

Pornography and Sex Trafficking

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By Janice Shaw Crouse

California Assemblyman Charles Calderon estimates that people spend over \$3,000 *every second* on adult entertainment and that there is a new adult video produced every 39 minutes. California lobbyists for the adult entertainment industry estimate that they employ 50,000 people and generate \$4 billion a year. That multiple billion dollar figure reveals a pivotal fact about obscenity and pornography. They're big bucks and big business.

Of course, we have laws on the books about obscenity and pornography, but, amazingly, obscenity is not taken seriously even by those legally charged with prosecuting offenders. So, while the Department of Justice is not looking, our homes are being invaded by offensive language, suggestive advertisements, blatantly obscene so-called "entertainment" and movie scenes that make "dirty dancing" seem tame.

Many people defend anyone's right to produce, distribute and consume obscene materials. They call us prudes when we object to the pornification of our culture. Evidently, they think it's cute when little children are sexualized. They are blasé at obscenity on television and in movies. They shrug their shoulders at people who have a foul mouth or tell offensive jokes and use crude, vulgar language. They just don't understand the ramifications of cultural disintegration. Yet, those who know the facts understand that small seedlings of the obscene can grow into giant sequoias of criminal sex networks.

Once the predator sees someone as a mere object - instead of a person worthy of respect and dignity - that person can be used, and abused, for the personal satisfaction of the predator; then, it is a very easy step to becoming a pimp and using that person as a commercial sexual commodity. Some people begin their downward spiral into pornography addiction by perusing *Playboy* or *Hustler* or some free online adult porn sites. Having entered this gateway, some consumers crave the titillation of more graphic, perverted images to satisfy their desire for stimulation. Some of them need more violent, more sadistic images and, ultimately, they seek them out. A research study of convicted sex offenders by psychologists at the Federal Bureau of Prisons became available last year; it will certainly disabuse those remaining people who think that obscenity and pornography are harmless indulgences. The study found that more than 85 percent of prisoners convicted of possessing child pornography admitted to abusing at least one child.

Obscenity is also used to ensnare women and girls into prostitution and sex trafficking. So-called "modeling agencies" or "modeling agents" take nude photos of girls and women and then threaten them with the exposure of these photos if they are unwilling to prostitute themselves. Ultimately, it is a matter of supply and demand. When there is demand, somebody will see this as a profitable opportunity and supply the goods. When there is demand for children to be used sexually, that demand will be met by ruthless traffickers.

Many pimps and traffickers use pornography to initiate their innocent victims into their new life of sexual slavery. The victims are shown pornographic films, over and over again for days at a time, so that they get hardened to accept the inevitable and learn what is expected of them.

The pattern of behavior is familiar; it follows the teaching technique of “translating image to action.” Teachers and coaches instruct the student to intensely visualize a desired outcome, act it out in the mind, and then it will become permanently imprinted on the psyche. With that technique, the teachers say, visualization leads to realization.

So it is with obscene materials and pornography. The johns watch porn, seeing violent and aberrant behaviors on film, then they crave the realization of what they have seen. Those obsessions drive them to the prostituted women and girls to get what they have seen depicted so graphically.

Cultural acceptance of pornography, stripping and prostitution is growing by the day. There are shows like “Pimp My Ride” and Academy-award winning songs like “It’s Hard Out Here for a Pimp” and they are not considered offensive, they are considered hip. In cities like Chicago and Miami, the “Pimp’s Ball” is a huge event where the pimps arrive in their outrageous limos, decked out in their “bling” and showing off their tattooed girls. Such events make the point: if we do not enforce obscenity laws stringently, the ripple effect on the rest of the culture will lead to a tidal wave of degradation and destruction.

Stripper poles are now part of some people’s bedroom décor. Pimp ‘n Ho parties are where the “in” crowd goes to have fun. Pop Star, Beyonce, has just come out with the line of children’s clothing that looks like “pedophilia chic.” Dressing like a streetwalker is now considered an acceptable Halloween costume for young girls or a prom dress for a teenager. There is even a line of clothing for infants called “Pimpfants.” A culture where people have those attitudes and values makes it so much easier for traffickers to set up their business exploiting children, women and men. All of this should offend our sensibilities, but in today’s culture, it is no big deal.

Those films that are made in the San Fernando Valley in California? They are very likely among the training tools used by sex traffickers from Malaysia to Mexico to Madagascar. There is no escaping the fact that obscenity and pornography produced in the United States damages, demeans and degrades people - including innocent children - around the world. The question is: what are we going to do about it and do we care enough to insist that the laws against obscenity be enforced?