



An Introduction to Misogyny in Popular Culture

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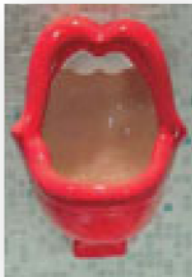
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INTRODUCTION

Misogyny has become the soundtrack of our lives. It is difficult to watch a movie, TV program or even pick up a newspaper without being slapped in the face with it.

- > The word “bitch”, an insult, is now used as a synonym for “woman”. In the PG-13 movie, *Wild Hogs*, for instance, the passenger on a motorcycle was said to be “riding bitch”.
- > Pimp, the word for a vicious exploiter of women, is used in a positive way by the most mainstream of corporations like the *Toronto Star* (“Pimp Your Garden”) and the *Globe and Mail* (“Pimp your ride with these nifty add-ons”).
- > Bell Mobility offered a line of ringtones called “Pimp Tones” that featured misogynist insults and threats of violence.
- > Pimp rapper, Snoop Dogg, appeared at the MTV music video awards with two women wearing dog collars and leashes. Subsequent to that, Chrysler hired him to appear in a commercial with their former Chairman, Lee Iacocca.
- > Ontario Premiers, Mike Harris (Conservative), and Dalton McGuinty (Liberal) appeared at press conferences for the WWE, thereby putting the Premier’s stamp of approval on the WWE’s well-documented misogyny.
- > The 2005 television season was dubbed “Die! Women, Die!” by a Washington Post columnist because of the unrelenting brutality against women that dominated so many shows.
- > An episode of the plastic-surgery series *Nip/Tuck* features a man who sews together a cadaver sex toy, starting with the decapitated head of his sister.



> Virgin Airlines planned to install mouth-shaped urinals in the executive clubhouse at Kennedy Airport. A few years later, a Hamilton, Ontario restaurant installed the urinals in their men’s room.

> An award-winning author who reviews crime fiction, is now refusing to review some books because so many feature male perpetrators and female victims in situations of sadistic misogyny. She says, “Each psychopath is more sadistic than the last and his victims’ sufferings are described in detail that becomes ever more explicit, as young women are imprisoned, bound, gagged, strung up or tied down, raped, sliced, burned, blinded, beaten, eaten, starved, suffocated, stabbed, boiled or buried alive.”¹

Following the murder of Amish school girls in 2006, *New York Times* columnist, Bob Hebert, summed up the situation this way:

*The disrespectful, degrading, contemptuous treatment of women is so pervasive and so mainstream that it has just about lost its ability to shock.*²

The decades pass and the situation worsens as desensitization sets in and we become inured to the words and images. This paper provides examples of misogyny in popular culture.

¹ *Sexist violence sickens crime critic*, The Observer, by Amelia Hill, October 25, 2009

² *Why aren’t we shocked?*, New York Times, by Bob Hebert, October 16, 2006

TELEVISION AND RADIO

INTRODUCTION

As violence on television in general has become more explicit and graphic, violence perpetrated against female victims has been ratcheted up to extreme levels. The Parents' Television Council (PTC), a conservative American watchdog group, logged 70 instances of scenes of graphic torture or sadism on network entertainment television in the year ended August 2002. In the two-year period previous to that, it logged 79 -- scenes of torture and sadism had nearly doubled.

Tim Winter, executive director of the PTC, used to work at NBC and once led MGM's on-line and video-game division. He believes television is being influenced by the misogynist violence of video games like *Grand Theft Auto*. "Sexual violence is something we track very closely. It's something we see much more played out, especially with the CSI-type of program."

Some of the post popular, mainstream prime-time programs now traffic in images so gruesome that until recently you would only have seen them in a theatrical movie like "Halloween" or "Hannibal": graphic depictions of human beings maimed, crushed, blistered like overcooked hot dogs. And body parts, lots of body parts.

New Gore Values, Newsday,
November 3, 2002

He took particular offence to an episode of the plastic-surgery series *Nip/Tuck* in which a man sews together a cadaver sex toy, starting with the decapitated head of his sister. "The envelopes are not being pushed, they're being shredded. Once you break a taboo on broadcast television or on cable, it's the writers' and producers' licence, they believe, to push it even further," says Winter.³

Globe and Mail columnist, Catherine Dawson March, wrote about the extreme violence against women in the 2005 TV season under the headline, "Set on fire, shot, raped – welcome to prime time". As she describes in her column:

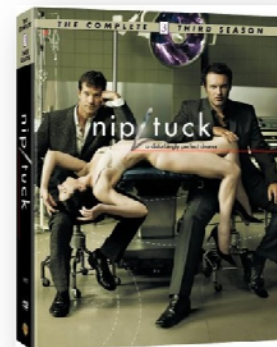
A stay-at-home stripper has her throat slit while performing via webcam; women are paralyzed by spider venom, unable to fight back against the rapist, who then murders them; a woman is killed with a nail gun; unseen forces pull a woman to the ceiling, she bleeds profusely and then spontaneously combusts; a woman is violated by aliens, then found naked in a swamp (but we don't get a look at the guy who was

abducted with her). And as if that's not enough, a woman's head is found inside a newspaper box; there's a snake coiled inside her mouth.

Those are a few highlights from this TV season. (That head-in-the-newspaper-box is actually a repeat of CSI from last year, but it was just too fantastic to leave out of the November Sweeps.) Makes you long for the eighties, when the violence of The A-Team was shocking and Daisy Duke's short shorts were risqué. Never mind back in 1952, when Lucy Ricardo couldn't even call herself pregnant. This season, pregnant women were attacked by hairy creatures that ripped out their unborn children.

Damsels in distress have always been a part of storytelling, but lately the distress has been excessively gruesome and excessively excessive.

The popularity of forensic series CSI and its spinoffs, CSI: Miami and



³ Set on fire, shot, raped: welcome to prime time, *Globe and Mail*, by Catherine Dawson March, December 10, 2005

CSI: New York -- TV shows that manage to nab elusive young male viewers -- may be why. Other networks are trying to capture a fraction of CBS's CSI success (all three shows combined draw around 60-million U.S. viewers). New series need to stand out and one sure way is sexing up the violence.⁴

This violence did not go unnoticed by others. Washington Post columnist, Lisa de Moraes, dubbed the season "Die! Women, Die!" and reports in her column that the issue was largely dodged by the program creators during the TV press tour:

"Is it a bad thing to be a woman on this show?" one television critic asked the panel of creative minds behind WB's "Supernatural" at the summer TV Press Tour in Beverly Hills.

"It's certainly dangerous, apparently," executive producer Eric Kripke replied. Then, remembering his prepping from the network before the Q&A session, he did a hasty 180 to get back on-message with "No, not at all, not at all."

"It's -- you know, we're going to be -- you know, every -- we just -- you know, this show to me is, there's kind of this mythic, you know, purity," continued Kripke, who is one of the writers (I know, hard to believe) on this series.

Jeff Davis had much the same reaction during a Q&A session for the show he created for CBS, "Criminal Minds."

(That's the one in which the would-be used-car buyer winds up in a cage with her eyes and mouth duct-taped, awaiting execution.)

Specifically, the question Davis took was: "One of the things we've noticed this season in all the pilots we've seen is the level of violence, particularly against women, has been ratcheted up to some really gruesome levels. You have the woman in the cage before she's raped and murdered. . . . Has that become necessary now, with so many shows on the air, that to become noticed, you've got to think up a crime that's so heinous that it's almost beyond imagination?"

"Actually, I don't think so," Davis responded, bravely ignoring the obvious.

"The most gruesome scene that we see [in the pilot episode] is this woman in the cage getting her fingernails clipped And when I wrote that scene, everybody told me I was sick. But it's just a woman getting her nails clipped."

Then the rest of the team jumped in and noted that the show's crimes are based on real ones.

Hey, It's Not Us, It's Reality was one of the first lines of defense tossed out by show creators and network suits; critics already had heard it several times before "Criminal Minds" had its news conference.

"That's something we've been hearing," one weary critic responded. "It's just that . . . we've seen about seven of [these types of shows] and to see them all in one season you have to wonder . . . is this what it takes to get noticed?"



⁴ Ibid

"There was actually a mandate from the network saying we want only shows that perpetrate violence against women," executive producer Mark Gordon quipped. "We're just trying to get on the air. We're doing the best we can."

"Well, I don't find it as funny as you do," the critic shot back.⁵

WORLD WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT

There has been considerable press coverage of the trend to sado-masochism, adult sexual themes, negative stereotyping of women, profanity and excessive violence in televised wrestling by World Wrestling Entertainment (previously known as "World Wrestling Federation"). Nevertheless, several of their programs have been carried by Canadian broadcasters.



A WWE star -- Road Rage AI -- carried around a female doll's head with the words "help me" scrawled on the forehead. This accessory was offered for sale in the toy department of Wal-Mart in Canada and the United States until it was taken off the shelves following protests.⁶

During one WWE event, a Canadian woman who "wrestles" for the WWE, Trish

Stratus, was forced by Vince McMahon, Chairman of the WWE, to strip down to her underwear, get on all fours and bark like a dog.⁷ In spite of this -- or maybe because of it -- Ms Stratus is treated as a star in Canada.

It's worth noting here, that Ontario Premiers, Mike Harris (Conservative), and Dalton McGuinty (Liberal), both appeared at WWE press conferences to promote the organization, thereby giving such mistreatment of women the Premier's stamp of approval.



*Why is this man smiling?
Premier Dalton McGuinty at
WWE press conference*

Bob Davies, the principal of Fort Rouge School in Winnipeg, filed a complaint about *WWF Raw* with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the federal broadcast regulator, because the show was being broadcast in a 3 to 5 pm afternoon timeslot on The Sports Network (TSN). He did so after seeing children at school mimicking the language and gestures of pro wrestlers. He suspended one eight-year-old who confronted a teacher, grabbed his crotch and said, "Suck it".⁸

The following example of how the abuse of women depicted by the WWE can affect youth was provided by Paul Robertson, a youth culture specialist with Youth Unlimited in Brampton, Ontario:

I was speaking at the Crisis Pregnancy Centres in the Southwestern Ontario area. At the end, I did a questions and answer time. One of the ladies asked me what I was hearing about kinky sex. I told her I hadn't heard anything in particular but if they were, it was probably because kids were seeing things on the Internet.

⁵ *Female characters, made to suffer for our "art"*, Washington Post, by Lisa de Moraes, September 18, 2005

⁶ *WWF doll wrestled off shelves*, Toronto Star, November 3, 1999

⁷ *Stratusfaction guaranteed*, Saturday Night, September 1, 2001

⁸ *TSN pulls wrestling from afternoon slot*, National Post, December 17, 1999

Afterwards, I asked her where the question really came from. She told me she had counselled two twelve-year-old girls in the last three months who came in for pregnancy tests. They told her separate but similar stories about how their boyfriends would put dog collars and leashes on them, lead them upstairs to his bed or her bed, tie their hands and wrists to the bed, and then do whatever they wanted to them before they had sex. When the worker asked the girls where their boyfriends had learned this, they both answered "WWF wrestling".

Another viewer complaint filed with the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC)⁹ relating to the TSN broadcast of *WWF Raw Is War* included the following statements regarding the treatment of women, which the CBSC termed "demeaning and degrading":

... the broadcaster has, on at least three occasions, made references to women which the Panel considers demeaning and degrading and in violation of the provisions of the Sex-Role Portrayal Code. On one occasion, one of the wrestlers calls Stephanie, one of the cast of characters, 'a two-dollar walking slut'. On another, one of the commentators describes one of the scantily clad women as 'that horny little she-devil, Terry' and on another, Stephanie is admonished to 'stop being a filthy, dirty, disgusting, brutal, skanky, bottom-feeding, trashbag ho.'¹⁰

The federal *Broadcasting Act* has various regulations that prohibit the abusive treatment of women and other vulnerable groups. However, laws are only as good as their enforcement, and the CRTC, the federal regulator tasked with enforcing the *Broadcasting Act*, doesn't seem to care much about protecting women and girls.

HOWARD STERN SHOW

Howard Stern's misogynist attacks on women were a matter of public record before his radio show was purchased in 1997 by Canadian broadcasters where he remained on the air in Toronto for several years. Eventually, his show was dropped by regular radio, but he returned to Canada in 2006 on Sirius Canada, a satellite radio consortium that includes the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The CRTC has done nothing, in spite of the fact that the Stern show contravenes the *Broadcasting Act Radio Regulations* prohibition against the broadcast of abusive comment, which state:

A licensee shall not broadcast... any abusive comment... that, when taken in context, tends to or is likely to expose an individual or a group or class of individuals to hatred or contempt on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability

Could we put a carrot in Howard's lap and she would have to eat it while she's naked. And, would she be willing to get naked and eat food out of a dog dish?

Howard Stern show

In August 2000, MediaWatch, a feminist watchdog group, wrote to the CBSC relating degrading statements made by Stern on Toronto radio station, Q107. For instance, he referred to one woman as a "money sucking whore, she's a slut". Regarding a proposed appearance on the show of a *Playboy* model, one of the cast members asked, "Could we put a carrot in Howard's lap and she would have to eat it while she's naked. And, would she be willing to get naked and eat food out of a dog dish." Another complaint was filed by an individual when Stern made these comments about a Puerto Rican woman: "She is a filthy, lowlife, low brain power woman. The

⁹ The CBSC is the industry organization responsible for dealing with public complaints against private broadcasters, but only those that are members of the Council. If a broadcaster is not a member of the CBSC, the CRTC must address the complaint. The CBSC has no power to punish a broadcaster, other than to eject it from the CBSC.

¹⁰ Canadian Broadcast Standards Council Decision 99/00-0607, January 31, 2001

reason she doesn't understand it is she ate lead paint chips when she was young from the housing project she grew up in. I love all people, but I gotta tell you that woman was a pig. A pig. She's filthy."¹¹

Stern's vile attitude towards women is illustrated by some of the websites he used to identify during the show on Q107. Two of these, a bestiality site and another featuring the violent sexual abuse of teenage runaway girls, were the subject of a complaint filed with the Toronto Police Service (TPS) and the CRTC in March 1998.¹²

Access to these two sites, one of which was identified by the TPS as obscene under the *Criminal Code* (the bestiality site), were provided by Q107 through a Howard Stern section on the station's own web site. Because of this, the complaint filed with the TPS alleged distribution by Q107 of obscene material, an offence under the *Criminal Code*. After consulting an obscenity expert with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, however, a decision was made not to prosecute.¹³ The CRTC declined to take any action against Q107 once the station eliminated the links.

So odious are Stern's views about women that, following the massacre of students at Columbine high school in 1999, Colorado legislators passed a resolution asking the local broadcaster to drop the Stern show after Stern asked on the air if the two gunmen had tried to have sex with any female students during the attack.¹⁴

MOVIES

INTRODUCTION

Writing about the 2009 Cannes Film Festival, Peter Howell, a movie columnist with the Toronto Star, said:

... misogyny – hatred of women – was insidious in the official selection at Cannes this year, both in the competition and programs like Un Certain Regard. It was rare to find a movie where the central female wasn't playing a whore, a nut case, a victim or all three, most often as the result of male treachery. This included Michael Haneke's The White Ribbon, the winner of this year's Palme d'Or.

*Anti-woman animus is most viscerally in evidence in Kinatay, an appalling drama by Filipino director Brillante Mendoza that shows the kidnap, rape, torture, murder and dismemberment of a prostitute in excruciating real time by indifferent males. None of the gory details are spared (the title is Tagalog for "slaughter"), a dedication that controversially won Mendoza the festival's prize for Best Director.*¹⁵

...films with explicit sex, violence and degradation become more the norm than the exception, especially regarding the depiction of women.

Peter Howell, Toronto Star

Prominent director, Lars von Trier, won an "anti-prize" at the closing of Cannes for having "the most misogynistic movie" at the festival. The film, *Antichrist*, includes a scene in which the star, Charlotte Gainsbourg, cuts off her clitoris with a pair of rusty scissors.

¹¹ Canadian Broadcast Standards Council Decision 99/00-0717-0739, June 28, 2001

¹² *Stern radio shuns Web link to sex*, Toronto Star, March 26, 1998

¹³ Telephone conversation between V. Smith and Staff Inspector Paul Gottschalk, Toronto Police Service, July 1998

¹⁴ *Jock shocks*, Toronto Star, April 29, 1999

¹⁵ *Films new fall guy: women*, Toronto Star, by Peter Howell, May 29, 2009

Howell said the presence of so many misogynist movies in the running for the top prize at Cannes suggests "... that many prominent filmmakers have slipped into a moral abyss where the debasement of women isn't a concern, or worse, is deliberately used to titillate critics and festival programmers, who are mostly male."

At the Sundance film festival a few months later, director, Michael Winterbottom, faced a hostile audience following the showing of *The Killer Inside Me*, starring Jessica Alba and Casey Affleck. A Hollywood Reporter columnist described the movie:

Jessica Alba is pulverized, fist to face, fist to face, fist to poor pretty face, by Casey Affleck for a good three minutes or so. Until her eyes are swollen shut and part of her face has been smashed away, exposing her jaw. What one character later describes as "hamburger," "stewed meat."

It's ultra-real, excruciating to watch and, in some viewers' minds, inexcusable.

When Affleck's sociopathic deputy sheriff, Lou Ford, does something similar to Kate Hudson's character later in the nihilistic noir, Winterbottom and crew lost even more of the audience. Not that they walked out of Sunday's premiere screening, mind you. They waited until the moment the lights came up for a Q&A with the filmmakers, and Winterbottom started fielding vehement criticism about the violence toward women.¹⁶

In 2007, After Dark Films was sanctioned by the U.S. Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) for releasing grotesque advertisements that the MPAA had rejected. To promote their film, *Captivity*, After Dark created ads showing explicit images of a woman's torture and death. The MPAA rejected the advertisements, but After Dark used them anyway on 30 billboards in highly-trafficked areas of Los Angeles, as well as on 1,400 taxi tops in New York city.¹⁷

In the Huffington Post, Jill Soloway commented on her experience with the billboard she encountered while driving her son to school:

That night I had a nightmare about the billboard, and by the next morning, I had a feeling in the pit of my stomach. This wasn't just horror, this wasn't just misogyny... it was a grody combo platter of the two, the torture almost a punishment for the sexiness. It had come from such a despicable inhuman hatred place that it somehow managed to recall Abu Ghraib, the Holocaust, porn and snuff films all at once.¹⁸

She started a movement to punish both After Dark and the distributor of the film, Canadian torture-porn producer, Lionsgate Films, by pressuring the MPAA to deny the film a rating. Without an MPAA rating, the movie would have very limited release options.

One of the people who wrote to the MPAA was Joss Whedon, creator of the TV series, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, who had this to say:

So just let me say that the ad campaign for "Captivity" is not only a literal sign of the collapse of humanity, it's an assault. I've watched plenty of horror - in fact I've made my share. But the advent



¹⁶ Sundance audience shaken by brutal "Killer", Hollywood Reporter, by Jay Fernandez, January 25, 2010

¹⁷ Lights out for After Dark ads, Variety, by William Triplett and Ian Mohr, March 29, 2007

¹⁸ Remove the rating for Captivity, The Huffington Post, By Jill Soloway, March 27, 2007

*of torture-porn and the total dehumanizing not just of women (though they always come first) but of all human beings has made horror a largely unpalatable genre. This ad campaign is part of something dangerous and repulsive, and that act of aggression has to be answered.*¹⁹

The MPAA took the unprecedented step of delaying the rating of the movie for 30 days, which put the planned movie launch date in jeopardy.

Writing about the remake of *Last House on the Left* released in 2009, Liz Braun, a columnist with the Toronto Sun, said:

*The Last House on the Left is a film involving such brutal violence and degradation that it made this viewer, and a few others we polled, physically sick. Some of the images are truly horrifying, and the content is generally disgusting and often unwatchable. It is a disturbing movie, which would seem to be the point. In moral terms, the film rates zero stars out of five.*²⁰

The plot revolves around killers who take two teenage girls captive after which they sexually assault, torture and leave them for dead. The killers take refuge during a storm at a house owned by the girls' parents, and once they realize who their guests are, the parents take revenge against them.



This "revenge" theme has been used to justify displays of extreme violence against women in other films such as *Irreversible* and the 2010 remake of the egregious, *I Spit on Your Grave*. The original *I Spit on Your Grave* featured a brutal, 40-minute gang rape of a woman which is supposedly justified by the revenge the victim takes against her attackers.

Irreversible, released in 2003, was described by the Star's Peter Howell as "a contemptible use of violence for the sake of violence". He describes the movie:

... [Gaspar] Noé eschews all considerations of art. He prefers instead to go for the maximum gawk-and-gag response by displaying as much violence on the screen as possible, in the form of a horrific story of rape and revenge that spares nothing in its depiction of brutality.

We see a beautiful woman (Monica Bellucci) being raped, sodomized and disfigured by a sadist in a pedestrian tunnel, in a scene that runs nine minutes but seems to last an eternity. We see the woman's boyfriend (Vincent Cassel) exacting bloody revenge on the man whom he suspects to be the rapist, using a fire extinguisher to smash his head and face into a bloody pulp.

*Noé makes sure we don't miss a single frame of pain, or a second of anguished cries. He demands not just a visual and mental response from us, but also a physical one.*²¹

When film critic, Roger Ebert, watched the original *I Spit on Your Grave* in 1981, he was "distressed by the shouts and loud laughter of the audience as a woman was repeatedly cut up, raped and beaten". He felt a basic change had taken place regarding women-in-danger movies -- the sympathies of the audience were no longer with the woman. He said, "The new horror films encouraged audience identification not

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ *Last House disgusting, but well made*, Toronto Sun, by Liz Braun, March 13, 2009

²¹ *New tolerance level put to the test*, Toronto Star, by Peter Howell, March 14, 2003

with the victim but with the killer."²² So much for the ludicrous idea that these "revenge" movies are anything other than a sadistic wallowing in misogyny for profit.

Globe and Mail columnist, Johanna Schneller, has written about the "gore porn" that has become so prevalent in many movies. To qualify as gore porn, she said,

*A scene must take something that's already disgusting -- let's say, Leatherface, the villain in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, slicing layers of flesh out of a young man's back -- and then amp it up for maximum nausea-inducement. The young man must be naked, and sitting in four inches of filthy water in a grime-streaked bathtub in a vermin-infested basement, while the genetically deficient relatives of the villain stroll happily around the floor above; he must be surrounded by buzzing flies and the severed parts of other corpses in varying stages of decay; he must be shivering and moaning, but quietly, and blank-eyed, to suggest that this torture has been going on for quite a long time; and the whole thing must be accompanied by repetitive thrash music.*²³

"Clearly, plain old horror and suspense are no longer enough to satisfy the stimulation junkies that we've become," Ms Schneller observed. "No, in order for us to have a good time at the movies, we need bottles full of eyeballs, lingering close-ups of the jagged tear between the shoulder blades -- complete with deafening ripping sounds -- of a young man hung on a hook, and a long, slow look at Lucy Liu uttering her last few sentences with the top of her head sliced off." ²⁴

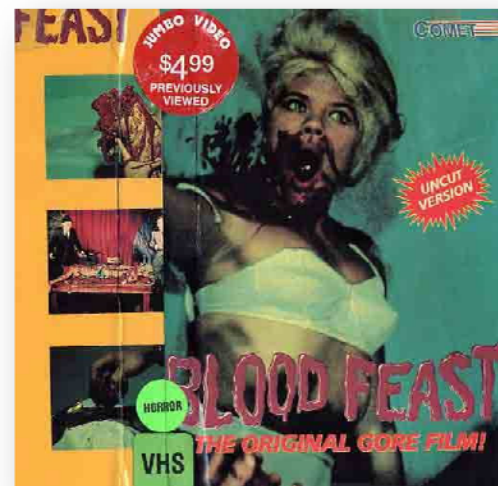
SLASHER FILMS

The 1960 Alfred Hitchcock film, *Psycho*, is generally credited with introducing the "slasher" concept to film, although the violence in *Psycho* was implied rather than explicit.

The extremely graphic and brutal type of slasher film (sometimes known as "splatter") was launched in 1963 with the release of a movie called *Blood Feast*, made by a pornographic movie producer after he noticed that drive-in audiences seemed to be particularly enthralled by rape scenes.²⁵

This genre of film features people, primarily teenage girls and young women, being tortured, dismembered, disemboweled and beheaded, with knives, hatchets, axes and/or construction tools -- chainsaws, nail guns, drills, jig saws -- hence the word "splatter" to describe the more extreme films.

The violence often takes place while the female victims are naked or wearing revealing lingerie. Showers and bathtubs make convenient murder sites because the victims are already naked. While men and boys are also killed, their deaths are not generally sexualized.

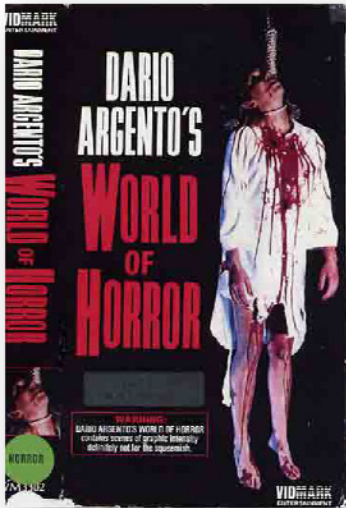


²² *Don't Touch That Dial: The Impact of the Media on Children & the Family*, Barbara Hattermer & Robert Showers, Huntington House Publishers, Louisiana, 1993

²³ *Hungry for blood? Gore porn's for you*, *Globe and Mail*, by Johanna Schneller, October 31, 2003

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ *Horrorshows, The A-To-Z of Horror in Film, TV, Radio and Theater*, Gene Wright, Facts on File Publications, New York, 1986



In testifying before the Standing Committee on Communication and Culture's hearings on television violence in the early 1990s, Keith Spicer, Chairman of the CRTC, described slasher movies as consisting "mainly of torturing and mutilating women... just wall-to-wall gore and cruelty, totally without justification".²⁶

Some academics dismiss the claim that slasher films primarily target women as victims, citing content analysis that they claim disproves it. Contemporary directors have probably responded to the harsh criticism of this genre and retreated somewhat from the blatant misogyny and sexualized torture and murder that distinguished the earlier productions. However, movies such as the *Slumber Party Massacre* series, *Sorority House Massacre*, *Mad Butcher*, *Body Shop*, *Pieces*, *Three on a Meathook*, *Blood Feast*, *Possession* and many more produced in the same vein, clearly feature women as victims whose murder is sexualized, so perhaps their analysis didn't go back far enough in time.

At one time in relatively limited theatrical distribution, the genre went mainstream in 1978 with the release by Universal Studios of *Halloween*, which "spawned an ongoing cycle of bloodier imitations".²⁷ *Fear in the Dark*, a documentary on the evolution of the horror film said, "By the late 1970s, psychopath movies had virtually taken over the horror genre and almost invariably, their victims were marginally-wayward suburban American teenaged girls."²⁸

Halloween, *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Friday the 13th* are sometimes referred to as "teenie kill" movies because both the victims and the audience for the movies are teenagers. For instance, Kane Hodder, "Jason" in the *Friday the 13th* series, figures the body count will reach "...101 maimed and murdered teenagers" when the character is finally retired.²⁹

Director, John Carpenter, originator of the *Halloween* series, has acknowledged that "a lot of people who watch these movies begin to imitate them",³⁰ while Kevin Williamson, director of the teen hit, *Scream*, admitted that the movies "make psychos more creative".³¹ Tragically, *Scream* has made some psychos more than creative -- news reports link the film to at least nine murders.³²

This brutal genre of film that once existed at the margins of popular culture has become so mainstream that Canadian media giants, Corus Entertainment Inc. and Alliance Atlantis Broadcasting Inc., launched *SCREAM* in 2001, an all-horror digital channel they promised would broadcast "good, old fashioned" slasher films.

By the late 1970s, psychopath movies had virtually taken over the horror genre and almost invariably, their victims were marginally-wayward, suburban American teenaged girls.

Fear in the Dark

In June 2003, the *SCREAM* web site listed the following films for broadcast during the month: *Prom Night*, *Prom Night III: The Last Kiss*, *Prom Night IV: Deliver Us From Evil*, *Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre III*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation*,

²⁶ *Television Violence: Fraying Our Social Fabric*, Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, 1993

²⁷ *Horrorshows, The A-To-Z of Horror in Film, TV, Radio and Theater*, Gene Wright, Facts on File Publications, New York, 1986

²⁸ *Fear in the Dark*, documentary broadcast on TV Ontario, September 24, 1992

²⁹ *The man behind the mask*, Toronto Star, August 13, 1993

³⁰ *Fear in the Dark*, documentary broadcast on TV Ontario, September 24, 1992

³¹ *A screaming success with the teen crowd*, Globe and Mail, August 14, 1999

³² *French link murders to cult film*, The Observer, June 9, 2002

Massacre at Central High, The Hills Have Eyes, April Fool's Day, My Bloody Valentine, Friday the 13th, Friday the 13th Part II; Friday the 13th Part III, Friday the 13th Part V: A New Beginning, Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives, Friday the 13th Part VII: The New Blood.

The majority of these films are reviewed in a book called *The Official Splatter Movie Guide*,³³ which offers some indication of the graphic violence featured in them.

VIDEO GAMES

In December 2002, the National Institute on Media and Family (U.S.) released their Seventh Annual MediaWise Video Game Report Card that condemned the "growing tendency to depict graphic violence against women in the industry's most popular games".³⁴ In *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*, a player can have sex with a prostitute and then get his money back by beating her bloodily to death with his fists, baseball bat or a golf club, action that can be felt through the PlayStation controller,³⁵ or she can be shot, complete with spurting blood and painful sound effects.³⁶



Dr. David Walsh, President of the Institute, stated the obvious when he said, "This is fantastically inappropriate... Rewarding players for having sex with, and killing, a prostitute is a frightening example to set."³⁷

In the *Duke Nukem* series, the shooter, Duke, moved through pornography shops, where he found posters of scantily clad women to use for target practice. In advanced levels, bonus points were awarded for the murder of prostitutes, women who are usually naked. Duke encountered defenseless, bound women, some of whom were tied to columns and pleaded, "Kill me, kill me". Although *Duke Nukem* was rated for adults, action figures

were marketed to toddlers through chains like Toys R Us.³⁸

In *Outlaw Golf*, players got to choose among strippers, bikers and ex-convicts for a round of golf. Once on the green, if a shot was botched, players could beat up their caddies, bringing their score back to par. If a player was partnered with a female caddie, he could grab her breasts and yank her nipples while saying "tune in, Tokyo".³⁹

In early 2010, controversy erupted over the Japanese video game, *RapeLay*. The goal in this game is to rape women and girls and engage in other misogynist acts. The player follows a mother and her two daughters into a subway station, stalks and gropes them. Along the way, the goal is to sexually arouse them, which takes time, as their initial reactions are fear and rejection. The player is able to impregnate women and abort their fetuses. The women and girls react to the repeated raping with fear and sorrow, though ultimately the player can successfully make the women appear to like it.

³³ *The Official Splatter Movie Guide*, by John McCarty, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1989

³⁴ *A Woman's Role In Popular Video Games? Stripped Down and Killed Off*, National Institute on Media and the Family press release, December 19, 2002

³⁵ National Organization of Women, USA, Action Alert

³⁶ *Child's Play? Grand Theft Auto III Provides Video Gamers With a Virtual World of Extreme Violence*, ABC News.com, July 1, 2002

³⁷ *A Woman's Role in Popular Video Games? Stripped Down and Killed Off*, National Institute on Media and the Family press release, December 19, 2002

³⁸ *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie & Video Game Violence*, Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, Gloria DeGaetano, Crown Publishers, New York, 1999

³⁹ *For Young Fans, the Name of the Video Game is Gore*, Washington Post, August 24, 2002

Writing about *RapeLay* in *Psychology Today*, Dr. Karen Gill explains why playing this game is damaging to women:

Research has shown that telling the story that women secretly enjoy rape encourages violence against women. Demeaning women, particularly sexually, encourages violence against women. A game of this graphic nature teaches sexual violence, much like a violent game teaches and encourages aggression. It exposes players - among them children, since the game is available online - to explicit content. In rewarding rape and misogynistic behavior, it teaches and encourages those types of behaviors.

My own research, and that of my colleagues, has demonstrated that exposure to sexually objectified and demeaned women in video games causes males (but not females) to be more lenient towards a real-life act of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, like rape, is an act of violence - not of romance or sexuality. Rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment are common violations of women. It should go without saying that none of these things should be condoned, much less actively encouraged.

The fact that the game was developed and sold and is being played and defended by players normalizes violence against women and demeaning and misogynistic behavior towards women and girls. I've spoken and written about an argument I've heard so often - that we can watch or play any media content and it has no effect on us. That idea is a myth. It is repeatedly debunked by research, and yet it persists. These behaviors are illegal - made so by civilized society because they are so deeply harmful, and so widely considered unethical.⁴⁰

In 2009, a similar controversy arose over the video game *Stockholm: An Exploration of True Love*. In this game, the player kidnaps and sexually and psychologically assaults a young woman, with the explicit goal of manipulating her into developing Stockholm syndrome. In other words, the goal is to get a woman to fall in love with you through kidnapping, abusing and manipulating her.⁴¹

Realism is the holy grail of the industry. John Riccitiello, President of Electronic Arts, the largest video game maker in the world, maintains, "People want to get lost in a story. Every single person that plays a video game, when you get lost in that experience, you sweat, you almost cry".⁴²

This game is not harmless entertainment. It is telling a story about women and men that is dangerous. It is teaching violence against women and exposing men and boys (and girls and women) to graphic behaviors of the worst kind.

Dr. Karen Gill

Peter Molyneux, a leading video game designer, says, "The level of detail we can create is quite scary. All human physiology can be replicated. We can recreate the effect of wind blowing through the hairs on someone's arms; we can simulate every single sweat pore on someone's face; we can even calculate the precise amount of blood that would dribble out of a wound and then show it healing slowly to form a scar exactly like it would in real life".⁴³

Bill Gates, Chairman of Microsoft, wants to bring the level of realism to the "point where people forget they are playing a game".⁴⁴ In furtherance of that goal, companies offer virtual reality headsets and accessories that impart physical sensation from game play, thereby reinforcing the life-like, interactive experience.

⁴⁰ *Making a (video) game out of rape*, by Dr. Karen Gill, Ph.D., *Psychology Today*, March 30, 2010

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² *Sex, Lies & Video Games*, CBSNEWS.com, August 6, 2003

⁴³ *You ain't played nothing yet*, *National Post*, January 7, 2000

⁴⁴ *Sex, Lies & Video Games*, CBSNEWS.com, August 6, 2003

MUSIC

INTRODUCTION

In testimony before an American Senate subcommittee hearing on the social impact of music violence, Dr. Frank Palumbo, representing the American Academy of Pediatrics, said:

During the past four decades, rock music lyrics have become increasingly explicit -- particularly with reference to drugs, sex, violence and even of greater concern, sexual violence. Pediatricians' concern about the impact of music lyrics and music videos on children and youth compelled the AAP Committee on Communications to issue a policy statement on the subject in December 1989, as well as one on media violence in 1995.⁴⁵

The AAP Policy Statement says the organization is "... greatly concerned that negative behavioral messages are being recorded and repeatedly broadcast."⁴⁶ Professors Donald Roberts and Peter Christenson, authors of *It's Not Only Rock and Roll: Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents*, believe that for adolescents, music is the "heavy equipment" of popular culture, more influential than television, movies and computers.⁴⁷

We started talking at the office about all this hatred in rap song after rap song, and once we started, the subject kept coming up because women were incapable of getting it off their minds.

Diane Weathers, Editor, Essence

The 1999 report, *Children, Violence, and the Media, A Report for Parents and Policy Makers*, issued by the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, provides insight into the situation:

Few would doubt the overall effect music has on people. In Plato's Republic, Socrates said that "musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten." Music affects our moods, our attitudes, our emotions, and our behavior; we wake to it, dance to it, and sometimes cry to it. From infancy, it is an integral part of our lives.

As virtually any parent with a teenager can attest, music holds an even more special place in the hearts and minds of our young people. Academic studies confirm this wisdom. One survey of 2,760 14-to-16-year-olds in 10 different cities found that they listened to music an average of 40 hours per week. Research has also shown that the average teenager listens to 10,500 hours of rock music during the years between the 7th and 12th grades.

With good reason, then, parents are concerned about the music lyrics their children hear. And parents should be concerned. Despite historic, bipartisan remedial legislation by the state and federal governments, it is stunning even to the casual listener how much modern music glorifies acts of violence. Studies show that modern music lyrics have become increasingly explicit, particularly concerning sex, drugs, and most troubling, violence against women. For example, the rock band Nine Inch Nails released a song titled "Big Man with a Gun," which triumphantly describes a sexual assault at gun point. Such hatred and violence against women are widespread and unmistakable in mainstream hip-hop and alternative music. Consider the singer

⁴⁵ Testimony of the American Academy of Pediatrics before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and The District of Columbia, on the Social Impact of Music Violence, presented by Frank Palumbo, M.D., FAAP, November 6, 1997

⁴⁶ *Impact of Music Lyrics and Music Videos on Children and Youth*, Policy Statement, American Academy of Pediatrics, December 1996

⁴⁷ News release for *It's Not Only Rock and Roll: Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents*, Donald Roberts and Peter Christenson, Hampton Press, New Jersey, 1997

"Marilyn Manson", whose less vulgar lyrics include: "Who says date rape isn't kind?"... Or consider "Eminem, the hip-hop artists featured frequently on MTV, who recently wrote "Bonnie and Clyde", a song in which he described killing his child's mother and dumping her body in the ocean.

One should hope that the music industry would, at the very least, ostracize such material. Regrettably, however, the industry has chosen to embrace it. How else would the industry explain a 1998 Grammy nomination for Nine Inch Nails? A 1999 Grammy nomination for Marilyn Manson? MTV's "Best New Artist" award to Marilyn Manson last year and Eminem this year? Or the fact that, despite growing concern about such music, Eminem and Nine Inch Nails performed just last week at MTV's Video Music Awards show, televised across the country during prime time?

We must not ignore the fact that these violent, misogynist images may ultimately affect the behavior and attitudes of many young men toward women.⁴⁸

For the most part, misogyny appears primarily in two genres of music, heavy metal and rap/hip hop.⁴⁹ According to Professor Roberts, both heavy metal and rap music present "highly problematic content in terms of violence, sex, and misogyny". Different studies estimate that such content occurs in anywhere from 25% to 70% of songs and/or videos depending on the definitions of violence used.⁵⁰

When lyrics are illustrated in music videos, their potential negative impact is magnified. Teenagers may not understand some rock lyrics, but can't avoid the images in music videos. In addition, music videos are self-reinforcing: if viewers hear a song after having seen the video version, they "flash back" to the visual imagery in the video. Content analyses indicate that more than half of concept music videos (those involving a theme, not a concert performance) contain violence, often including acts of violence committed against women, and women are frequently portrayed in a condescending manner.⁵¹

The following provides information on violent rap and heavy metal, those two being the most problematic genres.

MISOGYNIST RAP/HIP HOP

The violent/misogynist version of rap music (gangsta rap) began with a performer called Ice-T in 1987, and continued to grow in influence and popularity to the point where it now influences most facets of popular culture.

In 2004, the influential black women's magazine, *Essence*, launched a campaign "...taking on the slut images and verbal abuse projected onto black women by hip hop lyrics and videos". *Essence* editor, Diane Weathers said, "We started talking at the office about all this hatred in rap song after rap song, and once we started, the subject kept coming up because women were incapable of getting it off their minds." At a listening session with their entertainment editor, they "...found the rap lyrics astonishing, brutal, misogynistic. ... So we said we were going to pull no punches, especially since women were constantly being assaulted."⁵²

⁴⁸ *Children, Violence, and the Media, A Report for Parents and Policy Makers*, United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, September 14, 1999

⁴⁹ Testimony of Donald F. Roberts, Ph.D., Department of Communication, Stanford University, before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and The District of Columbia hearing on the Social Impact of Music Violence, November 6, 1997

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁵¹ *Impact of Music Lyrics and Music Videos on Children and Youth*, Policy Statement, American Academy of Pediatrics, December 1996

⁵² *At last, women lash out at hip hop's abuses*, New York Daily News, by Stanley Crouch, January 3, 2005

The late C. Delores Tucker, as Chair of the National Political Congress of Black Women, was at the forefront of protests against gangsta rap music because of the degradation of women, promotion of drug use and violence contained in the lyrics. Ms Tucker believed that the performers promoted "Negative, stereotypical images, calling their mothers, grandmothers, all the women in their community, whores, bitches and sluts",⁵³ and she condemned the corporations that "promote and distribute music that teaches kids that it's cool to kill, use drugs, gang rape girls and denigrate women in the most vulgar and violent ways".

In his essay, *Spittin' acid at the sistas*, American social activist, Ewuare Osayande, expressed his view of the situation:

From the lyrics on the radio to the videos on the tube, Black male rappers engage in an aural and visual assault on the minds and bodies of Black women. This cultural attack on Black women would warrant a state-of-emergency even if the madness began and ended in the studios, but it doesn't. More and more, Black men and boys are reciting these lyrics until they become the mental script that directs their interactions with Black women even as these tracks advocate the real-life hatred and violence toward women.

*At face value, many would dismiss my description and assessment as being over the top, but upon close examination, one will realize that the critical condition of the situation cannot be overstated. My words fall way short of capturing the deadly effect misogynistic rap is having on Black women. The fact is that what many rappers are spewing is criminal by most societies' standards.*⁵⁴

American studies indicate that rap is "the dominant favorite among adolescent African American males (as many as 75% list it as their favorite), with many white adolescents, especially suburban white boys, listing it as one of their preferred music genres". However, because of rap's concentration on the most negative aspects of the inner-city experience, some believe it may function more to cultivate racial stereotypes than to cultivate cross-cultural understanding.⁵⁵

At a conference in Chicago in October 2003, rapper Angela Zone criticized the state of the genre, saying, "Right now it's raising a generation of pimps and ho's and we've got to stop that."⁵⁶

An Associated Press article reported on the promotion of the pimp lifestyle in rap and hip hop music:

Ten years ago, it seemed as if every rapper wanted to be a gangsta. Now, everyone wants to be a pimp. 50 Cent and Snoop Dogg strut in full pimp regalia, surrounded by a bevy of beauties, in their new video P.I.M.P... Even old-school soul veteran Ronald Isley personifies the pimp style with his alter-ego, Mr. Biggs, right down to his elaborate cane.

... the self-proclaimed king of pimps, Bishop Don Magic Juan, would disagree with the sentiment that pimping is a bad thing. Although he's given up the pimp business for preaching -- he's an ordained minister -- he's still a proud playa who sticks up mightily for his former profession. "It's been portrayed negatively through movies and television," says Juan, who despite his new profession has not forsaken his pimp wardrobe. "Now people are seeing it for what it is."

Snoop Dogg, perhaps the biggest pimp purveyor in today's rap game, agrees. "It's cool to look good, it's cool to have girls on your arm, and get money from them, and that's a good feeling, you dig? There ain't nothing wrong with it," he said in a recent interview.

⁵³ *Gangsta Warfare*, Boston Globe, March 10, 1996

⁵⁴ *Spittin' acid at the sistas*, by Ewuare Osayande, SeeingBlack.com, April 29, 2005

⁵⁵ Testimony of Donald F. Roberts, Ph.D., Department of Communication, Stanford University, before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and The District of Columbia hearing on the Social Impact of Music Violence, November 6, 1997

⁵⁶ *The worse it gets, the better it sells*, Toronto Star, October 26, 2003



The pimp game has been rapped about for more than 20 years. Oakland native Too Short and Los Angeles pioneer Ice-T celebrated it in the early '80s. Brooklyn's Big Daddy Kane talked about it in the late '80s. In the '90s, the Notorious B.I.G. rapped: "Pimpin' ain't easy but it sure is fun." And one of Jay-Z's most popular songs remains the 2000 anthem Big Pimpin'.

No major rapper embodies pimp style more than Snoop. When he first emerged a decade ago, his style was L.A. gangsta Crip -- baggy jeans, blue flannel shirts and sneakers.

Snoop says pimp culture showed him how to carry himself with style and pride.

"I wanted to look good and feel good about myself," he says. "Those are qualities that you get from a pimp that everybody's not really understanding."⁵⁷

In a 2005 episode of MTV's cartoon, *Where My Dogs At?*, a Snoop Dogg look-alike leads two leashed, bikini-clad black women into a pet store, where they act like animals: walking on all fours, scratching themselves, and defecating on the floor. Snoop dons a plastic glove to clean up their mess.⁵⁸ MTV defended this as a satire of Dogg's appearance on stage during the MTV music video awards with two women wearing dog collars and leashes, a defense that was dismissed by critics.

The rapper has an entire track about beating women on his CD, *Rhythm and Gangsta*. "Can U Control Yo Hoe" has him instructing another man on how to beat the woman he is living with:

*Can you control your hoe? (You got a bitch that won't obey what you say)/
You can't control your hoe? (She hardheaded, she just won't obey)/
Can you control your hoe (You've got to know what to do, what to say)/
You've got to put that bitch in her place, even if it's slapping her in her face/
Ya got to control your hoe/ Can you control your hoe?*

This odious person was hired to appear in a commercial with former Chrysler chairman, Lee Iacocca, who called him a "good kid". Dogg's XXX-rated music video, *Doggystyle*, was broadcast in Canada by Bell ExpressVu as a New Year's Eve special on December 31, 2001.

Rapper 50 Cent, another pimp proponent, performed at the Molson Amphitheatre in Toronto in 2003 along with Jay-Z. A review of the concert noted that "the multi-racial crowd, equally male and female, as young as 10, were mesmerized by him, nodding their heads and reciting his lyrics about pimping, dealing and smoking weed." The reviewer commented that it was "unnerving to hear 15-year-old girls respond loudly in the affirmative when he call[ed] for his bitches".⁵⁹

The lyrics to P.I.M.P., by 50 Cent, include these lines:

*Bitch choose with me, I'll have you stripping in the street/
Put my other hoes down, you get your ass beat/
Now Nick is my bottom bitch, she always come up with my bread/
The last nigga she was with put stitches in her head.*

⁵⁷ *Rappers go for new 'costume'*, Associated Press, July 29, 2003

⁵⁸ *MTV2 "satire" puts black women on leashes*, by Tracy Clark-Flory, Salon, August 10, 2006

⁵⁹ *Gangstas mine the mainstream*, Toronto Star, July 3, 2003

P.I.M.P. was one of the ringtones offered by Bell Mobility.

Content Analysis

Professor Edward Armstrong of Murray State University did a content analysis of 490 songs produced by 13 rappers during the period 1987 to 1993, selecting material from those identified as being the "ruling class" of the genre. The results are shocking. Following are excerpts from his analysis describing lyrics on rape, murder, rape/murder and assault. (Text has been edited for brevity and to eliminate obscene lyrics. The entire article is available on line.

Rape

Willie D and Too \$hort advocate raping women who do not submit to their sexual advances. Another rape narrative has Too \$hort beating his victim's "ass with a billy-club." In "She Swallowed It," N.W.A recommend specific procedures for attacking a fourteen-year-old.

Ice-T (Body Count) proposes sex "with Tipper Gore's two twelve-year-old nieces." This is a clear case of seeking revenge against one of the founders of the Parents' Music Resources Center.

Eazy-E, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Too \$hort casually mention gang rapes. MC Ren tells of "ten niggas" who rape a child and then violate her with a broomstick. In Ice Cube's "Givin' Up The Nappy Dug Out," "fourteen niggas" line up to take turns placing themselves "two on top, one on the bottom" of an underage girl. Too \$hort conceives of an array of alternatives in his consideration of the pluses and minuses of statutory rape. In "She's A Bitch" (1987c), he adapts a crude aphorism... He recites similar words in "Hoes".

Murder

M.C Ren shoots a woman who set him up to be robbed. In "To Kill A Hooker," N.W.A drag a streetwalker into a car and kill her because she demanded money in exchange for sex. Women are also murdered for choosing the wrong companion (Eazy-E), becoming nosy (Geto Boys), and for remaining silent. Ice Cube fed a girl to the wolves because the "little ho had no words." Three other personal traits stimulate violent and misogynist lyrics. N.W.A's Eazy-E tied to kill a "fat girl" with an elephant gun. When that didn't work, he "grabbed a harpoon" and left the woman on the avenue "like a beached whale." MC Ren mulls over shooting and burying a "bitch"... Rappers plan murders to pay back women who, in their opinion, did something wrong. Transgressions include telling a lie (Scarface), failing to make bail (Eazy-E), transmitting a venereal disease (Geto Boys, N.W.A), calling the cops (N.W.A), and cheating.

Two Too \$hort songs tell of killing women but never offer a hint at what precipitated the acts. Bushwick Bill simply brags that he is the "neighborhood bitch slayer." The Geto Boys recommend putting "a ho in front of a trigger." Without supplying any explanation, N.W.A mention taking the life of a wife and daughter. N.W.A also recollect "bitches" that they have shot and announce their plans to "smother" someone's mother. The Geto Boys kill a person's wife "for kicks" and pump anonymous women "full of lead". Scarface recounts the same senseless killings. Songs combining murder and mutilation exemplify a virulent positioning of women as objects of violence. The Geto Boys attack someone's nieces and cut the girls' heads into "88 pieces." Bushwick Bill recalls this incident in a song where his breakfast menu is "bacon and legs." Ice-T (Body Count) sets his mother on fire, beats her to death with a baseball bat, and cuts up her body. In a Geto Boys' act of murder, the weapon of choice is a machete: "I sliced her up until her guts were like spaghetti."

Rape and Murder

Too Much Trouble kill an elderly rape victim whom they caught crawling for the telephone. First, they hit her on the head with a hammer, and the sound of a hammer hitting someone's head accompany the lyrics. Too \$hort slaps a young girl to convince her to perform oral sex after which the child dies. In "One Less Bitch," N.W.A tie a woman to a bed, rape, and then shoot her. The Geto Boys produced two versions of their signature song, "Mind Of A Lunatic." Both begin by noting the identical initial actions of a peeping tom turned rapist. In one, the perpetrator cuts the victim's throat and watches her "shake like on TV." The second version heightens the macabre as the killer has "sex with the corpse." Another Geto Boys' song depicts a similar rape/murder, only this time they slit the woman "like a pig."

Assault

In "6 'N The Mornin'", Ice-T batters a woman, heretofore a stranger, because she called him a name. "Boyz-N-The-Hood" suggests corporal punishment for women who "talk shit." Dr. Dre presents the identical message in "Nuthin' But A 'G' Thang," the No. 1 rap song of all time. Talking back (Ice-T, Too \$hort) and showing disrespect (dissin') (N.W.A) cause men to react violently. Rejecting a proposition provokes a physical attack (Eazy-E). Too \$hort hurled this tirade:

You f--k with us, bitch, something gettin' broken
Your leg, arm, jaw, nose, pick a part.

In N.W.A's "A Bitch Iz A Bitch," money-hungry or stuck-up women are subsumed under the same solution: "Slam her ass in a ditch." Responses to mental slowness are equally harsh. Bushwick Bill kicks a woman's ass if her "brain don't click." By choosing the wrong friends, "bitches" either "need stitches" (Willie D) or get drop-kicked (Ice-T). Personal characteristics also induce violence. In "Punk Bitch," Too \$hort expresses his desire to slap all bald-headed women. Ice-T pushes a woman to the floor because "she looked like Godzilla."

Intimate relationships are also riddled with violence. When one's "lady," as opposed to one's "bitch," talks to another man, she gets physically punished (Geto Boys). Tardy breakfasts are hard to handle. Violence accompanies the command to put some "eggs in the goddamn skillet" (Too Much Trouble). Identification of rappers as putative parents generates physical responses. Ice Cube plans to end a pregnancy by kicking a woman "in the tummy". The Geto Boys handle a false accusation of paternity by trying to break the woman's neck. Too \$hort deals with a similar situation by surprising the woman "like a mack" and then dropping "her ass off at Kaiser [hospital]." Women are hit (Ice Cube), slapped (Too \$hort), tossed (Eazy-E), thrown into a trunk (Too \$hort), smacked (Too Much Trouble; Too \$hort) and kicked (Too \$hort), all for no apparent reason. For instance, Too Much Trouble mention only that "a bitch is just like glass – easy to break."⁶⁰

Eminem

Professor Armstrong's content analysis of violent rap music predates the arrival on the scene of Eminem, a performer who has achieved international celebrity status. His misogyny is widely acknowledged in the media, yet he continues to receive the highest honours the music industry can bestow, and sell millions of CDs internationally. A sampling of quotes from media commentators follows:

- *His lyrics are misogynist... Mathers' lyrics are sick-making; they express an odious hatred of women.* (Confronting Eminem, Globe and Mail editorial, October 27, 2000)

⁶⁰ *Gangsta Misogyny: A Content Analysis of the Portrayals of Violence Against Women in Rap Music, 1987-1993*, by Edward G. Armstrong, Murray State University, Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 2001

- *Eminem, whose unbridled venom toward women, gays, most of his colleagues in music, his wife, and his mother, sets a new standard for violent and hateful lyrics. (Girls just want to have angst, National Post, July 19, 2000)*
- *Eminem may be the most violent, woman-hating, homophobic rapper ever. Why are critics giving him a pass?... But should the nation's tastemakers, the ones supposedly pondering the connection between art and society, align themselves with an artist as blatantly hateful, vengeful and violent as Eminem?... Instead, the rapper simply delivers 75 minutes of nearly nonstop hate. (Invisible man, Salon.com, June 7, 2000)*
- *There is no evidence that Eminem's homophobia and misogyny are satirical. If he were rapping about lynching colored folk or slaughtering "towel-head" Muslims, for example, the satire claim would probably not fly – a point lost on pretty much every journalist except Salon's Eric Boehlert. (Eminem: Rap or Consequences?, PlanetOut News & Politics, June 20, 2000)*
- *In the week since Eminem received four Grammy nominations – including album of the year – the rapper's violent, homophobic and misogynistic lyrics have sparked a new firestorm of protest from individuals and groups who cannot believe Grammy voters would recognize anything artful in Eminem's angry raps. (Storm grows over Eminem's Grammy nominations, National Post, January 12, 2001)*

Then punch a bitch in the nose... Until her whole face explodes ... There's three things I hate: girls, women and bitches...

Eminem lyrics

BELL MOBILITY PIMP TONES RINGTONES

In 2005, CanWest News Service published an article about ringtones offered for sale by Bell Mobility:

Bell Mobility is selling a series of cellphone ringtones called PimpTones that make light of prostitution and refer to women as "bitches," "skanks" and "hoes."

The short messages can be downloaded from the Bell website for a \$2.50 fee and programmed to sound whenever the cellphone rings.

Unlike conventional ringtones that play melodies or short clips of popular songs, the PimpTones are voice recordings of actors speaking in a street vernacular about "players" and "hoes" (whores).

Some of the explicit language in the ringtones is beeped out but can still be easily understood.

Bell pulled two of the ringtones off its website on Friday after the Ottawa Citizen called to ask why it would sell a product that seems focused, however satirically, on a profession that exploits women.

The company removed a clip entitled "No Love For Hoes," in which a receptionist is heard saying there are "skanks" and "hoes" calling on line one, and another in which a female voice says, "Money, clothes and hoers is all a player cares about."

But Bell continues to offer others in the same PimpTones series, including a clip with angry male voice saying, "Bi-(BEEP)-ch, do I look like a motherfu-(BEEP)-ing track suit?" A track suit is urban slang for a low-class person who wears athletic gear.

"Well, no," a young female voice replies. "Well, quit sweating me, ho!" the man says. In one clip, a young woman's voice says, "So, Mack-a-ho, your escorts for the Las Vegas Gentleman's Ball have arrived." Mack is slang for pimp or, in verb form, means to seduce or have sex with.

Other clips use the word bitch and humorously threaten slaps or kicks if the phone isn't answered.⁶¹

A Bell Canada spokesperson, Nessa Prendergast, defended the product as being offered in response to customer demand. The motif that PimpTones use is "a huge phenomenon" in pop culture, she said. "There are mainstream TV shows and products that use that language. It's a big part of the culture these days."

After CanWest publicized the sale of PimpTones, Bell withdrew some, but not all, of the products. It took a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission to convince Bell to remove the remaining pimp ringtones.

HEAVY METAL

Heavy metal, death metal, nu metal and shock rock -- the names are varied, but the message is more or less the same: extreme violence, misogyny, deviance, suicide, nihilism. The members of shock rock band, Marilyn Manson, name themselves after serial killers, while the lead singer has taken the name of mass murderer Charles Manson. Both this band and the group Nine Inch Nails recorded in a studio set up in the former residence of Sharon Tate, the same house where the Charles Manson "family" slaughtered several people and painted the walls with their blood.⁶²

Some sample songs from Cannibal Corpse:

Staring Through the Eyes of the Dead
Stripped, Raped and Strangled
The Pick-Axe Murders
She Was Asking For It
Force Fed Broken Glass
Blood Drenched Execution
Dismembered and Molested
Stabbed in the Throat
Every Bone Broken
F**ked With a Knife

Lyrics for the above can be found by doing an Internet search. The web site for Metal Blade Records Inc., distributor for Cannibal Corpse, boasted that the band had been "BANNED in Australia, New Zealand & Korea BANNED from performing any material off their first three albums in Germany, where the sale of "Butchered at Birth" is outlawed completely!"

This band makes appearances in Canada, and their CDs are available in Canadian franchise record stores (e.g., HMV), although some of the songs appear to contravene the Canadian *Criminal Code* obscenity law because the lyrics combine the exploitation of sex with cruelty and violence (one of the

⁶¹ *Bell Mobility's 'PimpTones' feature explicit language*, by Glen McGregor, CanWest News Service, July 30, 2005

⁶² *Helter Skelter, The True Story of the Manson Murders*, 25th anniversary edition, by Vincent Bugliosi, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1994

reasons their lyrics aren't reproduced in this paper). An item commenting on the band's popularity in Quebec revealed that, "... their name came up when a Seattle fan of the band raped and killed one woman and left another for dead, which resulted in national news coverage and subsequent record album sales for the band".⁶³

In 2001, a lawsuit was filed against the heavy metal band, Slayer, by the parents of Elyse Pahler, a 15-year-old girl murdered and raped by three teenaged boys. One of the girl's killers told police "the killing was partly inspired by the heavy metal music of Slayer -- a popular band that specializes in misogynist songs depicting torture and satanic sacrifice".⁶⁴ The brutality of the crime was horrifying:

First they choked her with a belt; then they took turns with a hunting knife to slash and stab her more than a dozen times; and as she fell to the ground, praying and crying out for her mother, the three friends stamped their feet on the back of her neck.

*Not long afterwards, according to a lawsuit, Joseph Fiorella, 14, Jacob Delashmutt, 16, and Royce Casey, 16, returned to where Elyse had bled to death and had sex with her corpse.*⁶⁵

The Pahler's believed that Slayer's "paens to serial killers and necrophilia contributed to their daughter's death" and sued the band and the companies that distributed their music. The lawsuit stated, "The distribution and marketing of this obscene and harmful material to adolescent males constituted aiding and abetting of the criminal acts... None of the vicious crimes committed against Elyse Marie Pahler would have occurred without the intentional marketing strategy of the death-metal band Slayer."⁶⁶

PORNOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Writing in *Politics and Culture*, Professor Robert Jensen, author of *Getting Off, Pornography and the End of Masculinity*, first describes a scene from the violent pornographic film series, *Gag Factor* (a description that will not be reproduced here), and then says:

*I am afraid of the sex I just described to you. I'm worried about the physical and emotional well-being of the woman in that scene. I'm afraid of the way in which the men who use that pornography will act in their own lives, toward women in their lives. I am afraid of the world that such sex helps to create. I am afraid, and you should be, too.*⁶⁷

We should all be afraid. Violent and degrading pornography has become commonplace and readily available. In February 2010, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly acknowledged the rise in "explicitly violent pornography which is not only degrading for women, but which is sadistic in nature". They declared violent pornography "a threat to women's dignity and rights" and recommended that the Committee of Ministers "take the appropriate steps against violent pornography to protect women's rights and dignity".⁶⁸ Across the border, politicians in Minnesota introduced a bill that would require the selection of hotels for government business that don't offer violent pornography, an indication of how commonplace it has become. This "Clean Hotels" initiative is a collaboration between the Men's Action Network and the Minnesota Department of Health's Sexual Violence Prevention Program.

⁶³ *Bienvenue aux Cannibals*, Montreal Mirror, August 17, 2000

⁶⁴ *Music to die for?*, Toronto Star, January 23, 2001

⁶⁵ *'He asked if I'd be down for sacrificing a virgin. I said, whatever'*, The Guardian, January 24, 2001

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ *Just a Prude? Feminism, Pornography, and Men's Responsibility*, Politics and Culture, by Robert Jensen, October 2, 2009

⁶⁸ Violent pornography: a threat to women's dignity and rights, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe motion for a recommendation, February 3, 2010

In a 2007 report, *Analyzing the Pornographic Text: Charting and Mapping Pornography Through Content Analysis*, researchers Robert Woznitser, Ana Bridges, and Erica Scharrer detail their analysis of 50 films randomly selected from the top 250 grossing pornographic films of that year. This is a brief summary of their results.

- 50 films – 304 scenes
- 3,376 different acts of verbal and physical abuse
- 11.5 acts of aggression per scene
- Aggression rewarded 68% of the time
- Neutral response to aggression 32% of the time
- Discouraged 0% of the time
- Positive sexual behavior represented just 10% of all actions⁶⁹

While some violent/degrading pornography is prohibited in Canada under the *Criminal Code*, if the exploitation of sex in the material is not a *dominant* characteristic, the products can be distributed. There is no *Criminal Code* prohibition at all on violence, so that even the most extreme violence can be combined with sexual content and distributed, provided the sexual content is not pervasive (see the section on “snuff” movie website). There is also no specific prohibition in the *Criminal Code* to prevent adults from exposing children and youth to sexually explicit material.

AVAILABILITY IN ONTARIO

An investigation by Global television in early 2005 revealed that many adult video stores were bypassing the Ontario Film Review Board (OFRB) process and selling unrated hardcore pornography. One store owner interviewed by reporter, Gus Kim, said he could obtain rape videos, and movies with titles such as *Baby Face* and *Teen Dreams* which seem to portray underage girls having sex. The store owners were not concerned about getting caught because they said the government was not enforcing the law.⁷⁰

The Global investigation indicated that stores were importing pornographic videos directly from the United States, a fact that sets off alarm bells in anyone familiar with the hyper-violent and degrading products manufactured in that country.

For instance, in films produced by Extreme Associates, “urine, excrement, blood and spit are prominent. No orifice goes unviolated, and the more revolting the means, the better.”⁷¹ The owner boasts that his films, which depict rape, torture and murder, represent the “depths of human depravity”.⁷² According to a *Wired* story on the American pornography industry, “plenty of porn providers... sell legally risky material featuring bestiality, violence and people who look like minors”.⁷³

VIOLENT PORNOGRAPHY BROADCAST ON BELL EXPRESSVU

In March 2001, the CBC television program, *The Fifth Estate*, reported on their investigation into the broadcast of pornography on Canadian pay-per-view television channels. Emphasis was given to the movies carried by Bell ExpressVu. (At the time, Bell ExpressVu was owned by Bell Canada Enterprises, one of the largest conglomerates in Canada.)

In previewing the piece for CBC's nightly news program, *The National*, reporter Hana Gartner stated:

⁶⁹ The sexualization of harm in contemporary pornography, Men as Peacemakers, “Clean Hotels” initiative

⁷⁰ Global television news, May 11, 2005

⁷¹ *Porn provocateur*, Salon.com, June 20, 2002

⁷² ‘Extreme’ judicial activism, The Washington Times, February 10, 2005

⁷³ *Legal Threats Stalk Adult Sites*, *Wired*, June 15, 2004

It is a competitive marketplace, and in the race for the raciest, Bell ExpressVu has broken the rules. It is running the raunchiest hard-core porn on two twenty-four hour channels which it is picking up from a distributor in Boulder, Colorado. Some of their movies are sexually violent, and would not be approved by the provincial censor boards.⁷⁴

On *The Fifth Estate*, Ms Gartner said:

... the harder the porn, the higher the profits, so when Bell ExpressVu came shopping, they bought the raunchiest stuff on the shelf. Two networks called Extasy and True Blue.

For \$15.95 a day, Bell ExpressVu will deliver your fantasy: anal sex, sadomasochistic sex, group sex, penetration, ejaculation -- nothing is left to your imagination.

They signed on with New Frontier just last spring. Now, nearly three-quarter of a million Canadian homes have access to these channels.⁷⁵

One of the producers of the material in question was Extreme Associates. The owner of this company, Rob Black, told *The Fifth Estate* that he's proud of the fact "his movies are the most shocking" of those produced every year.⁷⁶ Indeed, a Time magazine article noted that even among hard-core pornographers, Black is "considered a sleazebag".⁷⁷ Extreme Associates' web site celebrates the fact that the company makes the "nastiest, most degrading, degenerate movies", and Black described his movies during an interview with Hannah Gartner as "horrible".⁷⁸

They're so horrible that the U.S. Justice Department prosecuted Extreme Associates in the first major obscenity case in ten years. One of the movies cited in the U.S. case, *Forced Entry*, includes scenes of women being raped and murdered. It also includes suffocation, strangulation, beatings and urination. The U.S. Attorney assigned to the case said, "They made absolutely no attempt to comply with federal law. In fact, it was probably their intent not to. Because what they wanted to do was to make the most disgusting material available on the market. And they succeeded."⁷⁹

The Toronto Star carried the following description of material broadcast by Bell ExpressVu:

... reporter Hana Gartner introduced clips that showed painful-looking bondage and simulated rape and torture, including hot wax being poured onto the breasts of a seemingly helpless bound woman and clothes pins and other clamps attached to nipples.

In one scene, a woman protests while being tied up and lashed to a door, with the doorknob in her mouth; others are hogtied while their bare buttocks and breasts are whipped.⁸⁰

A CRTC spokesman stated that it is a condition of license for pay-per-view channels to have sexually-explicit films approved by a provincial film review board prior to broadcast, and Bell ExpressVu assured *The Fifth Estate* that all their movies had been approved by film boards in either Ontario or Quebec. However, Robert Warren, Chair of the Ontario Film Review Board at the time, was shown examples of movies broadcast on Bell ExpressVu's two channels, movies that the company said had been cleared by the OFRB. During the viewing that was shown on *The Fifth Estate*, Mr. Warren said, "It's been actually a long time since we've seen something this violent here at the board." Contrary to Bell ExpressVu's claims, Mr. Warren hadn't heard of many of the movies, and some of them he said the OFRB would never approve because of the violent and degrading content. In closing the segment, Ms Gartner said that the

⁷⁴ The National, CBC News, March 27, 2001

⁷⁵ *The Pious Pornographers*, *The Fifth Estate*, March 28, 2001

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ *Porn Goes Mainstream*, Time, September 7, 1998

⁷⁸ *The Pious Pornographers*, *The Fifth Estate*, March 28, 2001

⁷⁹ *Porn in the U.S.A.*, 60 Minutes, CBSNews.com, November 21, 2003

⁸⁰ *Bell satellite TV pulls porn in wake of CBC expose*, Toronto Star, March 29, 2001

images shown on *The Fifth Estate* were only a "tiny sample, carefully chosen and edited to reveal the least possible".⁸¹ Bell ExpressVu cancelled both channels as a result of *The Fifth Estate* exposé.

Obscene Under the *Criminal Code*

Both Jean-Pierre Blais, Executive Director of Broadcasting for the CRTC, and Robert Warren, Chair of the OFRB, speculated on *The Fifth Estate* that the films shown by Bell ExpressVu might contravene the obscenity provisions of the *Criminal Code*. A viewer agreed and filed a complaint with the Toronto Police Service (TPS) alleging a contravention of the *Code*, and including a copy of *The Fifth Estate* broadcast.

The TPS, in turn, sought a legal opinion from Assistant Crown Attorney David Butt, an obscenity expert with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Following Mr. Butt's assessment of the Bell ExpressVu material, a letter was sent to the complainant from TPS Detective Staff Inspector Roy Pilkington stating the following:

It is the opinion of Mr. Butt that the materials allegedly distributed by Bell ExpressVu are obscene under the Criminal Code. However, it is his opinion, in all the circumstances, that at present it would not be in the public interest to prosecute Bell ExpressVu.

*Mr. Butt bases his opinion in part upon the careful steps apparently taken by Bell ExpressVu to avoid any further broadcast of similar material, as outlined in their letter to you dated May 7, 2001.*⁸²

The TPS also wrote to David McLennan, President and Chief Operating Officer of Bell ExpressVu:

I have advised [the complainant] that if you have not been forthright in your May 7 letter to her or you continue to be involved in the distribution of obscene material, then the Toronto Police Service and Mr. Butt would certainly be prepared to reconsider a prosecution against Bell ExpressVu.

*I hope that the response you received as a result of your Adult Programming has left you with an indication of not only the manner in which the public holds you accountable but also of the measures that the Toronto Police Service are willing to take to uphold community standards.*⁸³

The CRTC did nothing to Bell ExpressVu, once again illustrating how little they care about defending the safety and human rights of women (see Howard Stern and WWE sections).

"SNUFF" MOVIE WEBSITE

In 2002, a northern Ontario man, Donald Smith, was convicted of making, possessing and distributing obscene material through a sexual sadism website. Approximately 2,000 subscribers paid about \$50 to be members of the site where they could view films showing "woman-hating snipers executing victims, with blood gushing and flesh ripping in slow motion". The films typically showed a killer surprising a woman showering or sun-bathing. The victim was knifed or shot at close range in the breast or genitals, with special effects used to heighten the blood and gore.

At Smith's trial, the Crown called expert witnesses to testify regarding the harm caused by his products. Psychologist Dr. Neil Malamuth said such media images could lead men to a greater possibility of violence, desensitization to violence, and greater acceptance of myths about violence against women, while women can be affected with lowered self-esteem and enhanced fear of violence. Psychiatrist Dr.

⁸¹ *The Pious Pornographers*, *The Fifth Estate*, March 28, 2001

⁸² Letter dated June 11, 2001 to V. Smith from Detective Staff Inspector Roy Pilkington, Toronto Police Service

⁸³ Letter dated June 12, 2001 to David McLennan, President & COO, Bell ExpressVu, from Detective Staff Inspector Roy Pilkington, Toronto Police Service

Peter Collins said the materials would “be of great interest to a sexual sadist”, helping them fantasize through a medium which validates that fantasy due to the fact others are doing the same as they are. The Crown stated that such materials being available on the Internet would be of most risk to adolescents, who are most impressionable when developing psychosexual behaviour.

The Ontario Provincial Police also looked at the possibility of laying hate crime charges against Smith because of the way women were depicted in the material. “Unfortunately”, said the OPP’s Wayne Harrison, “the hate laws in Canada do not include gender as a group that can be the victim of a hate crime”.

One of the major issues in the case was whether the combination of nudity and violence depicted in the films met the *Criminal Code* definition of obscenity. A jury in Fort Frances believed it did, and Smith was convicted, fined \$100,000, put on probation for three years and prohibited from using his websites or the Internet.

Smith appealed his conviction and the case was heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal. The defence factum presented to the Appeal Court acknowledged that the videos displayed images of “nude or partially clad women who were subjected to violence by shootings with guns, or arrows, or inflicted by knives or sword”. Defence counsel, Brian Greenspan, argued, however, that Smith’s films did not meet the legal definition of obscenity because they featured “an abundance of violence”, but sexual activity was virtually absent. “You don’t have obscenity unless you have explicit sex coupled with violence,” Greenspan told the Court. His client, he said, took care to research landmark obscenity decisions before he began making films.

In 2005, the Court of Appeal released their decision and upheld an obscenity conviction against Smith on only one charge relating to graphic stories available on the website, and ordered a new trial on several counts. The Court ruled that “sexualized nudity” is not sufficient to constitute explicit sex under the *Criminal Code* definition of obscenity. The fine was reduced to \$2,000 and the Court noted that there was no jurisdiction, as a term of probation, for Smith to be ordered to turn over his interest in the websites to the Crown.

HUNTING FOR BAMBI WEBSITE

In 2003, outrage was sparked by news reports that a Las Vegas company was offering men an opportunity to track and shoot naked women with paintball guns⁸⁴ and purchase a video of their “hunt”. The hunts were offered through a web site called “Hunting for Bambi”.

Although some maintain the hunts are a hoax, the Hunting for Bambi web site continues to operate (as of August 22, 2010) and offer the hunts along with virulently misogynist commentary and pictures. At right is a picture reproduced from the home page.

**Men Hunting Naked Women.
It's About F**k'n Time!**



**That's Right Bitch.....
It's Hunting Season!**

INTERNET

While the Internet is an amazing and valuable resource, it is also a source of great concern arising from the fact that it provides instant access to graphically depicted acts of sadism, torture, bestiality, child abuse, sadomasochism, rape, incest, etc. While some of the sadistic and explicitly violent material is

⁸⁴ *Bizarre Game Targets Women: Hunting for Bambi Parts 1, 2 and 3*, KLAS TV, July 10, 2003

available through mainstream distribution channels in Canada, much of the sexually violent material is prohibited under the *Criminal Code* and could not be easily accessed if not for the Internet.

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) provides this content synopsis:

Virtual violence is readily available on the World Wide Web. Children and young people can download violent lyrics (including lyrics that have been censored from retail versions of songs), and visit Web sites that feature violent images and video clips. Much of the violence is also sexual in nature.

For example, the site Who Do You Want to Kill? allows players to select real-life stars of television shows, and then describe how they would kill them off in the series. The entries frequently include bizarre acts of degradation and sexual violence. Murder is also a staple of the Web site newgrounds.com, which features a number of Flash movies showing celebrities being degraded and killed. When MNet surveyed 5,682 Canadian young people in 2001, the newgrounds site ranked twelfth in popularity among 11- and 12-year-old boys.

Other popular sites such as gorezone.com and rotten.com feature real-life pictures of accident scenes, torture and mutilation. In 2000, rotten.com was investigated by the FBI for posting photographs depicting cannibalism.

Many kids view these sites as the online equivalent of harmless horror movies. But their pervasive combination of violence and sexual imagery is disturbing. Gorezone's front-page disclaimer describes the images on its site as "sexually oriented and of an erotic nature" and then warns viewers that they also contain scenes of death, mutilation and dismemberment. The disclaimer then normalizes this activity by stating, "my interest in scenes of death, horrifying photos and sexual matters, which is both healthy and normal, is generally shared by adults in my community."

Anecdotal evidence suggests that gore sites are well known to Canadian school children, although parents and teachers are often unaware of their existence. In MNet's 2001 survey, 70% of high school boys said that they had visited such sites.⁸⁵

A Wired article on pornographic web sites drew attention to sites offering fantasies of men slipping sedatives into women's drinks and then raping them. One offers free memberships to visitors who send their own original pictures of "passed out girls". In the United States, the Humane Society has been swamped with complaints about Internet sites featuring people having sex with dogs, horses, snakes and "almost every other creature imaginable".⁸⁶

PORNOGRAPHY'S CROSSOVER TO THE MAINSTREAM

Pornography has become ubiquitous -- impossible to ignore, avoid or deflect. A Washington Post article said, "The popularization of pornography is everywhere. In the suburbs, the shopping mall, the movie theatre, the radio, the television, our living rooms: Pop Porn."⁸⁷ Brian Heidik, winner of *Survivor: Thailand*, starred in porn movies. Sarah Kozar, a finalist on *Joe Millionaire*, acted in bondage videos, and porn performers are a staple on the *Howard Stern Show*, which broadcasts in an early-morning time slot.

Rock and rap music, with its very young audience, has enthusiastically embraced pornography. Rappers Ice-T and Too-Short have released porn videos; Snoop Dogg produced the XXX-rated *Doggystyle* in 2002.⁸⁸ Eminem featured porn performers Gina Lynn in the video for his single, *Superman*, and Jenna

⁸⁵ *Violence in Media Entertainment*, Media Awareness Network web site, April 2003

⁸⁶ *Porn Spam: It's Getting Raunchier*, Wired, September 30, 2002

⁸⁷ *Pornography Goes From XXX to Zzz*, Washington Post, February 24, 2003

⁸⁸ *Boogie nights*, Globe and Mail, May 7, 2003

Jameson in his *Without Me* video. Porn worker Dasha was one of Madonna's party pals in the clip for *Music*, Blink 182 had a porn performer pose in a nurse's costume for the cover of their 1999 album, *Enema of the State*, and Kid Rock posed with porn performers for the cover of *Rebel without a Pause*.⁸⁹

Brad Brough, producer of the Canadian-made series "sextv" says, "These images just filter in to billboards or onto magazine covers or whatever it is. It just kind of accumulates. Kids growing up, the next generation down from me, are growing up with these images in their brains. They have VCRs, they have Internet access and they have *Gear* magazine and *Maxim* magazine within arm's reach in Chapters bookstore".⁹⁰

This is not healthy sexuality being promoted on such a massive scale, but violence, misogyny, prostitution and deviance -- and quite often by the most mainstream national and multi-national entertainment conglomerates.

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL COST?

As exposing children and youth to this type of material is a relatively new "social experiment" being conducted, not in a controlled research environment on university students, but live and on the very young, it could be some years before we know what the social cost is. In studying the problem of youth exposure to Internet pornography, the National Research Council (U.S.) determined that, "The science base for understanding the impact on children of viewing sexually explicit materials is sparse".⁹¹ The Council's report, *Youth, Pornography, and the Internet*, states:

*For research purposes, a few studies of sexually explicit material have used college-age viewers as a way of understanding the impact this material may have on children. Note, however, that a college student differs considerably in cognitive, physical, and social maturity compared with a primary- or middle-school student.*⁹²

The report also notes that ethical and legal considerations limit actual experiments to demonstrate the impact that exposure to sexually explicit material has on young people. However, as the Canadian Paediatric Society points out, "Numerous studies illustrate the powerful influence of mass media on adolescents at the very time they are developing their values and beliefs around gender roles, sexual behaviours and attitudes", and they also say that youth consistently "rank media among their leading sources of information on sex and sexuality"⁹³, an alarming thought considering the prevalence of violent, misogynist and deviant content.

Dr. Christina Grant of the Hospital for Sick Children's Adolescent Medicine Division says, "Experts agree that in considering the role of media and teens' sexual behaviour, we must reflect on what has been established in the field of violence and the media where there is a clear directional influence on the role of media and violent behaviour/attitudes. Simply put, if adolescents can learn aggressive behaviour from television, could they not also be able to learn sexual behaviour?"⁹⁴

According to Alan Mirabelli, Executive Director of the Vanier Institute of the Family in Ottawa, "Our children do suffer from... 'hurried child syndrome' as they rush, at younger and younger ages, to emulate and imitate adults and their behaviours." Carla Rice, a clinical program specialist with the Body Image Project at Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, says the cultural

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ *Porn goes mainstream*, Toronto Sun, December 8, 1999

⁹¹ *No Single Solution for Protecting Kids From Internet Pornography*, The National Academies News Release, May 2, 2002

⁹² *Youth, Pornography, and the Internet*, Dick Thornburgh and Herbert S. Lin, Editors, Committee to Study Tools and Strategies for Protecting Kids from Pornography and Their Applicability to Other Inappropriate Internet Content, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 2003

⁹³ *Measuring the media in kids' lives: A guide for health practitioners*, Canadian Paediatric Society

⁹⁴ *Teens, sex and the media: Is there a connection?*, Paediatric Child Health, May/June 2003

pressure on girls to look "hot" is tremendous, as pop stars from Madonna to Britney use their bodies to sell records.

Clothes designed for girls, including little girls, have never been so revealing. The Washington Post called it the "whore wars", and said, "What many find truly astonishing is the tender age at which its' first aimed..."⁹⁵ Girls are dressing in such a provocative manner, that even elementary schools in Ontario introduced dress codes:

Popular tween wear -- thong underwear, low-riding jeans, and crop-tops -- have left school administrators with little choice but to spell out appropriate attire for girls as young as six, directives once reserved for high schoolers in a hurry to grow up.

Some grade schools now include a general ban on "short-shorts" and "skimpy tops", while other dress codes are more specific. They include a ban on tank tops, see-through shirts, spaghetti straps, tight shirts, midriff-baring tops, visible underwear and "pants that are cut so low (or pulled down so low) that you can see underwear".

The tween fashion craze has moved well beyond city borders and has crept into small-town Canada.

*"It was predominantly the females coming to school with spaghetti-strapped tops and/or a bare midriff, so we put a dress code in place. Especially in elementary school, underwear shouldn't be showing and bare skin shouldn't be showing," says Mike Dunphy, principal of Hillsdale Elementary School in rural Ontario.*⁹⁶

Numerous studies illustrate the powerful influence of mass media on adolescents at the very time they are developing their values and beliefs around gender roles, sexual behaviours and attitudes.

Canadian Paediatric Society

When the Centennial Academy in Montreal has a free-dress day (uniforms not required), the girls "come in with their lace thong sticking out of their pants and the pants are cut very low, right down to the pubic bone. It's very, very exhibitionist," says Andrea Peplow, co-ordinator of admissions."

Commenting on what this means for young girls, Globe and Mail reporter, Deborah Fulsang, wrote, "...there is a huge difference between a 20-year-old pop star who travels with a phalanx of bodyguards and a pubescent girl waiting for a bus."⁹⁷

The mainstreaming of pornography is suspected of affecting girls in even more destructive ways. In the United States, child advocates are worried and puzzled by the increasing numbers of middle-class teenage girls turning to prostitution for "thrills, or money, or both".⁹⁸ An article in Newsweek noted:

Some activists put the blame at least in part on a culture that glorifies pimping. The new song by superstar rapper 50 Cent—"P.I.M.P."—is about as subtle as the title suggests.

Sample lyric: "Bitch choose with me, I'll have you stripping in the street/Put my other hoes down, you get your ass beat." Rapper Jay-Z's hit song "Big Pimpin' " goes like this: "I thug 'em,

⁹⁵ *Mom, I'm ready for school*, Globe and Mail, September 28, 2002

⁹⁶ *X-Kilts take on miniskirts in schoolyard*, Ottawa Citizen, April 22, 2003

⁹⁷ *Mom, I'm ready for school*, Globe and Mail, September 28, 2002

⁹⁸ *This could be your kid*, Newsweek, August 18, 2003

*f—k ‘em, love ‘em, leave ‘em/Cause I don’t f—kin’ need ‘em/Take em out the hood, keep ‘em lookin’ good/But I don’t f—kin’ feed ‘em.*⁹⁹

While there are those who dismiss this as just another development in the history of "teen" rebellion, performers like 50 Cent and Jay-Z are adults not teenagers, the record company executives who market their violent albums are adults, and the "slut, bitch, whore, porn star in training" t-shirts and hooker tot-wear aren't created by teenagers -- they're created and marketed by adults to the very young. The message that misogyny, prostitution, pornography and the sexualization of children are all "good things", is being force fed to children and youth by adults, the very group responsible for protecting them and ensuring their healthy emotional development.

PAYING THE PRICE

The misogyny poisoning our social environment comes with a cost and the price is being paid largely by girls and young women. The 2008 report of Toronto's School Community Safety Advisory Panel stated that, "Violence against girls and young women is a pervasive problem" in Toronto schools. The Panel found that "gender-based violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, is occurring at alarming rates" and they concluded that the seriousness of the problem required immediate attention.¹⁰⁰

*The disrespectful,
degrading,
contemptuous
treatment of women
is so pervasive and
so mainstream that it
has just about lost its
ability to shock.*

Bob Hebert
New York Times

Toronto school board trustee, Cathy Dandy, who heads the board's school safety committee, agreed the problem is serious and pointed out the increase in extremely violent pornography and degrading music videos and lyrics.¹⁰¹

A study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health was released shortly after the Panel report. Psychologist David Wolfe said his study of 23 rural and urban high schools in southwestern Ontario showed the issue is not a Toronto phenomenon.

"We're saying it, unfortunately, is a very common phenomenon," Wolfe said. Teen harassment used to be more racist and sexist, he said, but is now "more homophobic and misogynistic," a lot of which is driven by what they see in the media.¹⁰²

In speaking about sexual harassment to a Toronto Star reporter, girls from five Toronto high schools reported being subjected to a barrage of misogynist comments, as well as being sexually assaulted "at any time in the halls". 14-year-old Tanya said, "You hear stuff like 'What's up, bitch?' and 'Hey, ho' every other second".

They hear girls being called skank, ho (whore) or slut every day, and they hear guys yell out which part of the male anatomy they want them to suck.¹⁰³ These insults and behaviour are lifted straight from popular culture.

In his book, *Misogyny & the Emcee: Sex, Race & Hip Hop*, by American social activist, Ewuare Osayande, says:

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ *The Road to Health: A Final Report on School Safety*, School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008

¹⁰¹ *Sexual harassment common in high schools, study finds*, Toronto Star, by Kristin Rushowy, February 7, 2008

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ *Girls candid about sex harassment*, by Kristin Rushowy, Toronto Star, January 28, 2008

*Rap music and the rappers who create and produce it are responsible for the impact of their message on the minds of impressionable youth. When a sixteen or seventeen year old boy hears a rapper he admires counsel him to "smack that bitch," why do we think that he would not consider doing that? What other force is as compelling that is advising him not to strike a woman, when the majority of mediums in American life only reinforce his destructive desires? Who are we fooling? None but ourselves if we think we can deny the impact rap(e) music is having on the minds and behavior of our youth.*¹⁰⁴

He's absolutely right, the majority of mediums in North American life do reinforce destructive desires. This is the fault of the "artists" who create it, the corporations who profit from it, and the politicians who sit on their hands and do nothing to stop it. Shame on them all.

¹⁰⁴ *Misogyny & the Emcee, Sex, Race & Hip Hop*, Ewuare X. Osayande, 2008