” In R.K. Bergen (Ed.), *Issues in intimate violence*, (pp. 237-250). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage]

“Jensen (1998) [Jensen, R., “Using pornography.” In G. Dines, R. Jensen, A. Russo (Eds.), *Pornography* (pp. 101-146). NY: Routledge] described another woman’s experience:

‘He would bring pornographic magazines, books, and paraphernalia into the bedroom with him and tell her that if she did not perform the sexual acts that were being done in the dirty books and magazines, he would kill her.’ (p. 115)

“Women’s experiences of pornography are dismissed as anecdotal, nonrepresentative, and unimportant. Falling into the measurement trap, we have turned to science, instead of to women, for answers...As Kelly pointed out, while we debate it, many people are coping with its unwelcome presence in our lives.”

### **News reports of violent sexual crimes**

The reader can judge for him or herself whether in the following cases (all taken from my file on pornography and violent sex crimes), pornography was *a* causative or “risk” factor, of major or minor importance, in the commission of the violent sex crime or crimes.

“Defendant was convicted of rape, two counts of aggravated sodomy and false imprisonment. . . . Certain magazines (‘Submarine Sadist,’ ‘Rope Embrace,’ etc) seized from appellant’s residence were admitted into evidence over appellant’s objection. ‘In the trial of sexual crimes exhibits having a tendency to show bent of mind toward sexual activity have generally been allowed into evidence’ . . . especially in light of the victim’s testimony concerning acts of bondage.” [*Yeck v. State*, 331 S.E.2d 76 (Ga. App. 1985)]

“Investigators searching for a motive in the brutal slayings of a Townsend mother and her two children will explore the role of ‘hard-core pornography’ in the [17 year old] suspect’s life. . . . Police sources say accused killer[’s] home...including his bedroom, ‘was full of hard-core pornographic magazines. They were all over the place’. . . . Several torn and crumpled porn magazine pages were found in a wastebasket at the murder scene. . . . The pornography in [defendant’s] home, coupled with his history of violent and sexual crimes has prompted investigators to explore whether [defendant] may have been ‘inspired’ by or may have copied acts depicted in videos or magazines.” [“Porn role probed in murders,” *Boston Herald*, 12/7/87]

“In a little house . . . police believe mild-mannered engineer [defendant], perhaps under the influence of porn-fueled fantasies, assaulted young women while his wife was away. He admitted, police say, to kidnapping and assaulting three girls, killing one of them, and assaulting four others in Georgia and South Carolina. Police in five other states, including Tennessee, want to talk to him. When police searched [defendant’s] rented storage unit...they found 935 pornographic books and magazines depicting sexual bondage, horror scenes and nudity. They also found...books about serial killer Ted Bundy, who preyed on attractive young women. . . .” [“Suspect in sex crimes sought,” *Knoxville Journal*, 2/27/89]

“A Circuit Court jury ruled that [defendant] was mentally responsible during the torture and murder of his sister-in-law and an attempt to murder his wife. . . . Psychiatrist Ralph Baker testified that he believed [defendant] had a disorder of sexual sadism but was not suffering from a mental disease. . . . Robert Miller, a psychiatrist . . . said [defendant] had a problem



throughout his life knowing how to direct his anger, and therefore he used pornography and thoughts of torture as a relief. . . . Paul Barnett, Price County Attorney, argued that he . . . had a fascination with pornography dating to childhood and who blamed alcoholism for his acts.” [“Jury finds [defendant] sane during crimes,” *Milwaukee Journal*, 3/18/89]

“In a videotape made this week for police crime-watch programs, the ‘Ski Mask Rapist’ revealed how he got addresses of some of his 35 victims. . . . Under questioning by Assistant District Attorney Mike Gillett, [defendant] said he watched X-rated videotapes about three or four times a week. ‘I would remember the videotapes I would watch when I committed an assault,’ he said. ‘I would think about the tapes at the time and the different acts in the videos. . . .’” [“Ski mask rapist details how he picked victims,” *Dallas Times Herald*, 6/1/90]

“A young FBI agent who helped nab a sadistic New Jersey serial killer Wednesday is a real-life version of the Jodie Foster character in ‘The Silence of the Lambs’. . . . As she tries to catch the maniac, Foster relies on the intricate methods she learns at the FBI National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crimes in Quantico, Va. That’s where FBI Agent Drucilla Wells received the training she used to zero in on serial-murder suspect [defendant]. . . . Wells learned that [defendant] collected porn and kept women’s panties in his car. She then put together a profile of [defendant] that expedited his capture by the FBI and local authorities.” [“How FBI’s ‘Jodie’ Got Her Man,” *N.Y. Post*, 3/30/91)

“A judge sentenced [defendant] to 20 years in prison for trying to rape a Wesleyan student, and attacking her housemate, saying [defendant’s] ‘whole life is dominated by pornographic fantasies that he was prone to act on. . . . Police searched [defendant’s] room after the incident and found open pornographic magazines. . . . In 1987, [defendant] was convicted of a similar attack after he sexually assaulted a housemate in East Haddam. . . . Then, in 1989, he was sentenced to six months for violation of probation; prosecutors said [defendant] ran up \$500 worth of telephone bills to pornographic and sex related groups.” [“Man sentenced to 20 years in sexual assault,” *Hartford Courant*, 5/2/91]

“The evidence adduced at trial viewed in the light most favorable to the state’s case . . . reveals the following. . . . Schiro was serving a three-year suspended sentence for robbery. . . . While in the work-release program [in Evansville, IN], Schiro worked across the street from [the victim’s] house. . . . Schiro went to a liquor store and stole an alcoholic beverage. . . . He took the liquor with him and went to see ‘quarter movies,’ which were characterized as hard-core pornography. . . . A woman who worked as a cashier at the quarter movie porn shop threw Schiro out when Schiro exposed himself to her. . . . From there Schiro went directly to [the victim’s] apartment. . . . Schiro knocked on [the victim’s] door and asked if he could use her phone on the pretext that his car would not start. . . . Schiro asked to use the bathroom. . . . When he came out of the bathroom Schiro was exposed and [the victim] became frightened. . . . Schiro then raped her . . . and raped her a second time. . . . Schiro raped her a third time. . . . Schiro decided he had to kill her so she couldn’t report the rapes. . . . She was still fighting him when he strangled her to death. . . . He then dragged her body across the living room where he performed vaginal and anal intercourse on the corpse and chewed on several parts of her body. . . .” [*Schiro v. Clark*, 963 F.2d 962 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1992)]

“Daily beatings, crude sexual acts and constant threats marked the 18-day imprisonment of a woman accusing [the defendant] of kidnapping and rape. . . . The woman, 22, cried as she described some of the things she accuses [the defendant] of doing. She said that in addition to raping and sodomizing her, he forced her to use her mouth to clean feces off his genitals. [Defendant] also asked her to perform sex acts depicted in pornographic magazines, the woman said.” [“Woman: Threats, beatings held me,” *Miami Herald*, 4/23/93]

“In December 1992, [Defendant] guided authorities to the [victim’s] body. . . . As he stated in court, he said [in the interview with the newspaper] he participated in the rape but did not shoot, strangle or mutilate her. . . . ‘Part of me wanted the rape to occur,’ [defendant] said. ‘I wanted to experience what it was like. I was curious about it.’ He said he became fascinated with the idea of rape by watching X-rated movies and reading pornography.” [“Night of Miss Harms’ Murder Still Haunts [Defendant],” *Omaha World Herald*, 9/28/94]

“A search of [defendant’s] home . . . turned up bags and boxes of pornographic books, magazines and videotapes about sexual bondage. . . . In the room where the woman said she escaped, investigators found a plastic sack filled with ‘bondage straps, restraints, chains’ and other items. . . . The victim said her captor also used an electronic stun gun to shock her after she was bound, gagged and blindfolded and carried to the trunk of a waiting car. The woman said she was taken to a home and left alone in an upstairs bedroom. The attacker apparently left the house and the woman managed to escape.” [“Bondage items found where woman was held,” *Grand Rapids Press*, 11/29/94]

“A former security guard dubbed ‘Dr. Smell’ for his foot fetish was found guilty of murdering a college student who was found barefoot, her socks and sneakers missing. . . . He was . . . on duty at the Drexel University [Philadelphia] computer laboratory where she was working the night she was beaten and strangled. . . . Police raided [defendant’s] apartment and storage locker and discovered 20 pair of white women’s sneakers . . . and 77 foot-fetish videos. [The victim’s] sneakers were white.” [“Sneaker Slaying,” *Assoc. Press*, 12/2/95]

“In the weeks before [defendant] allegedly began savaging women, he spent whole days mesmerized watching porn videos showing women being raped and tortured, a roommate said yesterday. As he grew increasingly despondent at the loss of his Japanese girlfriend, [defendant] bought and rented sadistic Japanese porn flicks, said [the roommate]. . . . Occasionally, excited by the copulation he saw on film, [defendant] would ask [the roommate] to accompany him to a sex club in Times Square. . . . [Defendant’s] obsession goes back to his teen years, said another friend. . . . ‘He used to have some porno games on his computer. He used to be able to take off these women’s clothes on the computer,’ said the old classmate. . . .” [“Porn Haze filled days,” *N.Y. Daily News*, 6/15/96]

“[Defendant], a [South Dakota] teen, was convicted of raping a Readers Den employee . . . ‘The Mitchell Police Department definitely thought pornography was a factor in [defendant’s] rape,’ said Assistant Police Chief Lyndon Overweg. ‘The defendant had been looking at the covers of pornographic magazines in the bookstore, pulling the film away from the covers. . . . We also were aware that [defendant] had used pornography in the past and felt that was a contributing factor to his crime’. . . . Overweg said it is difficult to

determine how much of an influence pornography has on people. . . . Pornography, however, is a common denominator that usually is present, he said. ‘Whenever I’ve investigated a sex crime, a search . . . will almost always reveal pornography at the attacker’s residence or . . . pornography in their backgrounds,’ Overweg said.” [“Officials: Set limits on explicit material,” *Mitchell Daily Republic*, 4/13/99]

“The disappearance of eight women and a baby girl have been linked to a Kansas man law enforcement officials say used the Internet to meet his victims for kinky sex. [Defendant] is a suspect in the deaths of five women whose bodies were found stuffed in 55-gallon drums in Kansas and Missouri. . . . [Defendant] apparently met his victims through sadomasochistic chat rooms and e-mail on the Internet using the screen name ‘slavemaster.’ Police confiscated pornographic material . . . from his mobile home. . . .” [“Nine disappearances linked to ‘Slavemaster,’” UPI, 6/8/2000]

“[Defendant] was sentenced to life in prison without parole for the brutal murder of a Rockville [MD] woman. . . . [Defendant’s] attorney . . . said Tuesday that [defendant] suffers from untreated mental disorders. . . . But prosecutors rejected the idea that [defendant’s] mental disorders led him to kill [the victim]. ‘The attack didn’t have anything to do with the disorders,’ said Deputy State’s Attorney John McCarthy. ‘It was inspired by pornographic movies.’ McCarthy said [defendant] was watching pornographic movies in his home the day of the attack.” [“Murderer gets life sentence,” *Montgomery Journal*, 5/8/02]

“Investigators looking into the killings of 10 women in the St. Louis area have accused a paroled robber in two of the killings after tracking him using the Internet. . . . The complaint . . . accused [the defendant] of kidnapping, torturing and killing two prostitutes. . . . Four days later [after finding a body], investigators determined that the return address on the letter [showing the location of the body], ‘I THRALLDOM,’ was a Web site featuring bondage and sexual torture. . . .” [“Internet Used to Find Man Who Is Charged in 2 of 10 Killings,” *N.Y. Times*, 6/11/02]

“A prowler climbed through the bathroom window of a Lower East Side apartment . . . shot a sleeping man in the head, police officials said, then drank the dead man’s whiskey and watched sex videos before heading downstairs, where he killed an elderly couple. The woman’s body was left naked in a living room chair, and she had been sexually abused.” [“Burglar Slays Man in One Apartment, Then Kills Elderly Couple,” *N.Y. Times*, 6/13/02]

“Police have charged a man in the slaying of a nun who was attacked as she recited the rosary while on a walk with another nun. Both women were sexually assaulted, police said. . . . Klamath County District Attorney Ed Caleb said [defendant] had just left ‘the only strip joint in Klamath falls’ before he attacked the women. ‘He then came down there, ran into them, attacked them, beat them severely to weaken them, then proceeded to sexually assault both of them, and we believe strangle one of them,’ Caleb said.” [“Man charged in Oregon nun’s murder,” *Associated Press*, 9/3/2002]

“A military jury gave a 25-year prison sentence to a lieutenant colonel who admitted killing his wife during an argument about pornography, an army spokesman said. . . . [Defendant] pleaded guilty to unpremeditated murder . . . saying he beat and strangled his wife as they fought about his use of the Internet to view pornography.” [“Colonel sentenced in wife’s death,” *Associated Press*, 10/30/2002]

“[A]ccused rapist and fugitive from the law [the defendant] has simple needs. ‘He likes sex and surf,’ defense lawyer Roger Jon Diamond told the *Post*. . . . Diamond claims his client was hooked on having sex with unconscious women—and that his girlfriends willingly took GHB [a date rape drug] to grant his sexual fantasies. ‘There are actually Web sites about this,’ Diamond said. ‘It’s a new fetish out there. Some guys like to see unconscious women getting raped.’” [“Fugitive Scion’s ‘Sex & Surf’ Life,” *NY Post*, 1/12/03]

“A teenage baby sitter . . . has been charged with raping and sodomizing three children he was watching in their home. . . . The youth had been abusing the children since the summer of 2002, when he began watching pornographic videos with the eldest child, a boy who was then 12, the warrant said. He eventually abused all three children, the [Connecticut] state police charged. He intimidated the children by telling them he would assault other members of the family . . . and tortured them with a knife, among other items, the warrant said.” [“Baby Sitter, 17, Raped and Tortured Three Children,” *NY Times*, 2/27/04]

### **Other law enforcement personnel**

As noted above, the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography (*Final Report*, 1986) relied in part on social science research. But the Commission also heard testimony from many witnesses, including more than 100 law enforcement personnel. Among the physical harms the Commission looked at were: Rape (pp. 773-780), Forced sexual performance (pp. 780-786), Battery, Torture (pp. 786-793), Murder (pp. 793-794), and Imprisonment (pp. 794-795).

On September 16, 1987, Darrell E. Pope, Commanding Officer (retired), Sex Crimes Unit, Michigan State Police, testified before the U.S. House Select Committee on Youth and Families, which was reviewing the incidence of violence against women. Lieutenant Pope testified in part:

“I was commanding officer of the Sex Crimes Unit of the Michigan State Police for 12 years prior to my retirement. During that time we had a law that requires law enforcement agencies, upon arrest and conviction of a sexually deviant person, to submit forms to . . . that Sex Crimes Unit. During this period of time, we accumulated, from 1956 to the time that I did my research in 1977, some 38,000 case histories, which included everything from exhibitionism to lust murders. The research that I did was based on that, plus the opportunity that I had . . . to work with agencies within the State of Michigan, as well as our own investigations of sexual assaults on women and children . . . We dealt with, in those 12 years . . . I am estimating the number—around 4000 cases . . . so we had the opportunity to talk not only to the victims and, in some cases, the offender, but also to the police officer . . .

....

“The number two issue is the issue does porno, in fact, affect sexual assault, and my answer very explicitly is yes. Being commanding officer of the unit, and having the availability of these sexual reports, in 1977, I did a research project where I looked at 38,000 case histories and found 41% reports indicated that, in fact, pornographic materials were used just prior to or during the sexual act...

“In 1978, we began to develop what we call a crime scene behavior analysis, in which we would profile the sexually motivated homicide and tell you what kind of people who did it. Again, in doing this, in talking, I had the opportunity to talk to some of these people who had committed lust murders. It was very fascinating. When you asked the perpetrator, the sex offender who would indicate or admit that he had used it, almost to a man, his answer was, ‘I used it for one of several reasons: One, to encourage me.’ He said—in some cases, I remember talking to one young man who was 19 years old, he said, ‘It excited me and then I got to thinking about it and I wanted to know how it felt.’

“This is this young man’s answer. He wanted to know how it felt to rape a woman and kill her. By the way, this was his girl friend. So he did it. And when we arrested this young man and searched his home, we found a pornographic magazine depicting this very thing that he had done. By the way, he had stabbed her 57 times.”

In an address, “Pornography, Depicted Violence and Crime,” to the Second Melbourne Criminal Justice Symposium held at the University of Melbourne on March 16, 1991, Richard M. Reade, Prosecutor for the Queen, State of Victoria, recounted the following case (among others):

“In my opinion, the first case is a graphic example of the serious problem our community faces as a result of the hardcore pornographic material being made freely available since the early 1970s. . . . At about 1 a.m. on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1981, a young woman then aged 31 was walking on the upper esplanade . . . . A man walked up to her, pushed a knife into her ribs, and demanded her money. He then forced her at knife point into a car park where he tied her up with rope and adhesive tape...He gagged her and said, ‘. . . Just do as I say, because if you don’t I will have no alternative to cut you up, especially your boobs.’ He then touched her breasts and inserted his finger into her anus and vagina...

“Having tied her up again and having torn her clothes off, he stuffed her underpants in her mouth, placed a pillowcase over her head and pulled her to the ground. While ‘squeezing her breasts like a sponge,’ he had vaginal and anal intercourse with her. . . .

“Still not satisfied he commented that her stomach was ‘cute,’ and with that, he cut all over her stomach with a knife. He also cut her thighs and neck, telling her that if she wanted to speak to him she was to call him ‘Master.’ He took her to a nearby tree and sliced her under the breast with the knife. He again had vaginal intercourse and cut her all over her body particularly in the area of her breasts...He then cut off her right nipple saying, ‘Now you won’t be able to breast feed your baby.’

“When this man was arrested, he was interviewed by Police and explained his strong sexual drive and why he took the rope and the knife etc. with him that night:

‘Because I have been reading books on bondage and I felt a strong urge to act out what was in the books. I knew it was wrong but I couldn’t help myself. . . . It’s those bondage books, sex feeds on sex, that’s what has done it, those rotten books. . . . The books show women need to be dominated, and that to grab a woman off the street and tie her up and rape her isn’t really wrong; and I said to her that night that I had to do it once to get it out of my system you know. . . .’

“The court was told that a large number of books and magazines on sex were found in his bungalow. They included, ‘Robbed and Raped,’ ‘Bondage Love,’ ‘Kidnapped.’ His counsel described ‘Bondage Love’ as being ‘almost a blueprint of what actually occurred.’”

In a July 23, 1991 hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary to address the Pornography Victims’ Compensation Act of 1991 (which passed through Committee but died on the floor of the Senate), Robert H. Macy, district attorney in Oklahoma City, testified as follows:

“Back in 1984, I was contacted by citizens in Oklahoma County wanting to do something about the sex crimes problem and pornography. Up until that time, I was truly a Doubting Thomas as to the correlation between sex crimes and pornography. . . . However . . . we put together a strategy to try to as much as we could eliminate pornography or obscenity and sex-oriented businesses in Oklahoma County. . . . We did it rather quietly, but we went out and systematically closed 12 out of 13 pornographic bookstores, 11 peep show operations. We had the porno films taken off of cable TV. With the help of a city ordinance, we closed 75 topless and bottomless bars. We shut down 21 houses of prostitution. We closed 27 out of 42 telephone escort services and eliminated 3 hardcore pornographic theaters. . . . They try to tell you that you can’t prosecute pornography cases and obscenity cases. I am here to tell you that you can. . . . But to give you an idea of what happened when we cracked down, in 1984 we had 565 rapes reported in our county. In 1985, it dropped to 542; 479 in 1986; 439 in 1987; 435 in 1988; and 427 in 1989. So in 5 years, the number of rapes dropped by 138, or almost 25 percent, and the only thing we did different in Oklahoma County was the crackdown on obscenity and . . . sex oriented businesses.”

In a letter, dated October 5, 1995, to Dallas Erickson, President of Montana Citizens for Decency through Law, John C. Moe wrote:

“My hopes and prayers are with you in your efforts to pass effective anti-pornography (obscene matter) laws for Montana. . . . For 11 years, 1952-1963, as an FBI agent in Southern California, I investigated organized crime, including its control of pornography, prostitution, illegal drugs, gambling, racketeering and related crimes. I found that these crimes as well as sex crimes and sexually transmitted diseases are all closely inter-related. . . . I served as Sheriff of Missoula County for 8 years, 1970-1978. . . . Following are some cases involving obscenity that I handled while I was Sheriff, 1970-1978:

“A 15 year old arrested for sexual assaults on girls 5 to 8 years old. He stated that he became sexually aroused by viewing a pornographic magazine kept under his bed.

“A 47 year old deviate with a lengthy criminal record who had numerous obscene books and movies in his possession when arrested. He admitted becoming sexually aroused by these items following which he would seek out female victims to rob and rape in unnatural ways. He admitted that while on parole he had sexually assaulted and robbed 21 females from 8 years of age and older.”

.... [Other cases omitted]

According to the article, “Sex Offenders Test Parole Officers,” (*N.Y. Times*, 6/8/97), “paroled sex offenders must obey strict rules depending on the nature of their crimes, such as rape, incest or pedophiliac crimes. Here are some of the conditions parole officers impose:

“May not frequent adult bookstores, massage parlors, topless bars and sex shops.

“Cannot participate in on-line computer services that exchange pornographic messages or establish sexual encounters or liaisons . . .

“Cannot buy or possess pornographic magazines, pictures or films.

“Cannot call sexually explicit telephone services . . .”

According to an article by Peter Landesman, “Sex Slaves on Main Street” (*N.Y. Times Magazine*, 1/25/04), the United States has not only become a major importer of sex slaves, many of whom are children, but the sex is now “harder.” Landesman reports that Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents at the Cyber Crimes Center in Fairfax, Va., are “finding that when it comes to sex, what was once considered abnormal is now the norm. They are tracking a clear spike in the demand for harder-core pornography on the Internet.” According to Landesman, when a special agent at the Center brought up a Web site that supposedly offered sex slaves for purchase to individuals, “a hush came over the room.” The article continues:

“ ‘That sure looks like the real thing,’ [I.C.E. Special Agent] Daufenbach said. There were streams of Web pages of thumbnail images of young women of every ethnicity in obvious distress, bound, gagged, contorted. The agents pointed out probable injuries from torture. Cyberraucions for some of the women were in progress; one had exceeded \$300,000.”

In a February 24, 2004 speech before the 2nd e-Crime Congress (held in London), Detective Chief Superintendent Len Hynds, head of the UK’s National Hi-Tech Crime Unit, said that for the Internet to “take the final step to adulthood, it must first deal with those fringe elements that chose to promote abhorrent activities like cannibalism and necrophilia.” Hynds’ comments were apparently related to a murder conviction reported in “Killer was obsessed by porn websites,” *The Guardian* (London), 2/5/04:

“During the trial, the jury heard that [the defendant], who kept the woman’s body for almost a month and visited it frequently while it was in a storage unit, was an avid user of [Internet] sites devoted to snuff movies and necrophilia. The court heard he had been examining such sites the day before he strangled the teacher with a pair of nylon tights. . . . The prosecution

said he had killed [the teacher] and kept her body as a ‘trophy’ to play out a ‘bizarre and macabre’ sexual fantasy. . . . Police . . . traced former girlfriends, who described how he liked to tie them up and apply pressure to their necks during sex until they almost passed out. One [former girlfriend] told officers [the defendant] admitted, ‘I get the awful feelings that I am going to kill and rape a woman.’ [She] also revealed she had discovered a stash of pornographic pictures of women. Around their necks [defendant] had drawn nooses.”

In 2002 Morality in Media retained the services of two recently retired law enforcement agents, Roger Young and Tom Rodgers, to follow up on complaints about pornographic Web sites submitted by citizens to MIM’s [www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org) site.

Roger Young joined the FBI in 1975 and began working obscenity, child pornography, and prostitution cases in 1977. From the mid 1980s until his retirement in June 2001 he was recognized nationally as one of the leading authorities in the FBI regarding the investigation of obscenity cases. Roger Young had this to say about pornography and violent sex crimes:

“It is my professional and personal opinion that there is a direct correlation between pornography and violent sex crimes. Individuals who commit these crimes receive reinforcement, motivation, encouragement and validation of their sexual fantasies from the pornography they view and read. This material then becomes a catalyst for acting out their fantasies. One case that comes to mind is the Gary Bishop case. Bishop sexually assaulted and murdered a number of children in Utah. Bishop began viewing pornography prior to high school. Prior to his execution, Bishop stated that the pornography he viewed and read affected him and was a factor in the crimes that he committed.

“In addition to the Gary Bishop case, another investigation in which I was involved was the Jeremy Strohmeyer case. Strohmeyer, a high school senior at the time of his crime, sexually assaulted and murdered a prepubescent female at a hotel/casino at the California/Nevada state line. During the investigation it was discovered that he had a large amount of pornography in his computer, and that just prior to his crime, he received an audiovisual image (AVI) on his computer from another individual. This AVI depicted an adult male engaged in sexual intercourse with a prepubescent female. Evidence in this case also revealed that Strohmeyer expressed an interest and a desire to engage in sexual intercourse with a prepubescent female. Before trial was to begin, Strohmeyer changed his plea from not guilty to guilty. Had the case gone to trial, the Las Vegas District Attorney planned to use the pornography in Strohmeyer’s computer to demonstrate premeditation for his crime.”

Tom Rodgers was a detective lieutenant with the Indianapolis Police Department. During his 28 years with the Department, Lt. Rodgers received many awards, including awards for fighting child pornography. He also helped lead the fight against “adult” bookstores during the period when Stephen Goldsmith (who later became Mayor) served as Prosecuting Attorney. Lt. Rodgers had this to say about pornography and violent sex crimes:

“As an Indianapolis Police Department Detective Lieutenant, I was assigned to the Sex Crimes Branch where we investigated forcible rapes involving adult victims as well as sex crimes against children. I can recall many cases involving suspects who used pornography



just prior to committing their sex crimes, including violent sexual crimes. One particular suspect would view his pornography before going out to prowl at night and identify vulnerable victims who felt they were secure in their homes. He would then break into their homes as they slept to commit his rapes, causing physical injury to all his victims.

“In the early 1980’s I was called to consult on a case with a Colorado police department while I was detailed to assist that police agency. The case involved a middle-age grandfather who frequented adult bookstores and was infatuated with adult pornography. Although he claimed to have no actual sexual attraction to children, he was accused of sadomasochistically molesting his granddaughters in acts so vile; it would defy your imagination.

“The grandfather photographed himself performing many sexual sex acts on his five-year old grandchild. In some of the photographs he would require her to pose nude with a blood spattered genitalia and abdomen. The child was also depicted in the photographs with a grimacing face as if experiencing severe pain. In one photography session, he hanged the child upside down by her ankles on the inside of a closet door. In this scene, the child was depicted wearing a skirt and her panties pulled down exposing her genitals. The final photograph in this series, depicted the child lying on a floor, nude from the waist down, bloodied and with a blunt instrument positioned between her legs. It appeared as if the little girl was unconscious or perhaps dead. The perpetrator was arrested when he sold copies of the photographs to an adult bookstore clerk who in turn sold them to an undercover agent.”

Many other current and former federal and state prosecutors and law enforcement agents across the nation (and in other countries) could and would describe similar cases where pornography did or may have contributed to violent sexual crimes, if they were asked to do so.

### **Clinical case studies and common sense**

Dr. Victor B. Cline, a clinical psychologist and Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Utah, has treated approximately 300 sex addicts, sex offenders, or other individuals (96% males) with sexual illnesses. In his monograph “Pornography’s Effects on Adults and Children” [available from Morality in Media in booklet form for \$4 and free of charge, in an abridged version, on the [www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org) web site (**Help for Porn Victims and Addicts** page)], Dr. Cline has this to say about a “four factor syndrome” common to nearly all of his clients, “especially in their involvement with pornography:”

“The first change that happened was an addiction-effect. The porn-consumers got hooked. Once involved in pornographic materials, they kept coming back for more and still more. The material seemed to provide a very powerful sexual stimulant or aphrodisiac effect, followed by sexual release, most often through masturbation. The pornography provided very exciting and powerful imagery that they frequently recalled to mind and elaborated on in their fantasies...It is difficult for non-addicts to comprehend the totally driven nature of a sex addict. When the ‘wave’ hits them, nothing can stand in the way of getting what they want, whether that be pornography accompanied by masturbation, sex from a prostitute, molesting a child, or raping a woman. These men are consumed by their appetite, regardless of the cost or consequences. Their addiction virtually rules their lives.

“The second phase was an escalation-effect. With the passage of time, the addicted person required rougher, more explicit, more deviant, and ‘kinky’ kinds of sexual material to get their ‘highs’ and ‘sexual turn-ons.’ It was reminiscent of individuals afflicted with drug addictions. Over time there is nearly always an increasing need for more of the stimulant to get the same initial effect. Being married or in a relationship with a willing sexual partner did not solve their problem. Their addiction and escalation were mainly due to the powerful sexual imagery in their minds, implanted there by the exposure to pornography. . . .

“The third phase was desensitization. Material (in books, magazines, or films/videos) which was originally perceived as shocking, taboo-breaking, illegal, repulsive, or immoral, in time came to be seen as acceptable and commonplace. The sexual activity depicted in the pornography (no matter how anti-social or deviant) became legitimized. . . .

“The fourth phase was an increasing tendency to act out sexually the behaviors viewed in the pornography, including compulsive promiscuity, exhibitionism, group sex, voyeurism, frequenting massage parlors, having sex with minor children, rape, and inflicting pain on themselves or a partner during sex. This behavior frequently grew into a sexual addiction that they found themselves locked into and unable to change or reverse no matter what the negative consequences were in their life. Many examples of the negative effects of pornography-use come from the private or clinical practice of psychotherapists, physicians, counselors, attorneys, and ministers. Here we come face to face with real people who are in some kind of significant trouble or pain. One example from my practice might illustrate this.

“I was asked to consult on a case where a Phoenix-Tucson area professional person, president of his firm and head of his church's committee on helping troubled children, was found to be a serial rapist who had violently raped a number of women at gun- or knife-point. . . . The only significant negative factor in his life was an early adolescent addiction to pornography which, for the most part, was kept secret from others. This gradually escalated over a period of years, eventually leading to spending many hours and incurring great expense at ‘adult’ bookstores, looking at violent video-porn movies and masturbating to these. His first rape was triggered by seeing a close resemblance in the woman he assaulted to the leading character in a porn movie he had seen earlier in the day. Reality and fantasy had become extremely blurred for him as he acted out his pathological sexual fantasies.”

In addition to covering clinical case history data, field studies and experimental laboratory type studies, Dr. Cline’s article also has a section entitled, “Use of Sexually Explicit Films to Change Behavior & Attitudes,” where he states in part:

“[S]ex counseling clinics in the United States daily make use of explicit sexual pictures, films, books and videos to change couple’s sexual behavior, beliefs and attitudes. Other centers use graphic sex films in an attempt to recondition the sexual behavior of sex offenders. However, these are carefully selected and prescribed as a physician would in writing a prescription for a particular drug to treat a specific illness or infection. . . . [N]o responsible sex therapist would ever say to a patient who had a specifically focused sexual problem, ‘Go down to the adult bookstore and help yourself to anything you can find there.’

“You cannot logically argue that the kind of change which takes place in a sex counseling clinic can function only one way (just to make people healthy). The possibility certainly exists that some pornography can harm people through accidental conditioning processes or modeling or imitative learning of destructive, unhealthy, or illegal kinds of sexual activity, which some viewers may later act out.”

On occasion, a mental health professional testifies in an obscenity trial (for the defense) that he or she uses materials in therapy that are similar to the pornography at issue in the case—therefore, the argument goes, the materials have serious scientific value. But as the Supreme Court noted in the *Miller v. California* [413 U.S. 15, at 36] obscenity case, “[C]ivilized people do not allow unregulated access to heroin because it is a derivative of medicinal morphine.”

It isn’t just defense expert witnesses who find value in viewing hardcore pornographic materials. As reported in *Adult Video News* (Sept. 1999), Sharon Mitchell, director of the Adult Industry Medical Healthcare Foundation, said:

“Everyone who watches porn learns something from it, right? It could be a new technique...even a new kind of fantasy. Right? So let’s just call this an instructional tape for safety awareness and for the HIV-positive to realize there’s ways to have sex safely.”

In an editorial, “The Importance of Porn in these Post-Sept. 11 Times” (*Adult Video News*, March 2002), Heidi Pike-Johnson writes:

“Porn...inspires us to reach out and try things that we had never done before. It challenges us to live up to our desires...”

### ‘Cathartic effect’

Another argument that defenders of pornography make is that pornography provides individuals prone to sexual violence with an outlet for their sexual desires. In other words, it has a cathartic effect on individuals who would otherwise commit sexual crimes.

Perhaps that is part of what Nadine Strossen had in mind when she said:

“In fact, the studies suggest that if anything, the greater availability of sexually explicit materials is positively correlated with . . . lower rates of sexual violence against women. Compare, for example, Singapore, which tightly restricts pornography, and Sweden, where pornography is freely available. Singapore has a much higher rape rate than does Sweden. . .” [“In Defense of Pornography,” *N.Y. Native*, 1/23/95]

I know little about Singapore, but I did find articles about Sweden, including the following:

Headline: **Swedes cleaning up their morality act** [*N.Y. Daily News*, 8/17/86]

“Here in the world capital of sexual permissiveness, the tide of sexual revolution has begun to ebb . . . and a public outcry over pornography is growing. Swedish authorities . . .

outlawed live sex shows four years ago, for example, and now are considering a ban on the sale of violent pornographic videotapes. Sex expert Maj Fant said Swedes were naively idealistic, unaware of pornography's dark side. The new Swedish view seems to echo the recent U.S. [Attorney General's] Commission report on pornography, which contended there is a link between smut and violent sex crimes."

**Headline: Sweden to Study Sexual Crime from Women's Viewpoint**

"STOCKHOLM, July 1[1993] (Reuters) – Alarmed by a sharp rise in sex crimes, the Swedish government ordered a study of rape, sexual harassment and indecent assault from a female standpoint. Official figures show sexual violence in Sweden rose 25 percent to some 6,000 cases in 1992 against the previous year. . . ."

**Headline: Sweden Porn**

"STOCKHOLM, March 25 [2000] (Reuters) – A group of Swedish chambermaids are seeking protection from male hotel customers who become 'over-excited' after watching pornography on television. In an article published in today's Aftonbladet daily, the group...called for the maids to be given alarms to use in case of attack."

**Headline: MEP declares war on porn**

"IRISH INDEPENDENT, January 21, 2004: A Swedish Euro-MP fighting the spread of pornography yesterday called for a study into 'the reasons behind sexual behavior of men'. . . She is the author of a draft European Parliament report warning that globalization has caused an explosion in the sex industry. The report . . . points out that 70pc of the 360m EU citizens spent on the Internet in 2001 went to porn sites."

**Headline: Swedes have more and more animal sex**

TV2.no NETTAVISEN, January 26, 2004: "Animal sex is not illegal in Sweden, and every year between 200 and 300 pets are injured because of sexual assaults. The estimate was presented by Svenska Veterinarforbundet, the Swedish veterinary organization. . . . 'We have seen an increase since 1999 when child pornography became illegal,' said Johan Beck-Friis. 'It appears . . . as there are some people who have replaced children with animals. . . .'"

It isn't just the Swedes, of course, who have sex with animals. And it isn't just the animals that suffer. As reported in "U.S. group campaigns to outlaw animal sex" (*Reuters*, 3/17/99), experts say some women abused by their husbands are forced to take part in bestiality. According to the article, the wives said that the bestiality is worse than being directly abused by their mates. Said Dr. Frank Ascione, professor of psychology at Utah State University, "Men who have observed bestiality in pornographic material will sometimes force their wives to reenact activity at home."

There are a number of problems with the cathartic theory. As Dr. Victor Cline and others have observed, when individuals become addicted to pornography they often (if not always) reach the

point where they act out (or, at bare minimum, *long for* the opportunity to act out) their sexual fantasies in real-life—with dates, wives, prostitutes, or strangers.

If the so-called cathartic effect were working, then the incidence of sexual abuse of children should be decreasing—in proportion to the expansion of traffic in child pornography on the Internet. But experts are concerned that the opposite is happening, as these stories show:

“Muireann O’Brian is helping to lock up child pornographers and child traffickers in the world’s most deprived countries. The Dublin woman, who heads the Bangkok office of the worldwide organization, End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism, helps police and lawyers nail pedophiles and charts the extent of child sex abuse. . . . Mrs. O’Brien said the number of children being sold for sex each day is staggering. . . . She said disturbing studies show heterosexual men are becoming addicted to child porn through the Internet. She revealed: ‘Studies and arrests have shown men with perfectly normal sexual proclivities become seduced, then involved and finally addicted to child pornography. Their addiction may manifest itself by them just keeping and looking at the images . . . But it has been found that the addiction leads many men into seeking out children to abuse.’” [“Irish Lawyer leading fight in Asia against evil perverts,” *Sunday Mirror* (London), 9/9/2001]

“Al Cooper, a California psychologist who recently published a book that explores the Internet’s effect on sexuality, said the rise in offensive porn spam may be due in part to some surfers’ dwindling interest in mainstream fare. ‘There’s only so many naked women’s breasts you can see until you get tired of it,’ Cooper said. ‘For sex sites to make money, they need to supply people with new material . . . something new and exciting’ . . . ‘We’re seeing a tremendous increase in people looking for child porn online, then trying to solicit kids for sex,’ Cooper said.” [“Porn Spam: It’s Getting Raunchier,” *Wired News*, 9/30/02]

“Demand for pornographic images of babies and toddlers on the Internet is soaring, a leading expert has warned. Psychology professor Max Taylor of University College Cork heads COPINE—a project set up to uncover pedophile gangs. The group, Combating Pedophile Information Networks in Europe, held a conference . . . to discuss the alarming growth of child porn. . . . [Taylor] said: ‘More babies and toddlers are appearing on the net and the abuse is getting worse. It is more torturous and sadistic than it was before. The typical age of children is between 6 and 12, but the profile is getting younger’ . . . COPINE’s research showed around 20 new children appear on the porn sites every month—many kidnapped or sold into sex.” [“Baby pornography soaring,” *Reuters*, 3/4/03]

“Kenneth Lanning, a former FBI profiler, believes many offenders have harbored—and suppressed—deviant urges for years. ‘They may never have acted out . . . and along comes the Internet . . . which is like pouring fuel on smoldering embers,’ Lanning said . . . The deluge of pornographic images and chatter on line is perilous for those struggling to keep their desires in check because it whets their appetite, experts say.” [“Net’s anonymity cloaks predators,” *NY Daily News*, 11/2/03]

“Pedophiles are swapping thousands of hardcore images of child sex abuse in a new form of computer child pornography [peer-to-peer traffic] that police believe is feeding a demand for

more real-time victims of abuse. . . . The images are generally more extreme and at least 20% of the users are what police class as Category One, meaning the suspect is ‘of significant risk to children’. . . . The [Metropolitan London police’s] child protection hi-tech crime unit has already built a list of 800 suspects involved in file swapping illegal images in the United Kingdom alone. While most are involved only in sharing or downloading the images, a significant proportion are active abusers producing the material for themselves, often using their own children, their neighbor’s children or—in rarer cases—by luring strangers.” [“Race to save new victims of child porn,” *The Guardian* (London), 11/4/03]

If the so-called cathartic effect were working, then the incidence of violent sexual crimes perpetrated by children should be decreasing, because never before has hardcore pornography been so readily available to children. But there is evidence that the opposite is occurring:

“Teenagers open up to Dr. Ponton, a professor of psychiatry at University of California at San Francisco. . . [A]s chairwoman of the Disaster and Trauma Committee of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, she works as a consultant to schools on issues of violence and risk taking. . . Q. [interviewer] *A disturbing finding of the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey last year is that one in five high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by her boyfriend. In other words, she has been physically hurt or forced to have intercourse against her will. Why is this happening?* A. [Dr. Ponton] . . . Violence and sexual themes run through media. So many of the sexual and violent images on the Internet and in other media use girls in objectified, sadistic ways. . . I see boys who are addicted to sex on the Internet that show sadistic behavior toward women. It affects those boys’ sexual lives and also what we see with our daughters.” [“An Expert’s Eye on Teenage Sex, Risk and Abuse,” *NY Times*, 1/15/2002]

“A former policeman who led the fight against Internet child porn warned that the tide of filth in cyberspace is growing and could lead to an abuse ‘timebomb.’ Terry Jones fears adolescents are being corrupted by exposure to sordid material. . . . [Jones’] police team was the first to catch a child abuser purely from the images [the abuser] put on the web. The police operation resulted in the man being jailed for 12 years for the systematic rape and indecent assault of a four year old. In 2001, another operation . . . trapped a further 48 targets across the country. Disturbingly, many of the suspects turned out to be under 17. One was under 13. ‘A third of indecent assaults are carried out by adolescents,’ said Jones, who now runs the Internet Pedophilia Training Awareness Consultancy.” [“Child Pornography Timebomb,” *Manchester Evening News*, 11/21/03]

“A Canberra (Australia)-based health unit working with abused and abusive children has recorded a significant rise in the number of children aged younger than 10 who are committing sexual offenses, including ‘oral sex and forced intercourse,’ against other children. . . . ‘We’re not talking about kids playing mummies and daddies together,’ [the unit manager Annabel] Wyndham said in a phone interview. ‘We’re talking about things like one child holding another child up by the neck . . . and pulling their pants down and doing things to them.’ Most of the children seen in this category came from troubled backgrounds, and 40 percent had been abused themselves. . . . Nonetheless, the unit also recorded startling data relating to Internet use. Of the . . . sexually-abusive children seen . . .

90 percent admitted having seen sexually explicit material online, the report said. A full one-quarter deliberately sought out pornography online as their main use of the Internet, while about 40 percent said they used the Internet for other purposes as well as accessing pornography. . . . Wyndham said her unit did not believe the rise in cases of children behaving in a sexually aggressive manner was merely a matter of increased recognition of a longstanding problem. . . . The research paper was presented by the Canberra unit and a government-funded body called the National Child Protection Clearinghouse. One of its child protection experts, Dr. Janet Stanley, said. . . . 'We're suggesting there's an association between children's exposure to inappropriate material on the Internet . . . and their acting out in sexually aggressive behavior, experimenting and modeling what they are seeing.'" ["Online Porn Driving Sexually Aggressive Children," *CNSNews.com*, 11/26/03]

If the so-called cathartic effect were working, then women should feel safer than ever because never before in human history has so much hardcore pornography been so readily available to persons of all ages. When asked in a 2003 national survey what their "top priorities" were, however, 92% of women 18 and older said reducing domestic violence and sexual assault ("USA's women have 'a new set of priorities,' poll suggests," *USA TODAY*, 6/24/2003).

And perhaps with very good reason. In February 2003, Lifetime Television aired a documentary, "Together: Stop Violence Against Women." In his article about the documentary, "Putting a Face on Violence" (*Newsday*, 2/12/03), David Behrens wrote:

"On campuses, one in four women are victims of rape or attempted rape, the film maintains. In another study, reported in the Commonwealth Fund Survey of Women's Health, 31 percent of American women said they had been physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend sometime in their lives."

If the so-called cathartic effect were working, then the incidence of violent sexual crimes in general should be rapidly decreasing, because there has been an explosion of Web sites featuring bondage, domination, gangbangs, rape, rough sex, and torture. But if Vernon Geberth is correct, there has also been an "upsurge in sexual violence, stranger rapes, and stranger sex murders."

### **Sexual violence against prostitutes**

My introduction to the problem of sexual violence against prostitutes came about indirectly. I was searching in a file for documentation about the connection between the California porn industry and organized crime when I came across an article, "LIFE ON THE STREET: New Wave of Prostitution With More Violence Is Overwhelming L.A. Authorities" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/8/85). What caught my attention in the article were statements like these:

"[M]ore customers, [a madam] said, were beating, torturing and killing out-call prostitutes.

"In addition to serial killers, usually one prostitute a month is murdered in Los Angeles County—twice as many as 10 years ago—estimated L.A. police detective Fred Clapp.

"An increasing number of customers are requesting violent or kinky sexual services. . .

“Most of the women who have worked the streets for any length of time have also been assaulted and tortured. Although there are no exact statistics on prostitute killings and abductions, most law enforcement officials agree that the problem has worsened.

“The sexual revolution has contributed to the change prostitutes have seen, said Dr. Michael Grinberg, a psychiatrist, sex therapist and chairman for the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, based in Philadelphia. . . There are several possible reasons for the change, Grinberg said. Our society is more violent now. . . Pornography is more graphic and readily available and some behavior displayed ‘can become incorporated in one’s sexual fantasies.’”

That article prompted me to open a new file, “Prostitutes—Violence,” a file which continues to grow, with articles like these about prostitutes murdered in the New York City metropolitan area.

“Joel Rifkin’s confirmed body count rose to 13 yesterday—making him the worst serial killer in New York State history. And police believe [correctly!] that the number will rise. . . There are a multitude of cases that are being reviewed from the surrounding tri-state area. . . Of the 13 known victims . . . 10 are definitely hookers. . . When serial killer Joel Rifkin wasn’t out stalking prostitutes, he sometimes watched movies about them, according to a Long Island video store owner. ‘He rented porno movies about hookers,’ said the manager.” [“Unlucky 13 as Ripper’s Victim List Grows,” *NY Post*, 7/2/93]

“In the wake of Joel Rifkin’s trial and conviction for murder on Long Island, a year after he was arrested and confessed to killing 17 women he claimed were prostitutes working in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, street walkers said they felt no safer. . . Prostitutes working the streets wept as they described the trauma of recent attacks. . . Ten prostitutes interviewed agreed that some johns like to see blood. Some won’t start sex before drawing blood with blows to the face. Others slash with knives. . . ‘They killed another girl just the other day,’ said a 28-year old, dark-haired prostitute in the Bronx recently. ‘It was one of her johns. Another was strangled.’” [“Streets Still Mean for Hookers,” *Newsday*, 5/17/94]

“A mild mannered clerk was charged yesterday with being the monster who stalked and killed two Manhattan prostitutes and sexually assaulted four other women. [Defendant] trolled the lower East Side and Chelsea looking for prostitutes with whom he could act out deadly bondage fantasies, cops said. . . When cops arrested [defendant], they found . . . a notebook containing amateurish sketches of women in bondage. . . At the Harlem home of [defendant’s] aunt, they found more drawings and a collection of bondage magazines.” [“Hooker-slay suspect charged,” *N.Y. Daily News*, 10/25/95] According to an article, “Hooker Killer Confesses,” (*N.Y. Post*, 10/25/95) defendant had a “bizarre foot fetish that made him want to turn his victims into ballerinas. . . [Defendant] confessed that he made his victims do a grotesque dance of death before sexually attacking and choking them.”

“A fourth body was pulled last night from the garbage-strewn house of horrors where an alleged serial killer is believed to have murdered and buried up to 8 women. . . As many as 10 prostitutes have now contacted police, reporting cases of ‘abusive contact’ and ‘rough sex’ by [defendant]. . . The 8 missing women . . . all had histories of prostitution and drug



use. They had been gradually disappearing from the same . . . Poughkeepsie neighborhood since October 1966.” [“ ‘House of Horror’ yields fourth body,” *NY Post*, 9/4/98]

“A . . . postal worker was found guilty of . . . bludgeoning and dismembering 3 women he picked up at a hangout for prostitutes in Jamaica Queens, and disposing the bodies in trash bins. . . . He still faces trial on murder charges in Westchester County, where the bodies of 2 other women were found.” [“Man Convicted of Murdering 3 Prostitutes,” *NY Times*, 3/5/99]

“Two prostitutes have been strangled in Bedford-Stuyvesant [Brooklyn] during the past two weeks, but police say they do not believe the slayings are connected to the recent, related murders of two other prostitutes in Williamsburg [Brooklyn]. Police previously said the [Williamsburg slayings] appeared to have been done by the same killer who . . . had strangled them with a black shoelace. . . . [One of the Bed-Stuy victims] was found dead on her bedroom floor . . . feet and hands bound, she had been strangled and her throat deeply slashed, police said.” [“Investigation of Killings Intensifying,” *Newsday*, 10/7/99] On June 23, 2000, a third woman was found strangled with a shoelace [“Serial killer on the loose? Slays of 6 Brooklyn women may be linked,” *NY Post*, 6/23/2000]

“Authorities believe [defendant] was on his way to becoming New York’s next serial killer. The 43-year old suspect psycho killer—busted last February while attempting to rape a streetwalker . . .—is now suspected of strangling two other hookers in earlier attacks in a chilling pattern of sexual assault and murder. . . . There were uncanny similarities between the suffocation of [the first murder victim, found 11/29/01] . . . and the strangulation of the [the second murder victim, found 1/26/02]. [“Psycho Sex Fiend,” *NY Post*, 1/21/03]

“Police have identified a headless and handless body dumped on Long Island last year as a 20-year old prostitute . . . who plied here trade in Manhattan before she was murdered, possibly by a serial killer. . . . A second body of a woman—also without a head or hands—had been found dumped a short distance away almost three years earlier in November 2000. . . . The torso of a third woman, also missing her head and hands, was found in Nassau County in 1997.” [“Headless, handless corpse ID’d as prostitute,” *NY Post*, 2/3/04]

Many other U.S. cities have reported killers who prey on prostitutes, including:

- \* Bridgeport, CT [“Accused killer of prostitute a suspect in other slayings,” *NY Times*, 9/1/94]
- \* Chicago, IL [“Decrepit buildings shield crimes of serial killer,” *NY Times*, 7/26/99]
- \* Dallas, TX [“Serial Killer Loose?,” *Newsday*, 11/14/91]
- \* Detroit, MI [“Ex-sailor linked to slayings of prostitutes worldwide,” *NY Times*, 3/9/2001]
- \* Grand Rapids, MI [“Police suspect serial killer on the loose,” *Detroit News*, 10/16/96]
- \* Kansas City, MO [“Body Parts Identified,” *Newsday*, 9/17/94]

- \* Miami, FL [“Prostitutes defy killer by working,” *NY Times*, 12/28/94]
- \* New Bedford, MA [“Killer stalks port: Prostitutes target in Mass.,” *NY Daily News*, 12/2/88]
- \* Newark, NJ [“Suspects seen but no pattern in 14 killings of women,” *NY Times*, 4/3/98]
- \* Philadelphia, PA [“Police link man to stranglings of 9 women,” *NY Times*, 6/27/99]
- \* Riverside, CA [“Californian guilty in killing of 12 prostitutes,” *NY Times*, 7/20/95]
- \* Rochester, NY [“Prostitution called link in Rochester deaths,” *NY Times*, 11/13/90]
- \* Seattle, WA [“Fiend says: I murdered 48 women,” *NY Post*, 11/6/03]
- \* Spokane, WA [“Man admits murdering 13 women,” *NY Daily News*, 10/20/2000]
- \* Trenton, NJ [“Trenton man faces charges in slayings of 4 women,” *NY Times*, 8/9/96]

While reading an article for this article, I also came across the following study:

“The present study . . . was aimed at studying sexual abuse of street prostitutes both prior to and following entrance into prostitution. Yet . . . unexpected information emerged . . . that was unfortunately not studied in a systematic manner. . . . Such was the case in the present study with regard to the relationship between sexual abuse and pornography . . . Two-hundred juvenile and adult, current and former, women street prostitutes in the San Francisco Bay area participated in the study. . . . The study generated an enormous amount of data, quantitative as well as qualitative documenting stunning amounts of sexual abuse of street prostitutes as part of their job, outside their work environment and in their childhood prior to entering prostitution. Many of the open descriptions of these sexual assaults made reference to the role played by pornography. These references were unsolicited by interviewers. . . . Out of the 193 cases of rape, 24% mentioned allusions to pornographic material on the part of the rapist. This is even more significant when it is understood that these comments were made by respondents without any solicitation or reference to the issue of pornography by the Interviewer. The comments followed the same pattern: the assailant referred to pornographic materials he had seen or read and then insisted that the victims not only enjoyed rape but also extreme violence.” [Silbert, M. and Pines, A., “Pornography and Sexual Abuse of Women,” *Sex Roles*, 10:857-868, 1984]

It isn’t just streetwalkers and call girls who are the targets of violent sex crimes. In a statement [published at [www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org) on the **Porn Problems and Solutions** page] to protest the "Erotica USA" trade show (held in New York City, April 1999), Dr. Mary Anne Layden, Director of Education, Center for Cognitive Therapy, at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote:

“The job that [strippers] do is fraught with dangers and unpleasantness. In one study 100% of the strippers reported some kind of physical or verbal abuse on their jobs. Verbal abuse by customers is extremely common with 91% reporting incidents. They were routinely called

degrading names like c--t (52%), w---e (61%), and b---h (85%). Besides the verbal abuse, all endured some type of physical abuse on the job. Despite the fact that it is illegal to touch a stripper, strippers reported that customers grabbed them by the arm (88%), grabbed their breast (73%), or their buttock (91%). Customers at strip clubs often assault the women. Customers pulled their hair (27%), pinched them (58%), slapped them (24%), or ~~bite~~ bit them (36%). They are often attacked in the strip club in front of bodyguards and other audience members. If men would do this to women in public, what would they do to women in private? Strippers are often raped. Strippers have reported that they have been followed home (70%) and have been stalked (42%).”

### **Ted Bundy**

Every so often I read an article defending media violence—in film, TV, rap/music or videogames—which argues (in so many words) that while the author or individuals the author is aware of frequently consume violent media, he or she or they don’t commit violent crimes. Therefore, the argument goes, media violence is not connected to violent crime.

It goes without saying that violent crime is a serious matter. For many reasons, including fear of getting caught and fear of God, most people don’t commit violent crimes. Their self-control is stronger than the anger, envy, hate, greed, jealousy, lust, etc. that stirs within.

But for many reasons—including alcohol, media, family breakdown, peer pressure, physical or sexual abuse, pornography, prenatal influences (often working in combination)—either internal restraints are inadequately developed or diminished or the urges become too strong (or both).

Here’s how serial killer Ted Bundy described his experience in an interview with Dr. James Dobson (a psychologist who served on the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography and founder of Focus on the Family) on January 23, 1989, the day before Bundy was executed:

Dr. Dobson: “For the record, you are guilty of killing many women and girls.”

Bundy: “Yes. Yes. That’s true. . . . Okay, but before I go any further, I think it’s important to me that people believe what I’m saying. I’m not blaming pornography. I’m not saying that it caused me to go out and do certain things. And I take full responsibility for whatever I’ve done. . . . That’s not the question here. The question and the issue is how this kind of literature contributed and helped mold and shape the kinds of violent behavior.”

Dobson: “It fueled your fantasies.”

Bundy: “In the beginning it fuels this kind of thought process. Then at a certain time it’s instrumental in what I would say crystallizing it, making it into something which is almost like a separate entity inside. At that point you’re at the verge, or I was at the verge of acting out on these kinds of thoughts.”

Dobson: “Now, I really want to understand that. You had gone about as far as you could go in your own fantasy life with printed materials, and then there was the urge to take that little or big step further to a physical event.”

Bundy: “Right. And it happened in stages, gradually. . . . My experience with pornography that deals on a violent level with sexuality is that once you become addicted to it—and I look at this as a kind of addiction—like other kinds of addiction. . . . I would keep looking for more potent, more explicit, more graphic kinds of materials. Like an addiction, you keep craving something that is harder, harder. Something which gives you a greater sense of excitement. Until you reach the point where the pornography only goes so far. . . .”

Dobson: “How long did you stay at this point before you actually assaulted someone?”

....

Bundy: “I would say a couple of years. What I was dealing with were strong inhibitions against criminal behavior—violent behavior—that had been conditioned into me, bred into me, in my environment, in my neighborhood, in my church, in my school. Things which said no, this is wrong. And I’m on that edge, and these last . . . you might say, vestiges of restraint—the barriers to actually do something were being tested constantly, and assailed through the kind of fantasy life that was fueled largely by pornography.”

Dobson: “Do you remember what pushed you over the edge?. . . . Would it be accurate to call that a frenzy, a sexual frenzy?”

Bundy: “. . . That’s one way to describe it. A compulsion, a building of destructive energy. Again, another fact here that I haven’t mentioned is the use of alcohol. But I think that what alcohol did in conjunction with, let’s say, my exposure to pornography [is that] alcohol reduced my inhibitions at the same time.”

....

Dobson: “Alright, if I can understand it now, there is this battle going on within. There are the conventions you’ve been taught. There’s the right and wrong that you learned as a child. And then there is this unbridled passion fueled by your plunge into hard-core, violent pornography. And those things are at war with each other.”

Bundy: “Yes.”

Dobson: “And then the alcohol diminishing the inhibitions, you let go.”

Bundy: “Well, yes. And you can summarize it that way, and that’s accurate, certainly. And it just occurred to me that some people would say that, well, I’ve seen that stuff, and it doesn’t do anything to me. . . .”

Dobson: “Addictions are like that. They affect some people more than they affect others. . . .”

Dobson: “. . . You really feel that hardcore pornography and the doorway to it, soft-core pornography, is doing untold damage to other people, and causing other women to be abused and killed the way you did.”

Bundy: “Listen. I’m no social scientist, and I haven’t done a survey. . . . But I’ve lived in prison for a long time now. And I’ve met a lot of men who were motivated to commit violence like me. And without exception, every one of them was deeply involved in pornography—without exception, without exception—deeply influenced and consumed by an addiction to pornography.”

Ted Bundy made quite a “splash” during his brief lifetime. He did so because he killed nice girls—instead of prostitutes. He did so because the night before his execution he spoke with Dr. James Dobson about how pornography had affected his life for the worse. He didn’t claim that pornography “made him do it.” He didn’t ask Dr. Dobson to intervene on his behalf with the Florida governor. Why then did pornography defenders work to discredit what Bundy said?

### **‘Prohibition’**

Well, some will say, “Why spoil my fun just because a few sickos commit violent sex crimes. We don’t ban alcohol just because some people abuse it. Why ban pornography?”

Here are three good reasons.

First, it isn’t just a few “sickos” who are adversely affected by pornography. Millions of Americans, young and old, are addicted to pornography, and violent sexual crimes are not the only rotten fruit of pornography. Other pornography victims include:

1. “Performers” (many if not most of whom are under 21) who are physically and emotionally abused in the production of hardcore pornography or who acquire sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS) in the production of hardcore pornography
2. Wives married to husbands addicted to hardcore pornography (effect on marriage)
3. Women sexually harassed at their jobs, in part through exposure to hardcore pornography
4. Children who get a sex *miseducation* from viewing hardcore pornography, robbing them of the opportunity to develop in a healthy manner psychologically, morally, and spiritually
5. Children sexually abused by children who imitate what they view in hardcore pornography
6. Children who are sexually abused by adults who use hardcore pornography to sexually arouse themselves and to entice, desensitize and instruct their child victims

In *Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton*, 413 U.S. 49, the Supreme Court also recognized governmental interests (other than sex crimes) that justify suppression of obscenity. They include:

1. Protecting “the quality of life and total community environment” (413 U.S. at 58)
2. Protecting “the tone of commerce” (413 U.S. at 58)

3. Maintaining “a decent society” (413 U.S. at 59-60)
4. Protecting the “social interest in order and morality” (413 U.S. at 61)
5. Protecting “family life” (413 U.S. at 63)

The recent article, “Hard-Core Harm: Why You Can’t Be Soft on Porn,” by Jan LaRue (Concerned Women for America, October 2003) [<http://www.cwfa.org/articledisplay.asp?id=4532>] provides a good overview of various harms linked to hardcore pornography.

Second, obscenity laws prohibit only “hard-core” pornography. Soft-core pornography and sexually explicit materials that, taken as a whole, have serious artistic, literary, political or scientific value are not prohibited under obscenity laws. Before sexual material can be deemed obscene, a jury (or judge), applying contemporary community standards, must also determine that the material depicts or describes sexual conduct in a *patently offensive* manner.

How many violent sex crimes against victims young and old should we tolerate so that libertines and sex addicts can view every form of pornography including—if the ACLU had its way—child pornography? Even with alcohol, we impose penalties on people who drink even small amounts and drive, despite the fact that most people who drink and drive do not cause serious accidents.

Third, prohibition failed in large measure because most citizens believed that alcohol, used moderately, was not a moral evil. Obscenity, however, like prostitution, has always been considered an evil. As Supreme Court Justice Brennan noted out in *Roth v. United States*. (1957):

“[I]mplicit in the history of the First Amendment, is the rejection of obscenity as utterly without redeeming social importance. This rejection for that reason is mirrored in the universal judgment that obscenity should be restrained, reflected in the international agreement of over 50 nations, in the obscenity laws of 48 States, and in the 20 obscenity laws enacted by Congress from 1842 to 1956.”

Since 1956, the Supreme Court has reiterated (see, e.g., *Miller v. California*, 1973; *Sable Communications of California v. FCC*, 1989) that the First Amendment does not protect obscene materials. Congress has strengthened federal obscenity laws (Title 18, Chapter 71, United States Code) at least four times (1984, 1988, 1996 and 1998).

In 2003, by unanimous consent, the U.S. Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 77, expressing the “sense of Congress that Federal obscenity laws should be vigorously enforced throughout the United States.” As I write this article, an identical House Concurrent Resolution 298, with 79 sponsors, awaits a vote in the House Judiciary Committee.

In the 2000 presidential campaign, both Al Gore and George W. Bush issued statements supporting enforcement of obscenity laws. In 2003, President Bush issued a Proclamation in conjunction with Protection from Pornography Week in which he again expressed his strong support for enforcement of federal obscenity laws.

In a March 2002 national opinion poll, conducted for Morality in Media by Wirthlin Worldwide, 81% of adults supported “vigorous” enforcement of federal Internet obscenity laws. In March

2004, again in a national opinion poll for *Morality in Media*, Wirthlin Worldwide found that 82% of adults supported “vigorous” enforcement of these laws.

### **Burden of proof**

In debating the issue of whether there is a causal connection between media violence and real-life injurious violence, I often say that, when common sense, anecdotal evidence and social science research all point in the same direction (as they do with media violence and real-life violence), then the burden of proof should shift to those who deny a connection.

Common sense should also inform us that when individuals (many beginning at early ages) feed their minds for years on hardcore pornographic material that depicts, among other things, bestiality, bondage, “domination” (humiliation & degradation), gangbangs, “golden showers” (urine), incest, marital infidelity, prostitution, rape, “rough sex” (strangulation and slapping), “scat” (feces), “school girls” (grade school through college), sexual murders, teen promiscuity, and torture, their sexual “appetites” can become warped—often to the extreme.

There is also a mountain of anecdotal evidence—from law enforcement personnel, domestic abuse and rape crisis counselors, mental health professionals, victims, perpetrators, and others—that indicates that pornography adversely affects vulnerable individuals of all ages. The anecdotal evidence set forth in this article is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

There is also a substantial body of social science research that indicates a causal relationship between exposure to pornography and sexual violence. The already noted article by Janet Hinson Shope “When Words Are Not Enough: The Search for the Effect of Pornography on Abused Women,” discusses some of that research. See also, E. Oddone-Paolucci, M. Genuis, and C. Violato, “A Meta-Analysis of the Published Research on the Effects of Pornography,” published in the Italian journal, *Medicine, Mind and Adolescence*, 2000, Vol. XII, 1-2, pp. 101-112. To obtain a copy of the meta-analysis of 46 studies, contact University of Calgary Professor Claudio Violato at 403-220-7296 or at [violato@ucalgary.ca](mailto:violato@ucalgary.ca)

Just as non-sexual media violence ranges from slapstick comedy to graphic and sadistic depictions of mayhem, pornography ranges from non-violent and “non-exploitative” consensual sex to rape, torture, murder, bestiality, and on and on (see above). The potential for harmful effects on audiences presumably varies from problematic to severe across those ranges.

But the potential for harm from pornography is never absent. All pornography has the potential of becoming addictive, leading to escalation, desensitization, and predatory acting out of sexual fantasies. Moreover, there is evidence that violent sex offenders are stimulated by hardcore pornography that doesn’t depict forced sex.

For example, in a study [Marshall, W.L., “The Use of Sexually Explicit Materials by Rapists, Child Molesters and Nonoffenders,” *Journal of Sex Research*, 25, No. 2, pp. 267-288 (1988)] of patients at the Kingston Sexual Offenders Clinic in Canada, conducted over a period of 6 years, researchers made “an unexpected finding, and one not explicitly sought after”—namely, that:

“One of rapists reported that he characteristically used consenting sex depictions to incite rape images in the process of preparing himself to attack a woman. Subsequent questioning...revealed a further five rapists who made similar claims and 10 of the 19 rapists who currently used consenting sex depictions for enjoyment (not necessarily preparatory to offending) also said they used it to incite rape fantasies.”

Even assuming, however, that what some call “non-exploitive,” nonviolent pornography is rarely linked to violent sexual crimes, we still have a major problem.

The *Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography: Final Report* (1986) found that “increasingly, the most prevalent forms of pornography” fit the description of “sexually violent material” (p. 323) and that “an enormous amount of the most sexually explicit material available” can be categorized as “degrading, the term we use to encompass the undeniably linked characteristics of degradation, domination, subordination, and humiliation. The degradation we refer to is degradation of people, most often women. . . .” (p. 331).

To give the reader a better idea of what “sexually violent” and “degrading” mean, examples of promotional material found on pornographic Web sites that citizens reported to MIM’s [www.obscuritycrimes.org](http://www.obscuritycrimes.org) Web site (usually as a result of porn spam) are reprinted here.

- \* “RAPE FANTASIES! WARNING! Uncensored Videos! All Extreme! All About Forced Sex!”
- \* “HOT YOUNG TEENS WITH DOGS, HORSES, COWS, CHICKEN, SHEEP, SNAKES, AND MORE...”
- \* “Next time you need a leak, don’t use a urinal, use a urinal slut”...”The original human piss trough.”
- \* “RAPED SCHOOL GIRLS”...”VIRGIN GIRLS RAPED”...”RAPE AN INNOCENT GIRL”
- \* “EXPLOITED BITCHES”...”Sometimes even the sweetest girls can really be disgusting bitches.”
- \* “WATCH HOW BEAUTIFUL WOMEN ARE HELD DOWN BY FORCE, HUMILIATED AND DEGRADED”
- \* “Hell Bondage”...”Domination”...”Fetish”...”Masters and Slaves”
- \* “REAL FAMILY INCEST SITE”...”THE BEST INCEST SITE IN THE ADULT WEB”
- \* “Barely Legal Teens in Live Sex Shows”...”INNOCENT BABYSITTERS”...”YOUNG SLUTS”
- \* “Teen Toilet Sex”...”Rape & Torture Porn”...”Scat [feces] Teen Bondage...”
- \* “pain gang bang”...”pissing orgy”...”animal lovers”...”wicked insertions”...”pregnant”...”fisting”

The Supreme Court got it right when it said in *Miller v. California* (413 U.S. at pp. 34-35):

“[T]o equate the free and robust exchange of ideas and political debate with commercial exploitation of obscene material demeans the grand conception of the First Amendment and its high purposes in the historic struggle for freedom. It is a ‘misuse of the great guarantees of free speech and free press’ . . . ‘The protection given speech and press was fashioned to assure unfettered interchange of ideas to bring about political and social changes desired by



the people' . . . . But the public portrayal of hardcore sexual conduct for its own sake, and the ensuing commercial gain, is a different matter.”

### **Not all are convinced**

The effect that pornography has in the commission of violent sexual crimes is difficult, if not impossible, to measure scientifically. Perhaps in part for that reason, the link between pornography and violent sex crimes is often omitted or not taken seriously by the secular news media in their coverage of pornography, the pornography industry or violent sexual crimes.

For example, in his article, “Analysis: Obscenity crusade’s flawed logic” (*UPI*, 12/6/03), Christian Bourge gives little weight to the statement of Bruce Taylor, a federal prosecutor, that “We are seeing much more treatment and therapy and social cost going into community health, domestic violence, rape and child crime that is related to pornography.”

In her otherwise excellent article, “The Porn Myth” (*New York*, 10/20/03), Naomi Wolf summarily dismisses the notion that pornography is linked to rape and sexual mayhem:

“[T]he other night, I saw Andrea Dworkin, the anti-porn activist. . . . If we did not limit pornography, she argued . . . most men would come to objectify women . . . and treat them accordingly. In a kind of domino theory, she predicted, rape and other kinds of sexual mayhem would surely follow. . . . She was . . . wrong about the outcome.”

While N.R. Kleinfeld and Erica Goode do note in their article “Serial Killing’s Squarest Pegs. . .” (*NY Times*, 10/28/02), that “[t]he majority of serial killers, experts say, use their crimes to act out elaborate sexual fantasies, sometimes involving rape and torture,” they do not mention the frequent connection between those violent sexual fantasies and addiction to pornography. [I note, however, that in another *NY Times* article, “Who Would Abduct a Child? Previous Cases Offer Clues” (8/27/02), Mary Duenwald writes: “Many abductors harbor sexual fantasies that involve children and may exercise these fantasies by using child pornography.”]

In his review of the book, “The Evil That Men Do: F.B.I. Profiler Roy Hazelwood’s Journey Into the Minds of Sexual Predators,” by Stephen G. Michaud with Roy Hazelwood, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt (“Finding Out What Is Standard About Deviants,” *New York Times*, 2/4/99), had this to say about the connection between pornography and violent sex crimes:

“In the opening pages . . . Stephen G. Michaud drops several *intriguing* comments like these: . . . ‘Aberrant offenders use pornography to validate their deviance. . . . The more they see of it, and masturbate to it, the more their behavior is reinforced.’ Since these are all *controversial* observations, the reader is drawn to learn what more Mr. Michaud has to say on these subjects. . . .” [Emphasis mine]

### **Final thoughts**

In writing this article, it was not my intention to prove scientifically, or otherwise, that behind every violent sex crime there is a pornography problem. Clearly, violent sexual crimes existed

long before the advent of the printing press and photography. If rape had not been a problem in “Biblical times,” the Law of Moses would not have prohibited it (Deuteronomy 22: 25-27).

I wrote this article because defenders of pornography are misleading the public by saying either that pornography is harmless or by saying that we lack the *necessary* “conclusive scientific data” that pornography causes sex crimes to justify suppressing pornography.

“Conclusive scientific data” is not necessary. There is already enough evidence of a causal link between pornography and sex crimes to justify enforcement of obscenity laws; and there would be much more if we would listen more to the people who deal with pornography first hand.

Used for the benefit of mankind, the scientific method is a marvelous tool, but it has limitations. Unlike laboratory rats, humans cannot be observed constantly, as in *The Truman Show* or *Nineteen Eighty Four* style, and controlled from birth to death.

Pornography addiction typically begins in childhood, but we can’t therefore randomly select a group of ten-year olds and expose half of them to hardcore pornography to determine what effects this exposure has on them. Even assuming that it is ethical to observe over a period of time individuals ages 18 and over who have agreed to view pornography on a regular basis, it is unlikely they will commit violent sexual crimes, knowing that they are part of a study.

Not too many years ago tobacco executives defended their products by arguing that there was no conclusive scientific data that smoking causes cancer. To my knowledge, they were right! To my knowledge, we still don’t have conclusive scientific proof that smoking causes cancer. But we certainly do have a large body of evidence linking smoking to cancer and other ailments, which in my opinion more than justifies governmental efforts to curb smoking.

Dr. Reo M. Christianson, Professor of Political Science (retired), Miami University, Ohio, provided these valuable insights in his article, “Political scientist calls for common sense in porn issue,” published in the March 1989 and November 1998 issues of the *AFA Journal*:

“I agree with Professor Wilson of Harvard who states that social science does not have sufficiently sensitive and sophisticated techniques and tools for definitively proving what damage pornography does or doesn’t do. Especially when it comes to its long-range impact and its impact on people who are not emotionally healthy and hence are particularly prone to commit anti-social acts...

“But if science cannot give us assured answers, let us use our common sense . . . As has often been said, if destructive material can do no harm, then constructive material can do no good—and everything conscientious parents have believed from the dawn of the family is wrong . . . But whatever conditions people regard destructive sexual behaviors as harmless, or worse, as desirable will inevitably weaken those barriers which society erects against irresponsible sexual conduct...

“I would emphasize the significance of the study by professors at the University of Indiana and the University of Evansville showing that persons who see a lot of pornography believe

that rapists should be treated more indulgently than those who don't. Charles Peters summarized earlier research . . . as indicating that violent pornography inspires violence. . . . Conclusive proof? No. Persuasive evidence? Yes.

"I might add that the ACLU... has become shrill, dogmatic and closed-minded on the issue of pornography . . . No censorship, it cries, hoping that buzz word will frighten people from exercising independent thought in this field . . . Parenthetically, doctrinaire liberals...worship only one god, and its name is the ACLU. When this deity speaks, they...suspend critical judgment and parrot its lines. And feel smug and superior to the great and unenlightened masses who, being clear-eyed rather than dogma ridden, regard pornography as a disgrace which ought to be curbed.

"I think the time is come to act . . . Time for the nation to realize . . . that communities have a right to set minimal standards of decency and the right to enforce them."

A final word from retired FBI Agent Roger Young:

"If anyone is to reach an honest fundamental understanding about obscenity, that person needs to *seek the truth and see the total picture*. In so doing it becomes clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is no such thing as just an obscenity case. Crimes associated with obscenity crimes include the following—arson, bribery, conspiracy, domestic terrorism, drugs, extortion, involuntary servitude, jury tampering, kidnapping, mail fraud, money laundering, murder, obstruction of justice, prostitution, public corruption, racketeering, rape, robbery, sexual assault, sexual exploitation of children, tax evasion, and witness intimidation. Obscenity's impact on the quality of life and commerce, and its relation to violations of other criminal and civil laws, is resulting in devastating and harmful consequences to individuals, families, communities and our nation."

*TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OBSCENITY PROBLEM AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT, CONTACT:*

**Morality in Media, Inc. • 475 Riverside Drive • New York, NY 10115**  
phone: 212-870-3222 • fax: 212-870-2765 • e-mail: [mim@moralityinmedia.org](mailto:mim@moralityinmedia.org)  
web sites: [www.moralityinmedia.org](http://www.moralityinmedia.org) • [www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org)

\* **MIM operates the [ObscenityCrimes.org](http://ObscenityCrimes.org) Web site**, which provides citizens with a means online to report possible violations of federal Internet obscenity laws. Reports to the site are forwarded by MIM to the Justice Department's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section in Washington and to U.S. Attorneys around the country. There is no other comparable tool for filing citizen complaints on Internet obscenity.

\* **Morality in Media operates the National Obscenity Law Center (NOLC)**, a clearinghouse of information on obscenity and related laws, with a library that includes published obscenity cases, federal state, and local anti-pornography laws, and monographs on legal questions that are the subject of recurring inquiries. NOLC materials are utilized by prosecutors, law enforcement agents, municipal attorneys and others. The NOLC also runs the **Safe States and Cities** project, which has been distributing model statutes on sexually-oriented businesses to hundreds of municipalities across the U.S. The NOLC has its own website pages at [www.moralityinmedia.org/nolc/](http://www.moralityinmedia.org/nolc/)

