

**The National Viewers and Listeners Association of Australia Inc.**

**N V L A A**

**“Towards a New Century and a Safer Society”**

---

**Productivity  
Commission**

**INQUIRY**

**INTO**

**BROADCASTING**

**Submission by**

**National Viewers and Listeners Association**

---

President : Jean Hicks  
3327

Vice President : Joan McArthur PH : (08) 9457

Secretary : Paul Hotchkin

P.O. Box 211, Greenwood, W.A. 6929 <http://millennium.fortunecity.com/berkeley/500>

Email Address: [nationalviewers@fcmail.com](mailto:nationalviewers@fcmail.com)

## RADIO BROADCASTING

While we have a very good system called the National Classification System where it says “Adults can See and hear what they like” however it does go on to say that “Minors should be protected”. Well we believe that they aren’t. In the event of the last few years with the Jonesboro and the Littleton Shootings, the American’s have been investigating the reasons why. Please find enclosed submissions from U.S. senate sub-committee hearings on “How music influences teenagers” and speeches by a U.S senator and U.S. President Bill Clinton’s speech in the wake of the Littleton Shootings. We recommend similar hearings and investigations by a Commission set up and headed by a team of Paediatricians, Psychiatrists, Researchers, Doctors and even Ministers of Religion. One needing investigating is the Government Radio Station Triple J. We want to know why every Friday night Triple J is airing “Death” Heavy Metal music (called “Three Hours of Power”) into areas where there is a high rate of youth suicide? City youth have a chance where they can choose between many youth orientated stations. Whereas country youth do not have that luxury and can only tune into the only youth orientated radio station, Triple J. We also have evidence where this same station has advocated drug use when we as a country are spending millions of dollars combating and educating the youth from it. We do not believe excuses that this type of music makes the youth think, especially positive thoughts, with negative type music, they are likely to think negative thoughts. We also don’t believe that the radio station is catering for a youth culture that is already there but is helping create it. It is well documented that media shapes cultures, otherwise large corporations wouldn’t be spending millions of dollars on advertising. While we applaud Triple J in its airing of diversification of music including new Australian content, it is the more damaging negative music that we are concerned about. Heavy Metal is also referred to as violent or angry music. We feel that there are more constructive and healthier ways for our youth to release anger and energy.

Just last year in November it was reported in NSW where a Youth gouged his mother’s eyes out and tried to suffocate her after she asked him to turn the music down. It was revealed in court that he was influenced by Heavy Metal music and comics. Another involved two girls in two separate incidents who both jumped off a bridge into oncoming traffic in memory of Grunge singer Kurt Cobain. In April this year, a Perth youth brutally used a axe and a lawn edger on his Grandmother and it was revealed here that he was influenced by Heavy Metal music and violent movies such as “Silence of the Lambs”.

There is a saying “Music soothes the soul”, well we believe that it can also destroy it. If music wasn’t such a powerful tool then Music Therapy Colleges wouldn’t be springing up around the globe. How about this saying “You are what you hear?”

Last year at a Suicide forum held in Canberra in August, one of our members met a father whose son committed suicide after being influenced by heavy metal/punk music. It was found that the group’s name was called Suicidal Tendencies. The particular song implied suicide, “When you hang yourself, if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again”. The beginning of the song starts with.... “Father please forgive me....”, the suicide note starts with “ Father please don’t blame me.....” We then found the CD to be readily available at local music shops. The next shock was the group was set to play in Australia in January. While it is unclear if they did or not, a local magazine called “Massive” decided to put a full page advertisement with Suicidal Tendencies products like a T Shirt with “Suicidal Wrist” and suicidal shorts etc. This same magazine ran editorials all glorifying death. For example Marilyn Manson’s Death Wish to Courtney (Cobain’s wife) and a four page article promoting satanism. Apart from magazines we found the Internet to be a playground with websites centred around Heavy Metal/punk music, satanism and death. When we say playground we mean that it is an area where these things are trivialised and glorified. The worse part yet is that our teenagers look up to these musicians as role-models.

The argument that parents are responsible for what their children hear or watch doesn't hold anymore simply because the teenagers sometimes uses headphones and parents aren't aware of what they are listening to. Also while some of these bands preach f... you! f...the world! f ...everything. The teenager emerges from the bedroom with the same attitude and then the fights start usually with teenager saying that they will leave home with a "Live away from home allowance" (taxpayers money) and a bad attitude towards life.

So with that in mind - we all have responsibility.

- \* Parents have the responsibility to protect their young.
- \* Government has responsibility to protect it's citizens.
- \* Media Moguls have responsibility to produce material that will be acceptable to community standards.

The Australian Broadcasting Authority has done some research into this subject of Heavy Metal music, but certainly not enough. Taken from the ABA "Headbanging or Dancing " books are some of the ABA results and comments made by the teenagers when interviewed were :

Page 17 " I also reckon it's better fun, headbanging than dancing". Girl **12-14 years** Darwin.

Page 41 " Common Complaint about HM was that it was impossible to understand the words while others said that techno music had no meaning and consisted of just a beat". Another quote was "HM is constant noise". (Notice the word noise and not music?)

Page 82 "We are influenced by the media...."

Page 84 "JJJ is a teenage station - it can get so annoying because they can play a lot of real heavy metal".

Page 87 Nationally - Triple J was favourite station at 26%

Page 91 Teenagers in Darwin were not satisfied with the choice of radio stations available.

**NB: We have included the speeches and transcripts of the U.S. Senate hearings as evidence in case the Productivity Commission can not set up a public hearing in Perth.**

## **PROGRAM STANDARDS**

Since the giving of self regulation to television providers, the necessary Codes of Practice adopted by FACTS, ABC and SBS have gradually become more liberalised in practice. FACTS has no problem adopting a degree of violence, sex and nudity, bad language, social and domestic conflict, imitable and dangerous behaviour and other - dealing with music - for G rated movies. PG rated movies can be moved to Children's time slots if the channel feels it can be done.

More and more we receive complaints of too much violence or gratuitous sex. Our Federal Attorney- General is a great believer that people should be able to see and hear what they desire. We of the NVLAA feel that we should be able to view programs of our choice. More often than not programs of our choice are not being offered to us.

Recently the Federation of Commercial Television gave us an opportunity to comment on their Codes of Practice overview. FACTS are hoping to introduce a new MV Classification (providing

the ABA sanctions it) that will allow extreme violence after 9.30p.m. Parents who care will have no choice but to send their 16 - 18 y o offspring to bed or to some other activity. They will have no other choice. These parents are exercising responsibility towards their children's nurture. How much responsibility are the providers showing?

What has happened to the old expression "soft porn"? Now we hear the word "erotica" used in its place. The 60 minutes program 18<sup>th</sup> April, Channel Nine gave us a clear indication of David Haines' (past Deputy Censor OFLC) perspective. From Deputy Censor to producer of Blue Movies, he claims that Australia's classification system is a wonderful system for this country. Why wouldn't it be so in his eyes - he helped set it up together with his friend John Dickie and fellow OFLC members. What about the other 16 million people who are not supporting him? Even allowing for apathy on the part of those who may not care or who can't pick up a pen to complain, the majority are still not looking for "erotica".

The use of soft pornography can in some cases (not all) lead on to the use of hard pornography. Ted Bundy, the U.S. serial murderer/rapist was a user of soft porn. He even warned others before he was executed not to use it. We also include findings by a Clinical Psychiatrist Victor Kline who has done extensive research into this area.

What has happened to family programs? Has the community lost sight of standards? "...it is pornography itself that pushes the boundaries back further and further. Community standards are likely to reflect the damage that pornography has done". Catherine Itzen (p414) Pornography, Women, Violence and Civil Liberties.

Why can't we get back to movies that depict strong happy families with happy children with a healthy self esteem? On offer now we see dysfunctional family situations with only one parent, violence in marriage, sex outside of marriage, suffering children with no self respect. Paul Newman is one mature actor who is convinced that movies being made today are not helping to protect families (Phone conversation with an NVLAA office bearer). The list of movies we recommend to our members is growing shorter by the day. Even now after the Littleton Shootings, Hollywood is being asked to "toe the line" with their production of violent movies.

## **REGULATION OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION**

We believe that children's programs on television should be regulated allowing only C and G programs. Parents are not always able to supervise their children's viewing. Mothers are often busy preparing meals and doing other chores. They should be able to do so with the knowledge that their children will be protected from unwanted violent or sexual scenes. Children are on occasion home from school because of illness and on pupil free days. Often M programs are showing around mid-day to 4 pm. This is adult time.

Children are now able to use the Internet and in many cases have more knowledge about this medium than their parents have. Our advice to parents is to keep the computer in a family room, spend more time with their teenagers while they are on the Internet, treat it as you would strangers in the street.

## **AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING AUTHORITY**

ABA has the power to call broadcasting bodies to be responsible for decisions they make. NVLAA has noticed that whenever the ABA has made a decision that a Code of Practice has been breached, the penalty has been grossly inadequate. An ABC breach of Code on one occasion went by without penalty because the ABA couldn't think of how to penalise the ABC. Why aren't penalties written into the Broadcasting Act. ABA decisions are regularly published in the ABA Update magazine. NVLAA can be forgiven for thinking that the ABA is a "toothless tiger".

## **COMPLAINTS**

NVLAA believes that the complaints mechanism to TV Channels is too complicated. Few people are aware that verbal complaints via telephone are not acceptable. Complaints must be in written form and the onus is on the person complaining to know which part of the Code has been broken. The time for response is too long (60 days). The TV Channels are not advertising their Codes of Practice well enough. Of the many complaints NVLAA receives, none of the person's bringing the complaint is aware that a Code of Practice exists. NVLAA has issued a "How to Complain" brochure, in the hope to educate people in this area. We suggest that people be allowed to complain about programs and by telephone directly to the Channel. Channels could then collate verbal complaints for referral back to FACTS for commercial television. ABC and SBS could do the same with their verbal complaints and refer them back to those who are looking after their Codes of Practice. Telephone complaints seem to be acceptable for the removal of distasteful advertisements.

### **NVLAA Recommendation**

Without a doubt there must be a urgent thorough investigation into Triple J's programming and the ABA's Complaints mechanism.

## **A Deserved Bad Rap: Music's Impact**

On November 6, 1997, Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) convened his Government Affairs subcommittee hearing to examine "Music Violence: How Does It Affect Our Youth?" There had not been a similar event since September 1985 when the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing to examine "Record Labelling." This edition of Policy Insights will review the current crises facing young people in America and current knowledge about the impact of the music they consume.

### **America's Youth in Crisis**

Young people are in more trouble, and in more danger, than ever before. Though the teenage population shrank from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, teen arrests for murder jumped nearly 160%. Similar jumps have occurred for aggravated assault (nearly 100%), simple assault (more than 140%), and robbery (nearly 60%). About three million kids between 12 and 17 use marijuana and their use has doubled since 1990. The percentage of kids in that age group using cocaine jumped 167% between 1992 and 1995. Their use of crack (up 108%) and heroin (up 92%) also soared.

By the time they leave their teens, about 80% of males and more than 70% of females have had sex. More than 70% of births to teenagers are illegitimate. Three million teens contract a sexually transmitted disease each year.

Teen suicide has more than tripled since 1970 and is the second leading cause of death among youth in America

Going beyond documenting the crisis to diagnosing its causes is challenging. Too many people, however, have ignored the contribution made by the violent and sex-oriented messages carried by popular music, one of the most powerful cultural influences in human history.

### **Music's Influence**

Aristotle believed music can shape character, while Plato believed music can be used to change whole societies. Dr. Howard Hanson, director of the famed Eastman School of Music, wrote more than 50 years ago that music "has power for evil or good." Teenagers consider musicians as heroes far more than athletes and rate music ahead of religion and books as factors that greatly influence their generation. This is perhaps because they spend so much time listening to it. Between the 7th and 12th grades, young people spend nearly as much time listening to

popular music as they spend in school over 12 years. Senator Brownback noted in his hearing that "the average teen listens to music around four hours a day."

## **Music's Message**

New York University lyrics professor Dr. Sheila Davis contends that "popular songs...provide the primary 'equipment for living' for America's youth." What "equipment" do America's youth acquire from today's popular music? Put another way, what messages are carried by the very powerful medium of popular music? The trends are invariably negative.

One trend is from the implicit to the explicit. Elvis Presley's soulful singing of "Heartbreak Hotel" gave way to the Rolling Stone's frustrated call to get "satisfaction." Today, the heavy metal band Motley Crew promotes intercourse on an elevator in "Ten Seconds to Love." The rap group 2 Live Crew de-scribes intimate sex acts in brash detail. Columnist John Leo writes: "Vulgar or sexual band names used to be ambiguous or hidden (i.e., the Stones, Cream).

Now there are at least 13 bands named after the male genitals, 6 after female genitals, 4 after sperm, 8 after abortion and one after a vaginal infection."

Another trend is the addition of new, more destructive, themes. Consumers of today's heavy metal music receive a much more dismal and bleak view of life than those in the last generation. Dr. Paul King, clinical assistant professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Tennessee, writes that "[t]he message of heavy metal is that there is a higher power in control of the world and that power is violence - often violence presided over by Satan."

Cultural commentator Michael Medved and Professor Carl Rashke hold similar views about today's music. Medved asserts that today's music is dominated by "sexual adventurism and the focus on physical pleasure as an end in itself." Rashke, Director of the Institute for Humanities at the University of Denver, observes that heavy metal music "is a true aesthetics of violence. It is a metaphysics. It is the tactic of consecrating violent terror, of divinizing it."

Just as heavy metal music added violence and the occult to the earlier rock music themes of sex and drugs, the genre of "gangsta rap" glorifies violence, rape, and drugs. Cypress Hill's "I Wanna Get High" and Tone Loc's "Mean Green" openly advocate marijuana use while Too Short promotes prostitution and drugs on his Shorty the Pimp album. In 1993, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's board of directors unanimously adopted a resolution condemning "the words, lyrics, and images that degrade, disrespect and denigrate African--American women with obscenities and vulgarities of the vilest nature."

## **Music's Impact**

If many messages presented by the powerful medium of music are increasingly negative, what is the answer to the question Senator Brownback's hearing asked about music violence and sex: how does it affect our youth?

The American Psychological Association includes "media influences" on the list of factors contributing to a child's risk profile. Most research on media effects has focused on television and confirms that television violence begets real-life violence.

This conclusion is shared by medical associations, commissions, and research organizations including: National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (1969); U.S. Surgeon General (1972); American Medical Association (1976,1996); National Institute of Mental Health (1982); Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence (1984); American Psychological Association (1985,1992).

Addressing Harvard University's School of Public Health in 1992, Professor Leonard Eron declared: "The scientific debate is over." In 1995, a group of European researchers published findings on the causes of psychosocial disorders in young people. In the chapter on media, they concluded that "the data across nations support the conclusion that viewing televised violence leads to aggressive behavior and not vice versa"

Many experts agree with child psychologist Dr. David Elkind that "music can influence young people as much as any visual media." In fact, the American Medical Association concluded in 1989 that music exerts a greater influence on teenagers than television. Surveys find that more teenagers than adults believe that popular music encourages drug use and premarital sex, and contributes to a "culture of aggression."

More specifically, research at the University of Florida shows that the more negative the message, the more young people listen to and believe that message. Professor Hannelore Wass concludes that these findings "seem to dispel the notion advanced by the re-cording industry that teenagers are only interested in the sound of music, don't know the lyrics, and listen strictly for fun."

Similarly, two researchers found that listeners to music with "potentially negative themes...were more likely to report that they knew all of the words to their favorite songs and that the lyrics were important to their experience of the music." In another study, these researchers discovered that heavy metal fans expressed greater approval of "sexual, drug-related, occult, and and-social behaviors and attitudes."

In the dozen years since the U.S. Senate last visited the subject, the music is more powerful, the messages more negative, and the impact on young people more destructive. Senator Brownback and other public officials must decide whether government policy can be part of a solution to this crisis and, if so, whether the state or federal

government should pursue that goal and what the best public policy might be. Senator Brownback's hearing, however, showed that the crisis is worse than ever.

[NOTE: Sources for the facts cited in this edition of Policy Insights are available in Heavy Metal, Rap, and America's Youth: Issues and Alternatives (4th edition), forthcoming 1998) to be published by the Free Congress Foundation.]

Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, Inc., or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, Inc., 717 Second Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

Page maintained by the office of Senator Sam Brownback (KS)

TESTIMONY

of the  
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

on

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF MUSIC VIOLENCE  
before the  
SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF  
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Presented by,  
Frank Palumbo, M.D., FAAP  
November 6, 1997

An article in the May 1997 issue of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine documented televised music videos with multiple episodes of violence or weapon carrying. Rock's Guns-N-Roses and Beastie Boys each reached 36 violent episodes performing just one song.

A wide majority of adults surveyed in a 1997 report from Public Agenda. "Kids These Days: What Americans Really Think about the Next Generation," decried sex and violence in the media as threatening to the well-being of young people. The report, however, couches this as a problem without a solution. "Given the intense complaints about the media, it is somewhat surprising that only half of those surveyed (49%) think pressuring the entertainment industry to produce movies and music with less violence and sex will be a very effective way to help kids. Perhaps people doubt that the industry will be responsive to public pressure, or wonder just how much influence they as individuals can bring to bear," it states.

We believe something can and should be done. Poll after poll laments the belief that our country, including its youth, is losing its moral center. Responsibility, respect and discipline are thought to be a thing of the past. Crime and violence have escalated to the point where it is a public health problem. Although there is no one solution, awareness of, and sensitivity to, the potential impact of music lyrics and videos by consumers, the media and the music industry is one important piece of the puzzle. It is in the children's best interest to listen to lyrics or to watch videos that are not violent, sexist, drug--oriented, or antisocial.

The Academy strongly opposes censorship. As a society, however, we have to acknowledge the responsibility parents, the music industry and others have in helping to foster the nation's children.

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee.  
Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the social impact

of music violence. My name is Dr. Frank Palumbo and I am a practicing pediatrician here in Washington DC. I am testifying on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), an organization of 53,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

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. Policy statements are the official position of the Academy concerning health care issues and help guide pediatricians in their assessment and treatment of patients.

Pediatricians with a specialty in adolescent medicine are keenly aware of how crucial music is to a teen's identity and how it helps them define important social and subcultural boundaries. One study found that teens listened to music an average of 40 hours per week.

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. Heavy metal and rap lyrics have elicited the greatest concern, as they compound the environment in which some adolescents increasingly are confronted with pregnancy, drug use, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and other sexually transmitted diseases, injuries, homicide and suicide.

For example, Nine Inch Nails released "Big Man with a Gun," with the following lyrics: I am a big man (yes I am) and I have a big gun; got me a big old click and I like to have fun; held against your forehead, I'll make you suck it, maybe I'll put a hole in your head; you know, just for the f--k; of it...I'm every inch a man, and I'll show you somehow; me and my f--king gun; nothing can stop me now; shoot shoot shoot shoot shoot...

Marilyn Manson has quite the way with a lyric: "Who said date rape isn't kind," "The housewife I will beat" and "I slit my teenage wrist" are just a sample from two songs.

To date, no studies have documented a cause-and-effect relationship between sexually explicit or violent lyrics and adverse behavioral effects, i.e., I'll listen to a song about killing someone and therefore I go out and kill. But we can all acknowledge the overall effect music has on people, including adolescents and children. Otherwise, we wouldn't listen to it. Music wakes us up in the morning, makes us want to dance, soothes us when we're feeling sad and grates on some folks' nerves in the elevator. From infancy to adulthood, it is an integral part of our lives. Mothers sing lullabies to babies, toddlers and children play "ring around the rosie," and teenagers become absorbed in songs they believe help better define them during this rocky transition into adulthood. Make no mistake about it, music can

summon a range of emotions, most of which are wonderful. Yet there is some music that communicates potentially harmful health messages, especially when it reaches a vulnerable audience.

If parents in the 50s didn't like Elvis' gyrating hips, those same people would be astounded at how rapidly we've reached the "anything goes" mentality of the 90s. With the advent of MTV and VH-I, not only do we have to listen to violent lyrics that for example degrade women, but we also get to see it acted out in full color. A handful of experimental studies indicate that music videos may have a significant behavioral impact by desensitizing violence and by making teenagers more likely to approve of premarital sex. According to a U.S. Department of Education report, a large percentage of young women and girls have been "subjected to a pattern of overt sexual hostility accompanied by actual or threatened physical contact and the repeated use of obscene or foul language."

Although the evidence is incomplete, based on our knowledge of child and adolescent development, the AAP believes that parents should be aware of pediatricians' concerns about the possible negative impact of music lyrics and videos. The Academy recommends that:

Research should be developed concerning the impact music lyrics and videos have on the behavior of adolescents and preadolescents.

The music video industry should be encouraged to produce videos and public service messages with positive themes about relationships, racial harmony, drug avoidance, nonviolence and conflict resolution, sexual abstinence, pregnancy prevention, and avoidance of sexually transmitted diseases.

Music video producers should be encouraged to exercise sensitivity and self-restraint in what they depict, as should networks in what they choose to air.

The music industry should develop and apply a system of specific content - labeling of music regarding violence, sex, drugs, or offensive lyrics. For those concerned about the "forbidden fruit" syndrome, only one study has examined the impact of parental advisory labels, and it found that teens were not more likely to be attracted simply because of the labeling. We label the food we eat, and the movies we watch -- why not label the music? If labeling is not done voluntarily by the music industry, then regulation should be developed to make it mandatory.

Performers should be encouraged to serve as positive role models for children and teenagers.

Pediatricians should join with educators and parents in local and national coalitions to discuss the effects of music lyrics on children and adolescents. The possible negative impact of

sexually explicit drug-oriented, or violent lyrics on compact discs, tapes, music videos and the Internet should be brought to light in the context of any possible behavioral effects.

Parents should take an active role in monitoring music that their children are exposed to and which they can purchase, as well as the videos they watch. Ultimately, it is the parent's responsibility to monitor what their children listen to and view. Pediatricians should encourage parents to do so.

Pediatricians should counsel parents to become educated about the media. This means watching television with their children and teenagers, discussing content with them, and initiating the process of selective viewing at an early age. In order to help this process, the Academy has launched Media Matters, a national media education campaign targeted to physicians, parents and youth. The primary goal of the Media Matters campaign is to help parents and children understand and impact upon the sometimes negative effects of images and messages in the media, including music lyrics and videos.

Media education includes developing critical thinking and viewing skills, and offering creative alternatives to media consumption. The Academy is particularly concerned about mass media images and messages, and the resulting impact on the health of vulnerable young people, in areas including violence, safety, sexuality, use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs, nutrition, and self-concept and identity.

For example, if a music video shows violence against women to any degree, a viewer, including young girls, could be led to believe such action is acceptable. If they are educated about the media, the premise in the video would be questioned and hopefully rejected.

Again, let me reiterate the point about a collective solution. Parents, pediatricians, the music industry and others have critical roles in discussing and addressing the increasing amount of violence in society, particularly when it comes to children and adolescents. It is my sincere hope that this hearing will begin a dialogue with all interested parties.

Thank you for your time today, and I am willing to answer any questions you may have.

Page maintained by the office of Senator Sam Brownback (KS)

**NVLAA SUBMISSION 3**

Research on Adolescent Uses of and Responses to  
Heavy Metal and Rap Music

Testimony prepared for Senate Hearings on

"The Social Impact of Music Violence"  
Washington, DC, November 6, 1997

Donald F. Roberts, Ph.D.  
Thomas More Storke Professor  
Department of Communication  
Stanford University

My name is Donald F. Roberts, and I am the Thomas More Storke Professor in the Department of Communication at Stanford University. Professor Peter Christenson, (Department of Communication, Lewis & Clark College) and I have just completed a book, entitled *Its Not Only Rock and Roll: Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents* (Hampton Press, 1997), which reviews most of a large and growing body of empirical research on the role of popular music in the lives of adolescents. I appreciate this opportunity to summarise some of those findings today, all of which are presented in detail in the book.

My comments will touch on three aspects of popular music. First, I'll say a few words about the content of heavy metal and rap music as it relates to violence and misogyny. Second, I'll briefly describe the audience for each of these two genres of music. Third, I'll summarise findings from a few experimental studies that have examined the effects of this kind of music.

Content. First, some comments on the content.

1. I am not going to review the various content analyses that have estimated the amounts of violence, sex, misogyny, and so forth in popular music. Clearly it exists in substantial enough amounts to warrant hearings such as this one. I do want to note, however, that for the most part we are talking primarily about two genres of music - heavy metal and rap. Most other popular music contains little, if any, of the kinds of lyrics and images we are concerned with today. I mention this because unlike even a decade ago, popular music has fragmented into a wide array of sub-genres. Billboard magazine now charts over 20 different types of music, and the Grammy Awards currently recognise 80 different categories, many of which represent distinct music genres. This is important because by middle adolescence, kids begin to gravitate toward just one or two of those many categories, and spend most of their listening time there. Thus, although heavy metal and rap audiences are large, they are by no means the largest and they compete for audience with a wide variety of other music genres the content of which is not all that problematic.
2. There is no question that both heavy metal music and rap do present many disturbing images of violence, sex, and misogyny. Different studies estimate that such content occurs in anywhere from 25% to 70% of metal and rap songs and/or videos depending on the definitions (of sex and violence) used. Clearly, even if we take the lowest estimates, there is enough

to be concerned about.

3. The lyrics are quite explicit and concrete - and seem to have become more so over the past five or six years. There is argument over whether or not kids understand the lyrics . . . something we can discuss further if you wish. . . but there is little problem when it comes to understanding video images. Although it is often difficult to make sense of the narrative or story line in these videos, there is no escaping individual images of violence or sexuality.
4. It is also important to note, however, that music video images are often stylised and, in and of themselves, seldom portray things that would earn an NC- 17 or even an R rating were they to appear in a motion picture. Music video sexual images are sensual and erotic, but seldom go as far as many current R-rated motion pictures. Typically, they are more a case of titillation than of consumption. Similarly, the violent images, while deplorable, are not dissimilar from what we often encountered in television fare (although the combination of the violence and the highly arousing sound may elicit stronger responses than violence in narrative drama). What does strike me as different about current heavy metal and rap lyrics and videos is the way they combine extremely provocative lyrics with the visual images, and their misogyny. When one combines a sensual image of a woman with explicit words about forcing sex, the meaning of the image is drastically changed. Moreover, in much of this music, women are frequently devalued, treated as little more than sex objects, threatened, and sometimes sexually attacked. Finally, many of the portrayals of how men and women interact are just exactly what I would hope our youth would not learn - indeed, would come to condemn.

To summarize comments about content, then, heavy metal and rap music present highly problematic content in terms of sex, violence and misogyny, and although not all kids are devotees of this kind of music, many are.

Audience.

Who are the kids who listen to or watch this stuff? Aside from their liking for these two particular genres of music, what are they like? Although similar in that both kinds of music appeal primarily to males, the heavy metal and the rap audiences are quite different. I'll begin with the heavy metal audience.

The Heavy Metal Audience.

1. Heavy metal fans are largely white, male adolescents. While others (e.g., girls, African Americans, Hispanics) occasionally listen, very few of those list heavy metal as a favourite. Indeed, there seems to be little middle ground with heavy metal, kids either love it or hate it - and those who love it tend to be

young, white males.

2. Although much of the heavy metal audience can be characterized as quite normal - typical kids who just happen to like the music - it is worth noting that this particular genre strongly draws kids who are otherwise troubled or at risk. That is, adolescents who have problems for a variety of reasons - most of which may be unrelated to the music - seem particularly attracted to heavy metal a point to which I will return.
3. Because so many troubled youth prefer heavy metal, compared to audiences for other types of popular music heavy metal fans tend to exhibit a number of worrisome attitudes and behaviours. They are more at odds with their parents, they often come from separated or divorced families and they report relatively low satisfaction with their family relations. They are often at odds with school authorities and with the school environment. Heavy metal fans tend to be risk takers and thrill or sensation seekers - they report more reckless behaviours such as drunk driving, casual sex, and marijuana and cocaine use than listeners of other music genres.
4. Turning to beliefs and attitudes, heavy metal fans express lower levels of trust in others, hold somewhat libertarian beliefs (i.e., anything goes), tend to be more Machiavellian (i.e., to engage in social behaviours most would view as manipulative, cynical, or amoral), and have fewer religious beliefs. Fans express more permissive sexual attitudes, manifest four levels of respect for women, and give lower estimates of the frequency of date rape and higher estimates of the rate of sexual activity in the general population than do other kids.
5. As I said, troubled youth are particularly drawn to this music. One study found that adolescents in juvenile detention centres are 3 times more likely than regular high school students to prefer heavy metal music. Other research finds that heavy metal music tends to be the almost unanimous choice of drug involved youth.
6. Finally, heavy metal fans tend to be fans in the true sense of the word - they are "fanatical" about the music. They are highly committed to and involved in the music; they listen more and identify with it and with its performers. They are more likely to nominate heavy metal performers as role models. They pay more attention to the lyrics than do more casual listeners. (All of these characteristics imply that fans may be highly susceptible to being influenced by the music).

Let me emphasize that I am not claiming that listening to heavy metal music caused any of these characteristics. Quite the contrary. Although it appears that kids with these attitudes turn to the music, so too do many "normal" adolescents who manifest few or none of these

attitudes and behaviours love the music. Knowing an adolescent is a heavy metal fan does not tell one much about whether he is troubled. However, if you know a youth is troubled, it's a good bet that he is a heavy metal fan.

In other words, rather than a "Heavy Metal Syndrome," we are probably looking at a "Troubled Youth Syndrome." In our book we write "White adolescents who are 'troubled' or 'at risk' or alienated in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons, gravitate strongly to heavy metal music - the style of music that provides the most support for their view of the world and meets their particular needs." And therein lies the worry. These "at-risk" kids are the very ones who are most likely to be influenced to adopt some of the attitudes and behaviours portrayed in these songs, and heavy metal lyrics and videos tend to reinforce and promote many of their pre-existing undesirable behaviours.

The Rap Audience.

1. Rap is the dominant favourite among adolescent African American males (as many as 75% list it as their favourite). Although it is not the dominant favourite, many White adolescents - especially suburban White boys - list it as one of their preferred music genres. At least one study estimates that White kids comprise as much as 60% of the total audience for rap. (Unlike heavy metal, Rap has achieved huge cross-over sales. The sound is new exciting, and edgy, and has been adopted by television producers - both in advertising and programming - as well as by kids of all races)
2. Although girls of both races like the music, they do not care for the lyrics. Rap appeals to females because of its highly danceable sound.
3. The kinds of alienated attitudinal and behavioural variables that are associated with heavy metal listening do not hold for listeners of rap. The music appeals to most African American kids, so there is no chance for any such associations to emerge; the associations are simply not found for White listeners.
4. African American youth love rap for both the sound and the message of the lyrics, and for hard-core African American fans, the lyrics are most important. African American males often identify with what the songs say. White youth, on the other hand, seem attracted to rap primarily by the sound; they seldom identify with the message of rap.

The messages of rap, then, are used and responded to quite differently by the African American and the White adolescents. African Americans, especially males, may identify with some of the more violent and misogynist images and may, therefore, be susceptible to influence by them. Whites, on the other hand, seem to be engaging a form of "cultural tourism." They are attracted by the

exciting sound not the message. Once attracted, though, they may discover a window on a culture to which they have little alternative access. That is, they are able to participate in rap's vibrancy without actually having to live in the inner city (the lyrics playing more a rhythmic function than a symbolic one), but they are presented a picture of the inner city. What is problematic here is that they are seeing a highly limited, highly distorted picture. Rap's concentration on the most negative aspects of the inner-city experience (less violent, less misogynist, less sexually explicit "rap lite" has not sold very well) may function more to cultivate racial stereotypes than to cultivate cross-cultural understanding.

### **Effects.**

Let me begin by noting that although social scientists recognize that the primary concern with the influence of violent music is whether and how it affects the behaviour of adolescents, most experimental studies describe the music's effects on beliefs and attitudes. This often leads critics to claim the research is irrelevant; they would, it seems, have us expose kids to violent videos, then count how many women they attacked, fights they instigated, or shots they fired. Obviously, when working with issues such as sex and violence, ethical considerations make behavioural outcomes extremely difficult to study. We cannot intentionally expose youth to violent and/or sexual and/or misogynist lyrics and images, and then put them in situations where they can act out what they have learned. Rather, we depend on measuring beliefs and attitudes, taking them as valid indicators of the likelihood of subsequent behaviour. Obviously they are not perfect predictors of subsequent behaviour: think of all the people who are against sin who transgress, or who favour doing good, who don't. Nevertheless, much of our social structure is predicated on the assumption that what people believe and/or favour and oppose, provide pretty good predictors of how they will behave. Indeed, the music industry itself spends a great deal of money trying to influence adolescent perceptions of and attitudes toward one or another performer and album in order to increase sales. My point then, is that experiments showing effects on beliefs and attitudes should not be discounted. With that said, let's look at the findings on effects.

1. Experiments that expose identical groups of adolescents either to (a) music with violent, sexual, or misogynist music and music videos, or (b) music lacking such content, or (c) no music, finds that youngsters do change their attitudes and/or beliefs as a result of exposure. That is, compared to kids who hear no music or view no videos, and to those who hear or view less problematic music content, kids who listen to or view violent, sexual, or misogynist content change their perceptions of others and the ways in which they think about social relations (in this sense, exposure to music content is no different than exposure to television or motion picture content).
2. The effects are stronger for exposure to music videos than for

exposure to just audio lyrics. However, once adolescents have seen a video, it seems quite common for them subsequently to replay the video in their head when they hear the song. Focusing on videos, specific findings include:

3. Videos laced with may violent images made adolescent viewers more antagonistic in their orientation toward women and more likely to condone violence in themselves and in others. Antisocial videos increased acceptance of subsequently observed antisocial behaviour.
4. Highly gender-stereotyped videos increased acceptance of gender-stereotyped behaviour.
5. Sexually charged videos led viewers to perceive subsequently observed ambiguous behaviour as sexier, and to be more accepting of premarital sex.
6. In addition, there is some evidence that once kids have come to associate the sound of heavy metal music to violence (through, for example watching typical heavy metal videos), then it no longer matters what the lyrics really say. One study found that listening to heavy metal music, regardless of whether the lyrics were violent or Christian (and explicitly non-violent) caused undergraduate males to express more negative attitudes toward women.
7. Finally, at least one case study (non-experimental) reported in the clinical research literature indicates that eliminating access to MTV decreased the frequency of violent acts among teenagers and young adults in a locked treatment facility.

Some conclusions.

Findings from research on all kinds of media content leave little doubt that children, adolescents, and adults learn a great deal from what they hear and see in the mass media. It is no different for adolescents and music media. Indeed, in some ways music media are particularly potent teachers of adolescents. Popular music is largely for, of, and by adolescents. It focuses on many of the issues that are central to adolescent concerns, many of which are taboo topics (e.g., sex and sexuality; cross-sex and peer relations; etc.) that parents, schools, and churches do not do a very good job of addressing. Today, adolescents obtain most of their information about sex and sexuality from peers and media - and the music media, because of their focus on such topics, are particularly likely to fill that need. They address such issues frequently; the kids listen and view repeatedly; and the consequences of the portrayed behaviours are typically positive. Sex is usually safe, rudeness is cool, threats toward police or other authorities are rarely punished - or even condemned, tattoos are never for life. And perhaps most important, heavy metal and rap both attract kids to their audiences who may be particularly susceptible to influence (troubled, alienated White males in the case of heavy metal, angry, inner city African American males in the case

of rap).

Given the content of so much of the music from these two genres, Professor Albert Bandura's remarks about the likelihood that youngsters will learn from almost all of the media to which they are exposed is particularly chilling. He wrote ". .. after the capacity for observational learning has fully developed, one cannot keep people from learning what they have seen" - or, I would add. what they have heard.

#### **NVLAA SUBMISSION 4**

February 13th, 1997

United States Senator  
Joseph Lieberman  
Senate Hart Bldg. Suite 316  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lieberman.

As part our families normal daily behaviour on the morning of December 12th, 1996, my wife started our son's shower and went to wake him. But our son was not sleeping in his bed, he was dead, he had killed himself. He has left us and is never coming back

Dear sir, my son was listening to Marilyn Manson's "Antichrist Superstar" on the stereo when he died, (I personally removed the distinctive CD with the red lightning bolt across its face from the player) with the rough draft of a 10th grade English class paper about this artist, that his teacher had returned to him that day for final revisions, on the stand next to his body. The lyrics (enclosed) of "The Reflecting God", on that CD, read as an unequivocally direct inducement to take one's own life. Our son's friends tell us that in the end, that this was his favourite song, that this was the cut that was always on whenever they came over.

We are all certainly free to make our own decisions regarding the value of content, but if you were to ask me, I'd say that the lyrics of this song, contributed directly to my son's death.

Additionally, two more of my son's friends, who have been treated for attempted suicide since his death, are/were caught up in Marilyn Manson's nihilistic music and are still considered to be at risk.

Sir, this music, because it glorifies inhumane intolerance and hate, and promotes suicide, contradicts all of the community values that people of good will, regardless of faith, ideology, economic or social position, share. Simply put, this music hurts us as a people. Our children are quietly being destroyed (dying), by this man's music, by ones and twos in scattered isolation throughout our nation today.

The artist's own words, in his lyrics and interviews (and his actions), indicate that this injury to society is intentional. The predatory world that Brian Warner markets, through his stage persona as Marilyn Manson \*, is one no normal (or few in the normal distribution curve of humanity) person would wish to live in.

\*Note: Warner's band members usually adopt androgynous, two part stage names, the 1st part derived from a female celebrity, and the 2nd from a convicted male mass murder. And Brian got lucky, as the lead, he got the pick of the litter, "Marilyn" as in Marilyn Monroe, the female celebrity who committed suicide and "Manson" as in Charles Manson, mass murderer.

By their nature, corporations do not have consciences and it is understandable that MCA would wish to defend a product that entered the Billboard 200 chart at No. 3. But even though they are soulless, corporations do have social obligations and responsibilities and MCA in the name of profit, wrapped in the first amendment, is, by producing and distributing this kind of "art", creating the end, resulting from yelling Fire in a theater.

I understand that the lyrics to individual songs and the content of

interviews made by artists with obscure magazines and newsletters are below a CEO's event horizon. But somewhere down the hierarchy line, someone who is aware of artistic content and stated intent, is making corporate economic decisions driven by greed. Decision making that kills.

Shaming major corporations into more responsible behavior is nice, but forcing a corporation to divest itself of a socially unacceptable, still functional subset, possibly at a profit, does nothing to rectify the problem or wash clean the hands of those involved.

The proper, responsible way to deal with organizations like Interscope Records, Nothing Records and the like would be to close them and write off the losses, with as much loud self congratulatory applause as one can possibly generate.

Because the problems today are several orders of magnitude worse than they've ever been, it may also be time to reconvene the congressional hearings held in the 80's that resulted in the voluntary RIAA "Parental Advisory" sticker program. It appears to be time to make this program mandatory and give it some teeth, so that states have some kind of objective criteria to use in regulating the exposure of minors to these dangerous materials.

My wife's name is Christine, my son's name was Richard, my name is Raymond. Sir, if there is anything you can do, we will do what we can to help.

Thank You,

Raymond Kuntz and Christine Kuntz  
for Richard Kuntz  
Rt 1 Box31  
Burlington, ND 58722

Copy of the rough draft of a 10th Grade English paper on "Marilyn Manson", written by Richard Kuntz, found by his body on the morning of December 12th 1996.

Marilyn Manson is the epitome of both "drug fiend" and "shock rocker." He is self described as a sadomasochist and good role model. His shows posses every detail in the order of shocking. His albums project an image of hate toward the Christian community, and the drugs he uses publicly are mind degrading.

Just a taste of Manson's outrageous antics can be described in one of his shows in Washington, DC. During the course of the show he "slashed himself across his chest with a shard of glass from a broken bottle" (Some), if this wasn't enough he also "exposed his genitalia" and also "sodomized himself with a stick and then threw it into the gaping crowd" (Some). Accordingly you should start to see the "shock" factor of his shows.

New York City is yet another stop on this shock rockers tour.

"Parading onto the stage in front of a giant Ouija board" the band already showed its dark side (Some) through out his set he "rips and tears at his ragged clothes until (naked except for a leather jockstrap)" (some 2) "then he grabs a bottle, breaks it over his head and invites the crowd to shower him in spit" (some 3). As a result of this he's proved to us his "shocking" side and has therefore gotten our attention, what he wants.

Manson believes in his music and is making a strong impression on young people today. In an interview with Deirdre Pearson, Manson was quoted as saying "the point of the album was to at least try to make a difference, to promote individuality, for everyone to be responsible for themselves, and for the people who just aren't tough enough to just lay down and let the others crush them with the wheels of progress." Due to this response it would be difficult to not wonder what type of values he possesses. The album he was referring to, "Antichrist Superstar," is his latest and "strongest musically" (Pearson, Deirdre 2).

Manson's second album, Smells like children, is a tribute to two tracks "Abuse" (part one and two) and "Confusion" which were on the original cut but were eventually taken off before the album was distributed. Manson explains the reason for this in an interview with Rudolf "both tracks featured collaborations done sometime last year with a guy named Tony Wiggins. It involved illegal activities. The record company said they didn't want them on the album which caused Tony Wiggins a volatile person to try and kill somebody. Some talk these off (Randolf 3). With this in mind it is easy to see why the albums release was so delayed.

Another point to consider when talking about Marilyn Manson is his extravagant use of drugs. In an interview with Zena Tsarfin, Manson said he "started smoking pot again" he had initially stayed away from "grass" for fear of jeopardizing his singing career (1). He only smokes it in the form of a "joint" he doesn't mess around with pipes or bongos" (Zena Tsarfin 2). What kind of Maniac would smoke dope?

Manson was also "really into LSD when the band was first starting about 5 or 6 years ago"(Zena T.sarfin 3). Jokingly Manson said he "would take acid and go to Disney World, everything seemed larger than life, it was terrifying"(Zena Tsaffin 3). Clearly Marilyn Manson portrays the phrase drug fiend, he believes "all drugs should be legal." (Zena Tsarfin 4).

Through the tolerance of "evil" groups such as Marilyn Manson, many children's minds are being degraded. Marilyn Manson shows that it is possible for Christian society to produce someone who is against every thing it stands for. Believing that what he is doing is good and promoting it through music, he gains followers by epitomizing children's black thoughts of rebellion.

Web browser "Bookmarks" that Richard apparently used in preparing his English class paper on "Marilyn Manson".

<http://papermag.com/magazine/manson.html>  
<http://pw2.netcom/~mhannon1/index.html>  
<http://student-www.uchicago.edu/users/cdbrown/imter.html>  
<http://www.utech.net/chico/prop.html>  
<http://www.hallucinet.com/underscope/nov95/manson.html>  
<http://www.hooked.net/toadophile/manson.html>  
<http://www.netrail.net/~sonicenu/manson.html>  
<http://www.lia.co.zq/users/marko/cool.html>  
<http://www.hightimes.com/mag/9606/manson.html>

Page maintained by the office of Sam Brownback

## **NVLAA SUBMISSION 5**

Barbara P. Wyatt, President  
Parents' Music Resource Center  
on Music Lyrics  
before the  
United States Senate Commerce Committee  
June 16, 1998

I speak as President of the Parents' Music Resource Center which was founded in 1985. In 1996 I became president having been on the board since one year after its inception. As a music major I can speak with knowledge as to the effects of music.

In 1985 four mothers, Susan Baker, Tipper Core, Pam Hower, and Sally Nevius became aware of

recordings purchased by their children. They were appalled by what they heard and decided to see if these messages were common. Much to their surprise and horror they discovered that many recordings on the market include profane, violent, and sexually explicit lines, plus some advocate drug and alcohol use, suicide and even necrophilia. Not only were the lyrics disgusting, enclosures and covers were bad or worse. In talking with other parents, the mothers found that most were unaware of the contents of popular music. Parents would often voice their feelings with "turn that thing down, I don't want to hear it" or would make the firm statement, "Go in your room if you are going to listen to that!" They were unaware of the contents of their listening progeny.

The women decided it was vital to launch an educational campaign. A board of concerned parents was created and the PMRC was born. Within months there were Senate hearings, not to promote legislation, but to alert the public as to the corrupt and blatant messages being sold to children.

Subsequently they met with members of recording industry associations and after much discussion, an agreement was reached whereby companies producing the recordings would place parental advisory labels on their own releases which include violent or sexually explicit messages. One might consider this a current rendition of the fox guarding the hen house!

Unfortunately the industry has used the label as a license to act even more irresponsibly. The problem is that many recordings which should be labelled are not and often the labels are not very obvious. In addition, the industry continues to contract with artists encouraging them to capitalize on the bizarre, obscene and corrupt messages that would be objectionable to most parents - IF the parents were aware of what their children were hearing. It is the responsibility of parents and adults supervising young people to know the content, but how can they be aware of the lyrics if the packages are wrapped and the lyrics inside? they cannot review the lyrics before purchase and the stores will not refund the money after the package is opened. Most adults want to act responsibly, but they need tools to help them make choices commensurate with their own values. There is legislation that indicates consumers have the right to know about any product they purchase. For instance, our food is labeled - every ingredient. We know more what is in a jar of pickles than we know about the contents of the music being sold to our children!

We recognize that the music industry is a business and the executives are responsible to stockholders for a return on investments. The greater the return the higher the salaries, the opportunity for acquisitions and more market share. We understand that. We also understand the musicians right of expression and know that many talented persons are using their talents to impact our young people in a negative way when they could have such a positive influence. The industry could promote music that would be uplifting rather than this overkill of the harmful. So many of our young people do not even know the wonderful music that abounds - with music eliminated in public schools, students have not been exposed to the many genre such as jazz, show tunes, classical and spirituals. They have not learned to read music nor to sing. All they know are the TOP FORTY.

The industry does not show that it cares about our youth. They have two lines they promote - one is pushing the line of indecency to entice young people and the other is the bottom line called greed.

The recording industry should have an interest in providing the best for our youth; however, they promote negative messages which are not only immoral, but which advocate illegal acts with results that can be devastating for our young people and society. There is evidence that people act out what they see and hear. When the music is put with imagery and words, the action on the part of the listener becomes active, not passive. The imagery becomes very real.

People ask what is wrong with America? Unfortunately the entertainment industry has a great influence. Some in the music industry fight drugs, are involved with the homeless, the elderly, and the hungry and they are concerned about the violence, but they are talking out of both sides of

their mouth. Their good works are overshadowed by the volume of recordings that are the antithesis of their good programs. Young people are listening to music for HOURS every day and they are watching MTV which puts imagery in their fertile minds. How do we know it has an impact? Just consider how Berlitz teaches a foreign language? They teach it by repetition. They bombard the brain with the same words over and over again. The brain receives ALL messages - it does not discriminate between retaining or discarding the good and the bad. What you put in the brain stays and if you feed the brain messages which are detrimental there will be an outcome that resembles the input. The more vulnerable the child, the greater the possibility that he negative messages will create problems. This does not say that every negative is going to corrupt every child, but continuous exposure does have an effect. Dr. Mark I. Singer of Case Western Reserve University completed a study on the Mental Health Consequences of Adolescents' Exposure to Violence in which he studied violent adolescents. 93.4% of the most-violent males and 95.8% females listen to music as their coping mechanism. Consider the music and one can imagine the results. The music industry is saturating the market with the messages which are hurting young people not only in America, but around the world.

While in Greece last summer, I had the opportunity to talk with prominent people of that country. I was asked the question "why are you sending such violent music, television and movies to our country?" How can I answer that question other than to respond - greed. Their philosopher Plato even indicated that music forms character and therefore plays an important role in determining social and political issues, he stated " When Modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the states change with them."

The labels were not advocated to provide a shield for the industry and the artists, (they view it as protection against law suits), but it was hoped that the industry would both comply with the labelling and stop contracting with performers who advocated actions which would be harmful. We understand that they the artists feel they are the reflection of society and not one of the causes of the problem, but since they are viewed as idols they do have an influence on our youth. You in the Congress are concerned about smoking, but these lyrics are equally harmful - we are talking about telling young people to take drugs, drink alcohol, and rape. The venom in some lyrics would not be allowed in most homes. The current idol, Marilyn Manson evokes shouts and cheers in his concerts when he advocates taking drugs and killing parents. Unfortunately many parents have no idea about these idols who have such an influence on their children. We receive calls from adults constantly who voice their concerns and express that they do not know how to combat this problem. They cannot identify music which is within their value system. Many of the recordings are not only violent, but much is verbal pornography!

Do the labels work? NO! There are standardised labels, but no standards.

Some companies label and others do not.

Packages occasionally have enclosures which are offensive, but are not labelled.

A child of any age can purchase recordings. When the Senate hearing on "The Impact of Violent Music " was held on November 6, 1998, Hillary Rosen, President of the Recording Industry Association of America stated the RIAA supports the restriction that no one under 17 can purchase recordings which are labelled. A boy who appears to be 12, but is 14, went unaccompanied into a store in Tennessee, at my request, last week and purchased a Marilyn Hanson recording, no questions asked. An adult tried to return it, but the store would not accept the return'. Stores often refuse to refund the cost of recordings which an adult finds objectionable. In fact, we have been told that there is a limit as to the number of recordings each store can return. Obviously that does not bode well for the concerned parent who wants to make a return and cannot as the store has reached its limit. The same young boy went into another store to make

the same purchase and they would not allow him to buy the recording stating. he was too young - that store should get ALL the business.

Music executives state that movies and television have similar contents - that is true as young people are avid viewers, but our youth are constantly listening to music. They play it while walking, riding, exercising, eating, while in malls, at school events and doing homework. Music is very much a part of their everyday activity and it is a very powerful tool. Music is known to heal, to calm and to excite. Music with lyrics can have an even greater impact.

While speaking at a conference called by the Lieutenant Governor of Alabama, a young girl asked if she could make a comment. She said, "you complain of the actions of youth, but who makes the movies, who sells the alcohol, who produces the television, who writes the advertising, who imports the drugs, who contracts with the artists, who use and abuse young people for sex - adults do and then you blame the young people and ask us why we act as we do? The truth hurts.

The PMRC does not approve of censorship, but just as in everything we do, each must act responsibly and when we do not there are consequences. We are reaping the consequences of a society that has set aside values and civility. There are laws which have been enacted to protect children. We have seen many times how industry plays both sides of the street. They say they care, but look what they do. We implore the industry to address the needs of parents and communities and that the industry become the parent's friend. There need to be changes and we need to make them now. A more effective system would be to make the labels more specific as to content, similar to television ratings.

The First Amendment was not written to provide license to corrupt children .and we are not asking for legislation, but we are asking for cooperation within the industry. We are all familiar with the words from the Bible which state "Bring up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." The industry is constantly capturing our next generation. Morality, civility and virtues have made civilizations prosper and have been the basis for noble leadership. Today that is lacking in America. We can either be the beacon on the hill for good or the Sodom and Gomorrah of the next century. Our youth will answer that question as they mature and we as adults are responsible for the result.

We thank you, Senators, for your concern and for this hearing. In bringing this issue to the public you provide an excellent forum to address this vital subject. We who are on the front lines on a daily basis appreciate this opportunity.

## **NVLAA SUBMISSION 6**

### **Lyrics, Liberty and License**

Senator Sam Brownback  
Address before the City Club of Cleveland  
March 23, 1998

Good afternoon. I want to thank the City Club of Cleveland for its hospitality, and the students who run the Youth Forum for the invitation, their top-notch administrative skills, and the opportunity to speak to you today.

I want to talk with you today about music and freedom -- about lyrics, liberty and license. This is an issue that is important to me -- as it is, I suspect, important to you. I can't think of a more fitting place for this discussion -- here, at a forum dedicated to upholding the principle of free speech, in Cleveland, the home of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

As many of you know, I recently held a Senate hearing on the impact of violent music lyrics on young people. During this hearing, we heard a variety of witnesses testify on the effects of music lyrics that glorified rape, sexual torture, violence and murder. Some of these lyrics are almost unbelievably awful -- but they are backed by huge, powerful, prestigious corporations. I have grown more and more concerned about the content and the impact of these lyrics. And I have publicly criticized the entertainment executives who produce, promote, and profit from such music.

I am also the only Senator on the Commerce Committee to vote against a very popular bill that would coerce TV stations into labeling their programs. I publicly opposed V-chip legislation. I have consistently voted against any sort of government involvement in regulating or rating music or television.

Some people don't think the two go together. They think that if you talk about some music lyrics being degrading and violent, then you must be in favour of censorship. Others think that if you vote against various government restrictions on television programs, or music content, you must approve of those programs and songs. Both views are mistaken.

And today, I'd like to talk about legislating in a way to maximize freedom, and agitating for civility and decency, and why the two not only can go together, but should -- and indeed, if we are to preserve freedom, they must.

Most of you here have strong ideas about music. As indeed, you should. Music is powerful. It changes our mood, shapes our experience, affects our thoughts, alters our pulse, touches our lives. The rhythm, the beat, and the lyrics all impress us with their message. Thousands of years ago, the great philosopher Plato stated, "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."

As such, music lyrics have profound public consequences. In many ways, the music industry is more influential than anything that happens in Washington. After all, most people spend a lot more time listening to music than watching C-Span or reading the newspaper. They're more likely to recognize musicians than Supreme Court Justices. Most of us spend more time thinking about music than laws, bills, and policies. And that's probably a good thing.

And as many of you know, no one spends more time listening to music than young people. In fact, one recent study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation concluded that the average teenager listens to music around four hours a day. In contrast, less than an hour is spent on homework or reading, less than 20 minutes a day is spent talking with Mom, and less than five minutes is spent talking with Dad. If this is true, there are a lot of people who spend more time listening to shock-rock artist Marilyn Manson or Snoop Doggy Dogg than Mom or Dad. In fact, Marilyn Manson himself said: "Music is such a powerful medium now. The kids don't even know who the President is, but they know what's on MTV. I think if anyone like Hitler or Mussolini were alive now, they would have to be rock stars."

In short, because of the power of music, the time we spend listening to it, and the potency of its messages, music has a powerful public impact. It affects us, not only privately, but publicly. It helps shape our attitudes and assumptions, and thus, our decisions and behavior -- all of which has a public dimension, and merits public debate.

Frankly, I believe there needs to be more public discourse over music. It is too important to ignore. Its influence reaches around the world. American rock and rap are popular exports. They are listened to by billions, in virtually every nation on earth. And for good or bad, our music shapes the way in which many people around the world view the U.S. American music is the most pervasive (and loudest) ambassador we have. Unfortunately, its message is too often a destructive one.

Over the past few years, I have grown concerned about the popularity of some lyrics -- lyrics which glorify violence and debase women. Some recent best-selling albums have included graphic descriptions of murder, torture, and rape. Women are objectified, often in the most obscene and degrading ways. Songs such as Prodigy's single "Smack My Bitch Up" or "Don't Trust a Bitch" by the group "Mo Thugs" encourage animosity and even violence towards women. The alternative group Nine Inch Nails enjoyed both critical and commercial success with their song "Big Man with a Gun" which describes forcing a woman into oral sex and shooting her in the head at point-blank range.

Shock-rock bands such as "Marilyn Manson" or "Cannibal Corpse" go even further, with lyrics describing violence, rape, and torture. Consider just a few song titles by the group "Cannibal Corpse": "Orgasm by Torture", or "Stripped, Raped and Strangled". As their titles indicate, the lyrics to these songs celebrate hideous crimes against women.

Many of you may already know the kind of lyrics I am talking about. If not, it is useful to read some of them -- they won't be hard to find; they are quite popular. Then ask yourself: what are the real-world effect of these lyrics? What do these lyrics celebrate, and what do they ridicule or denounce? What are the consequences of glorifying violence and glamorizing rape? Have record companies behaved responsibly when they produce music that debases women? You and your friends may come up with different answers. But they are good questions to think about. And I hope recording industry executives think about them as well.

It is a simple fact of human nature that what we hear and see, what we experience, affects our thoughts, our emotions, and our behaviour. If it did not, commercials wouldn't exist, and anyone who ever spent a dollar on advertising would be a complete fool. But advertising is a multi-billion dollar business -- because it works. It creates an appetite for things we don't need, it motivates us to buy things we may not have otherwise. What we see and hear changes how we act.

Now think back to the music we have been talking about. How do these lyrics affect their fans? Different people will be affected different ways. Some teens are more vulnerable than others. Young people who grow up in strong families, going to good schools, with adults who are committed to them, are probably going to be just fine. But let's consider what happens in some of America's inner cities, where many young men grow up without fathers, without good

schools, surrounded by violence -- how does this affect the way they think about, and treat women? Moreover, there have already been several studies done that have pointed to a loss of self-esteem among girls and young women. How does the fact that some of the best-selling albums feature songs that refer to them exclusively as “hos’, bitches and sluts” affect them?

There are no easy answers to those questions. It is impossible to quantify the ways in which such lyrics affect us. But it is equally impossible to believe they have no effect at all.

Of course, most rock and rap do not have hyper-violent or perverse lyrics. In the grand scale of things, it is a small number of songs from an even smaller number of bands that produce these sort of lyrics. They are the exception, not the rule.

It is also true that people will disagree over which music is offensive. Some people thought the Beach Boys were a problem, and some think the Spice Girls are. I do not happen to be one of them. There will always be songs about which reasonable people with good judgement will disagree.

But there should also be some things that we can all agree upon. And one of those things is that music which glorifies rape, violence and bigotry is wrong. It may be constitutionally protected. The huge entertainment corporations that produce, promote and profit from this sort of record may have a right to do so. But it is not the right thing to do.

So this past November, I held a hearing on the impact of music lyrics which glorified violence and debased women. We heard from a variety of witnesses -- a parent, a representative from the American Academy of Pediatrics, a Stanford Professor, the head of the Recording Industry Association, and the head of the National Political Congress of Black Women, who has campaigned against gangsta rap. Should any of you want to see the record of the hearing, you may do so by logging on to my senate web site.

I held this hearing for two reasons: 1) to raise public awareness of some of these lyrics, so that potential consumers can make more informed judgements before they buy the music, 2) to examine, through hearing from witnesses from the medical and academic communities, the impact of such lyrics on youth attitudes and well-being.

It is a particularly important time to do so. Actual and virtual violence have dramatically increased over the last few decades. Over the last thirty years, violent juvenile crime has jumped over 500%. Teen suicide has tripled. Crimes against women have increased. Casual teen drug use has jumped by almost 50 percent in the last four years alone.

There is also a sense that we have lost ground in ways that defy easy measurement. There is a feeling that we as a society have grown

coarser, meaner, more alienated. Violence seems not only more widespread but less shocking. We have become more accustomed, and more tolerant, of tragedy, violence, and hate.

At the same time, there has been a marked increase in violence and misogyny in popular music. Now, this is not to say that music violence was the cause of real-life violence. Music is only one slice of the entertainment world, a small part of the popular culture.

Whatever impact music has on our attitudes and behaviour is bound to be complex and variant. But the best way, I believe -- then and now to determine what that impact is, what influence violent lyrics exert, is to encourage research, debate and discussion.

During the hearing, we did not call for censorship. We did not propose, consider, or tolerate any restriction of free speech. We did not ask for legislation, regulation, litigation or any other machination of government that would prohibit even the most racist, violent, anti-woman lyrics. When it comes to First Amendment issues, I vote as a libertarian. I have voted against labels, against restrictions, against government meddling. But it is not enough to merely legislate in a manner to protect freedom. It is also necessary to agitate for the cultural conditions that safeguard freedom. Let me explain what I mean:

For free societies to endure, there must be a distinction between what is allowed and what is honoured. I believe that the First Amendment assures the widest possible latitude in allowing various forms of speech -- including offensive, obnoxious speech. But the fact that certain forms of speech should be allowed does not mean that they should be honoured, or given respectability. There are many forms of speech that should be thoroughly criticized, even as they are protected. Freedom of expression is not immunity from criticism.

The proper response to offensive speech is criticism -- not censorship, and not apathy. Vigorous criticism of the perverse, hateful, and violent reflects a willingness on the part of citizens to take ideas seriously, evaluate them accordingly, and engage them directly. A cultural predisposition to care about ideas -- and to judge between them -- while protecting the liberty of others, is the best bulwark of a free society. A citizenry that evaluates ideas, that discerns the true from the false, that values reason over reaction, that affirms that which is edifying, and that refutes that which is wrong -- is exactly the society most likely to value, to have, and to keep free speech.

What we honour says as much about our national character as what we allow. There is an old saying "Tell me what you love, and I'll tell you who you are." The same can be said of societies, as well as individuals. What we honour and esteem as a people both reflects and affects our culture. We grow to resemble what we honour, we become less like what we disparage. What we choose to honour, then, forecasts our cultural condition.

This is important, because there are cultural conditions which make democracy possible, markets open, and societies free. Democracy

cannot endure in a society that has lost respect for the law or an interest in self-government. Societies become less free when they become more violent. The more culturally chaotic we become, the more restrictions, laws and regulations are imposed to maintain order.

Glorifying violence in popular music is dangerous -- because a society that glorifies violence will grow more violent. Similarly, when we refuse to criticise music that debases women, we send the message that treating women as chattel is not something to be upset about. Record companies that promote violent music implicitly push the idea that more people should listen to, purchase, and enjoy the sounds of slaughter. When MTV named Marilyn Manson the "best new artist of the year" last year, they held Manson up as an example to be aspired to and emulated. Promoting violence as entertainment corrodes our nation from within.

This is not a new idea. Virtually all of the founding Fathers agreed -- even assumed -- that nations rise and fall based on what they honour and what they discourage. Samuel Adams, an outspoken free speech advocate, said the following: "A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy."

Unfortunately, in many circles, liberty is being re-defined as "license" -- the idea that anything goes, that all speech is morally equivalent. According to this view, we cannot judge or criticise speech -- no matter how offensive we may find it. After all, what is offensive to one person, the reasoning goes, may be acceptable, even enjoyable to someone else. Thus, the idea of honouring certain forms of speech and stigmatising others become seen as infringements on liberty. This assumes that to have freedom of speech, you can't give a rip over what is said -- and that tolerance is achieved by apathy. Their motto can be summed up in one word: "whatever".

This is dead wrong. A philosophy of "whatever" is poison to the body politic. Civility, decency, courtesy, compassion, and respect should not be matters of indifference to us. We should care about these things -- care about them deeply. We should allow both honourable and offensive forms of speech. But just as certainly, we should honour that which is honourable, and criticise that which is not. If we, as a society, come to the place where we think anything goes, the first thing to go will be freedom.

The great southern author Walker Percy once stated that his greatest fear for our future was that of "seeing America, with all of its great strength and beauty and freedom.... gradually subside into decay through default and be defeated... from within by weariness, boredom, cynicism, greed and in the end, helplessness before its great problems."

I am optimistic about our future, but his point is an important one. America is at a place in history where our great enemies have been defeated. Communism -- with all of its shackles on the human spirit

-- has fallen. The Cold War is over. Our economy is strong; our incomes up, our expectations high. We are, in a sense, the only remaining world superpower.

Certainly, the future looks bright. But our continued success is not a historical certainty. It will be determined by the character of our nation -- by the condition of our culture as much our economy, or our policies. What we value, and what we disparage, are good predictors of what we soon shall be.

This is why I have both legislated in a libertarian manner, and agitated against hateful, racist, violent music lyrics. For those of us who are concerned about the loss of civility in society, and the glorification of hate, violence and misogyny in popular music, our goal must be not to coerce, but to persuade. We should aim to change hearts and minds, rather than laws. Analysing, evaluating, and sometimes criticising lyrics is not only compatible with, but essential to, liberty.

May rock roll on, and freedom ring.

Page maintained by the office of Senator Sam Brownback

## **NVLAA SUBMISSION 7**

### **Clinton Calls for End to 'Culture of Violence' In Weekly Radio Address, President Asks Nation to Take Responsibility for its Children**

ABCNEWS.com

April 24 — In his weekly radio address Saturday, President Clinton talked about the tragedy in Littleton, Colo., and asked Americans to take responsibility for the future of the nation's children.

He said that he will send to Congress two new bills to help keep guns out of the hands of violent juveniles, and to pay for more counsellors and conflict resolution programs.

The following is a transcript of the address:

Good morning. Tomorrow in church services all across America, we'll be thinking of those who lost their lives in Littleton, Colorado.

This is a time for all Americans to pray for their families, as well as those who were injured and their loved ones, and all the people of the schools and the community.

It's also a time for all Americans to ask what we can do — as individuals and as a nation — to turn more young people from the path of violence; how we can take responsibility, each and every one of us, for the future of our children.

We've seen far too many tragedies like the one at Columbine High School. It's striking that these violent assaults on human life often illuminate the best of the human spirit. We marvel at the bravery of the fatally wounded teacher who led 40 students to safety. We look

with admiration at the medics and the police officers who rushed to the scene to save lives; the clergy, the counsellors, the local leaders who immediately began the painful process of helping people to heal; and the parents and students who, in the face of hatred, refuse to return it.

At a moment of such terrible, terrible violence, these people didn't turn away — and we can't, either. Instead, every one of us must take responsibility to counter the culture of violence. The government must take responsibility.

Next week, I'll send to Congress two new bills to keep our children safe. First, we must do more to keep guns out of the hands of violent juveniles. My bill will crack down on gun shows and illegal gun trafficking, ban violent juveniles from ever being able to buy a gun and close the loophole that lets juveniles own assault rifles.

Second, we must do more to prevent violence in our schools. My Safe Schools bill will help schools pay for more counselors and conflict resolution programs, more mentors and more metal detectors. It also includes \$12 million for emergency teams, to help communities respond when tragedy strikes.

And government can help parents take responsibility. It's harder than ever for parents to pass on their values in the face of a media culture that so glorifies violence.

As Hillary pointed out in her book, the more children see of violence, the more numb they are to the deadly consequences of violence. Now, video games like "Mortal Kombat," "Killer Instinct," and "Doom" — the very game played obsessively by the two young men who ended so many lives in Littleton — make our children more active participants in simulated violence.

A former Lieutenant Colonel and psychologist, Professor David Grossman, has said that these games teach young people to kill with all the precision of a military training program, but none of the character training that goes along with it.

For children who get the right training at home and who have the ability to distinguish between real and unreal consequences, they're still games. But for children who are especially vulnerable to the lure of violence, they can be far more.

Vice President Gore has led the fight to give parents the tools to limit the exposure of their children to excessive violence, from a television rating system to new ways of blocking inappropriate material on the Internet to the V-chip.

By this July, fully half of all new televisions will have the V-chip; so will every new television in America by the year 2000. Years ago, Tipper Gore sounded the first alarm about the damaging effects on our children of excessive violence in movies, music and video games. Today, she is still drawing attention to mental illness.

This June, she will host the first ever White House

Conference on Mental Health, where we'll talk about how to recognize mental illness in young people before it's too late.

These are steps the national government is taking to protect our children. But it is not a job government can or should do alone --parents come first. They should turn off the television, pay attention to what's on the computer screen, refuse to buy products that glorify violence. Make sure your children know you care about what they're doing.

And to the media and entertainment industries, I say just this: you know you have enormous power to educate and entertain our children. Yes, there should be a label on the outside of every video, but what counts is what's on the inside and what it will do to the insides of our young people. I ask you to make every video game and movie as if your own children were watching it.

In the days ahead, as we continue the process of healing, we must pledge ourselves to the task of putting an end to the culture of violence and building in its place a culture of values we can be proud to pass on to all our children.

Thanks for listening.

#### S U M M A R Y

The president  
said he will  
send Congress  
two bills aimed  
at curtailing  
youth violence.

## **NVLAA SUBMISSION 8**

### **HEALING SEXUAL AND PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTIONS**

**By VICTOR B. CLINE, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

#### About the Author

Victor B. Cline earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley and is presently a psychotherapist specializing in family/marital counselling and sexual addictions. He is also Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, president of Marriage and Family Enrichment (a nationwide seminar group) and author/editor of numerous scientific articles and books, including the book, "Where Do You Draw the Line? Explorations in Media Violence, Pornography, and Censorship."

I have treated approximately 350 sexual addicts or sexual compulsives and have found some strategies that are very helpful in healing individuals struggling with these issues.

First, I would like to list typical symptoms which are associated with addictions in this area;

- a) Sexual acting out despite serious consequences and repeated attempts at control. The early antecedents are often being sexually abused/seduced/eroticized and/or a pattern of compulsively masturbating to pornography starting in early adolescence or before. In other words, a developing pattern of what, in time, becomes out of control sexual behaviour.
- b) Inability to stop (or powerlessness) despite adverse consequences, with frequent use of denial, rationalization, and minimization to hide both the problem and the underlying

shame.

- c) Neglect or sacrifice of important social, family, occupational, or recreational activities because of sexual behaviour.
- d) An ongoing desire or effort to limit sexual behaviour.
- e) An inordinate amount of time spent in obtaining sex, being sexual, or recovering from sexual experience.
- f) Risk taking
- g) Living a double life
- h) Decrease in one's spiritual or religious life. A constant violation of one's value system.
- i) Endangering one's professional and family life.

When I see patients who come in for treatment of their own volition and choice, it is usually because their spouse has discovered them participating in sexual activities that are totally unacceptable to that partner which creates a crisis in the marriage or relationship. Or, if juveniles, they have been discovered by their parents engaging in sexual activity which is unacceptable to their family's values and/or is illegal (e.g., sexually abusing another sib). Or they are being brought to trial for committing a sexual crime and want to get into treatment as a strategy in getting a lesser sentence or maybe parole. Or they are being sued for sexual harassment and want to demonstrate a good faith effort to get help. Or because they have been engaging in sexual behaviours which violate their own personal values and norms and are experiencing much guilt and shame over it and they want to change and heal.

I find that masturbatory conditioning is the royal road to acquiring a sexual deviation. This is especially risky and harmful if one is masturbating to pornographic images of sex with children, or being aroused by seeing images of women raped, sexually tortured, injured, etc. Or exposing oneself to other imagery which are pathogenic, unhealthy, and high risk if engaged in real life. In over 90% of my patients, regardless of what the original triggering or initiating causes were -- pornography may act as an aid, facilitator, or, at the very least, a contributor to their sexual addiction and illness.

I have found that in treating illnesses in this area for over 25 years that two things are required in order for a significant healing or long-term sobriety to occur:

1. The individual has to be in treatment with a sexual addiction therapist. This is one problem you can't resolve yourself. Self-control and self-discipline don't work. It's like a cancer -- it never goes away or clears up on its own. If married (or in relationship with another), that person must also be in treatment too -- jointly with the same therapist, for they have been traumatized and have issues of depression, anger, etc., which have to be resolved. Also, the therapist has to have special training in treating this problem, or else you are wasting your time and money.

Whether they are a psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker is much less important than that they have a successful track record working in the sexual addiction area.

How do you find somebody like that? I have found, pragmatically, that the quickest way is either through A.A. or S.A. (Sexaholics Anonymous) in your city wherein you ask those attending these meetings who they have found to be most helpful in treating this in your

community. You can find out when and where they meet by looking up the number for A.A. or S.A. in your phone book and they will be able to direct you to a person or a time and location where you can get this information.

2. None of my patients ever stays permanently "sober" unless they also have membership in S.A. (Sexaholics Anonymous) which makes use of the 12-step program similar to A.A. There you should also acquire a "sponsor" who is someone with a reasonable time period of sobriety whom you can call any time of the day or night when the wave of overpowering temptation hits you and you start to crumble or relapse. This program is free. It (or a similar organization) exists in every medium-sized or larger city in America. In most places there will be meetings several times a week -- if that's what you need.

## **PORNOGRAPHY'S EFFECTS ON ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

Note: This is an abridged version of Dr. Cline's article. The entire unabridged version is available in booklet form from Morality in Media, 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 239, New York, NY 10115. Price: \$3.00 per copy. Quantity discounts available. For more information, please e-mail Morality in Media in New York.

### **1. What are Pornography and Obscenity?**

Whether pornography has any significant harmful effects on consumers continues to be a controversial issue, not only for average citizens but also for behavioural scientists. This is not surprising in the light of the fact that two national commissions -- the Majority Report of the 1970 Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography and the 1986 Attorney General's Commission on Pornography -- came to diametrically opposed conclusions about this matter.

Some social commentators claim that pornography is mainly a form of entertainment, possibly educational, sometimes sexually arousing, but essentially harmless. Or, they claim, at the very least, that there is no good scientific evidence of harm. Other social commentators claim more dire consequences and give as examples recent cases, played up by the media, of sex-murderers who have claimed that pornography "made them do it."

To ascertain something about pornography's effects, we first need to define it. The word "pornography" comes from the Greek words "porno" and "graphia" meaning "depictions of the activities of whores." In common parlance, it usually means, "material that is sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal."

"Obscenity," however, is a legal term which was defined by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1973 Miller v. California decision. For something to be found obscene, and therefore unprotected by the First Amendment, a judge or jury representing a cross section of the community must determine if the material:

Taken as a whole, appeals to a prurient (sick, morbid, shameful, or lascivious) interest in sex;

Depicts sexual conduct in a patently offensive manner (i.e., goes beyond contemporary community standards with regards to depictions of sexual conduct or activity); and

Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value.

The material has to meet all three tests before it can be found obscene in the eyes of the law and its distribution prohibited. This means that something could be regarded as "pornographic" but still not be obscene, such as an explicit sex film produced and used to teach medical

students about human sexuality, or a film or book with serious artistic and/or literary value which has some explicit sexual content.

Thus, the Supreme Court has protected a wide variety of sexual matter in movies, books, magazines, and in other formats from being prohibited for sale and exhibition to adults (there is a stricter standard with respect to minors). Under the Miller test, however, the distribution of pornographic material which is obscene, such as most of what can be called "hardcore," can be prohibited and penalties proscribed.

The distribution of obscenity is prohibited on the federal level and on the state level in over 40 states. While the enforcement of obscenity laws increased after the Attorney General's Commission issued its "Final Report" in 1986, particularly at the federal level, enforcement is at best sporadic in many parts of the nation.

This lack of enforcement, especially at the state and local levels, may be attributable, in part, to the view of many people and, in particular, public officials that pornography is essentially harmless or, at the least, that there is little or no real evidence of harm.

## **2. EFFECTS ON ADULTS**

In reviewing the literature on the effects of pornography, there is a variety of evidence suggesting risk and the possibility of harm from being immersed in repeated exposure to pornography. These data come primarily from three sources:

1. Clinical case history data
2. Field studies
3. Experimental laboratory type studies

As a clinical psychologist, I have treated, over the years, approximately 350 sex addicts, sex offenders, or other individuals (96% male) with sexual illnesses. This includes many types of unwanted compulsive sexual acting-out, plus such things as child molestation, exhibitionism, voyeurism, sadomasochism, fetishism, and rape. With several exceptions, pornography has been a major or minor contributor or facilitator in the acquisition of their deviation or sexual addiction.

### **FIRST STEP - ADDICTION**

The first change that happened was an addiction-effect. The porn-consumers got hooked. Once involved in pornographic materials, they kept coming back for more and still more. The material seemed to provide a very powerful sexual stimulant or aphrodisiac effect, followed by sexual release, most often through masturbation. The pornography provided very exciting and powerful imagery which they frequently recalled to mind and elaborated on in their fantasies.

Once addicted, they could not throw off their dependence on the material by themselves, despite many negative consequences such as divorce, loss of family, and problems with the law (such as sexual assault, harassment or abuse of fellow employees).

I also found, anecdotally, that many of my most intelligent male patients appeared to be most vulnerable -- perhaps because they had a greater capacity to fantasise, which heightened the intensity of the experience and made them more susceptible to being conditioned into an addiction.

One of my patients was so deeply addicted that he could not stay away from pornography for 90 days, even for \$1,000. It is difficult for non-addicts to comprehend the totally driven nature

of a sex addict. When the "wave" hits them, nothing can stand in the way of getting what they want, whether that be pornography accompanied by masturbation, sex from a prostitute, molesting a child, or raping a woman. These men are consumed by their appetite, regardless of the cost or consequences. Their addiction virtually rules their lives.

## **SECOND STEP - ESCALATION**

The second phase was an escalation-effect. With the passage of time, the addicted person required rougher, more explicit, more deviant, and "kinky" kinds of sexual material to get their "highs" and "sexual turn-ons." It was reminiscent of individuals afflicted with drug addictions. Over time there is nearly always an increasing need for more of the stimulant to get the same initial effect.

Being married or in a relationship with a willing sexual partner did not solve their problem. Their addiction and escalation were mainly due to the powerful sexual imagery in their minds, implanted there by the exposure to pornography.

I have had a number of couple-clients where the wife tearfully reported that her husband preferred to masturbate to pornography than to make love to her.

## **THIRD PHASE - DESENSITIZATION**

The third phase was desensitization. Material (in books, magazines, or films/videos) which was originally perceived as shocking, taboo-breaking, illegal, repulsive, or immoral, in time came to be seen as acceptable and commonplace. The sexual activity depicted in the pornography (no matter how anti-social or deviant) became legitimized. There was an increasing sense that "everybody does it" and this gave them permission to also do it, even though the activity was possibly illegal and contrary to their previous moral beliefs and personal standards.

## **FOURTH PHASE - ACTING OUT SEXUALLY**

The fourth phase was an increasing tendency to act out sexually the behaviours viewed in the pornography, including compulsive promiscuity, exhibitionism, group sex, voyeurism, frequenting massage parlours, having sex with minor children, rape, and inflicting pain on themselves or a partner during sex. This behaviour frequently grew into a sexual addiction which they found themselves locked into and unable to change or reverse -- no matter what the negative consequences were in their life.

Many examples of the negative effects of pornography-use come from the private or clinical practice of psychotherapists, physicians, counsellors, attorneys, and ministers. Here we come face to face with real people who are in some kind of significant trouble or pain. One example from my practice might illustrate this.

I was asked to consult on a case where a Phoenix-Tucson area professional person, president of his firm and head of his church's committee on helping troubled children, was found to be a serial rapist who had violently raped a number of women at gun- or knife-point in the Arizona area. In doing the background study on him, I found him to come from an exemplary background and trouble-free childhood. He was an outstanding student in high school and college.

His wife, children, business and church associates had not the slightest inkling of his double life or dark side. The only significant negative factor in his life was an early adolescent addiction to pornography which, for the most part, was kept secret from others. This gradually escalated

over a period of years, eventually leading to spending many hours and incurring great expense at "adult" bookstores, looking at violent video-porn movies and masturbating to these.

His first rape was triggered by seeing a close resemblance in the woman he assaulted to the leading character in a porn movie he had seen earlier in the day. Reality and fantasy had become extremely blurred for him as he acted out his pathological sexual fantasies.

In my clinical experience, however, the major consequence of being addicted to pornography is not the probability or possibility of committing a serious sex crime (though this can and does occur), but rather the disturbance of the fragile bonds of intimate family and marital relationships. This is where the most grievous pain, damage, and sorrow occur. There is repeatedly an interference with or even destruction of healthy love and sexual relationships with long-term bonded partners. If one asks if porn is responsible or causes any sex crimes, the answer is unequivocally, "Yes," but that is only the tip of the iceberg.

## **SEXUAL DEVIATIONS ARE LEARNED BEHAVIOURS**

The best evidence to date suggests that most or all sexual deviations are learned behaviours, usually through inadvertent or accidental conditioning. There is no convincing evidence to date, suggesting the hereditary transmission of any pathological sexual behaviour pattern such as rape, incest, pedophilia, exhibitionism, or promiscuity.

As McGuire explains, as a man repeatedly masturbates to a vivid sexual fantasy as his exclusive outlet (introduced by a real life experience or possibly pornography), the pleasurable experiences endow the deviant fantasy (rape, molesting children, injuring one's partner while having sex, etc.) with increasing erotic value. The orgasm experienced then provides the critical reinforcing event for the conditioning of the fantasy preceding or accompanying the act. (McGuire, R.J., et al., "Sexual Deviation as Conditioned Behaviour," Behaviour Research and Therapy, 1965, vol 2, p. 185).

In my experience as a sexual therapist, any individual who regularly masturbates to pornography is at risk of becoming, in time, a sexual addict, as well as conditioning himself into having a sexual deviancy and/or disturbing a bonded relationship with a spouse or girlfriend. A frequent side effect is that it also dramatically reduces their capacity to love. Their sexual side becomes, in a sense, dehumanized. Many of them develop an "alien ego state" (or dark side), whose core is antisocial lust devoid of most values.

It makes no difference if one is an eminent physician, attorney, minister, athlete, corporate executive, college president, unskilled labourer, or an average 15-year-old boy. All can be conditioned into deviancy.

## **THE EFFECTS OF AGGRESSIVE PORNOGRAPHY (PORNO-VIOLENCE)**

In recent years, there has been a considerable body of research on aggressive pornography, much of it found in "hard R-rated" films. Many of these films are also shown unedited on cable TV and later are available to children in nearly every video store in America. The typical film shows nude females, or females in sexually arousing situations and postures, being raped, tortured, or murdered.

The results of this research suggest the possibility of conditioning viewers into associating sexual arousal with inflicting injury, rape, humiliation, or torture on females. Where these films are available on videotapes (which most are), these can be repeatedly viewed in the privacy of one's residence and masturbated to, with the associated risks of negative or antisocial conditioning and behaviour, as previously noted.

The literature on aggressive pornography is rather impressive in its consistency in suggesting a variety of harms or possibility of antisocial outcomes from exposure to this material. This should not be surprising after 40 years of research on film and TV violence arriving essentially at the same conclusion.

In a study by Mills College sociologist Diana Russell, it was found that the depiction and dissemination of the "rape myth" (i.e., that most women really enjoy having sex forced upon them) were significant elements in reducing inhibitions to the use of violence, habituating both males and females to the idea of rape and also accepting sexual aberrance as "normal" behaviour. She also found that once the seeds of deviant behaviour were planted in the male fantasy, the men were inclined to act out their fantasies. She found that both the fantasies were acted out, as well as the mere conceptualization of deviant fantasies as viable behaviours, led to considerable conflict and suffering on the part of both males and females, particularly in sexual relationships with their intimate partners.

(Russell, Diana, Rape and Marriage, Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982).

## **THE EFFECTS OF NON-VIOLENT PORNOGRAPHY**

The issue which has caught the attention of some behavioural scientists is whether it is the violence or the sex that is doing most of the "harm" when it is fused together in so-called aggressive pornography or porno-violence. Some will say, "Just eliminate the violence -- the sex is OK."

Most therapists, however, as well as most ordinary citizens, would not regard the following examples as healthy models of sexual behaviour, but all are frequently depicted in "non-violent" pornography:

- Child pornography and "pseudo child pornography"
- Incest pornography (e.g., mother seducing son, daughter seducing father, etc.)
- Sex with animals
- Group sex
- Sex which humiliates and denigrates women and their sex role in man/woman relationships  
(without overt violence)
- Obscene films which present a massive amount of misinformation or gross distortions about human sexuality

All of the above, while lacking violence, still have the potential of having negative effects on some viewers because they model unhealthy sex role behaviour or give false information about human sexuality. Additionally, non-violent porn can contribute to acquiring a great variety of sexual addictions.

Additionally, empirical research suggests that when experimental subjects are exposed to repeated presentations of hardcore non-violent adult pornography over a six-week period, they:

- Develop an increased callousness toward women; trivialize rape as a criminal offence; to some it was no longer a crime at all;
- Develop distorted perceptions about sexuality;
- Develop an appetite for more deviant, bizarre, or violent types of pornography (escalation); normal sex no longer seemed to "do the job;"

Devalue the importance of monogamy and lack confidence in marriage as a lasting institution;

and

View non-monogamous relationships as normal and natural behavior.

(Zillman, D., and Bryant, J. "Pornography's Impact on Sexual Satisfaction." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1988: vol 18, no. 5, pp 438-453; and Zillman, D., and Bryant, J., "Effects of Prolonged Consumption of Pornography on Family Values." *Journal of Family Issues* (Dec. 1988): vol. 9, no. 4, pp 518-544.).

### **THE CASES OF GARY BISHOP AND TED BUNDY, SERIAL KILLERS**

Another example of the effects of pornography comes from Gary Bishop, convicted homosexual pedophile who murdered five young boys in Salt Lake City, Utah, in order to conceal his sexual abuse of them. He wrote in a letter after his conviction: "Pornography was a determining factor in my downfall. Somehow I became sexually attracted to young boys and I would fantasise about them naked. Certain bookstores offered sex education, photographic, or art books which occasionally contained pictures of nude boys. I purchased such books and used them to enhance my masturbatory fantasies.

"Finding and procuring sexually arousing materials became an obsession. For me, seeing pornography was lighting a fuse on a stick of dynamite. I became stimulated and had to gratify my urges or explode. All boys became mere sexual objects. My conscience was desensitized and my sexual appetite entirely controlled my actions."

In the case of Ted Bundy, serial killer of possibly 31 young women, he stated in a videotaped interview hours before his execution, "You are going to kill me, and that will protect society from me. But out there are many, many more people who are addicted to pornography, and you are doing nothing about that." While some commentators discounted his linking aggressive pornography to his sex-murders (when he said it fuelled his violent thoughts toward women), there seems little doubt that Bundy consumed a great deal of pornography, much of it violent, from an early age.

### **3. EFFECTS ON CHILDREN**

I find in my clinical practice a spill-over effect where pornography used by adults very frequently gets into the hands of children living in the home or neighbourhood. This can cause extremely negative consequences.

For example, the parents of a 14-year-old boy brought their son to me when they discovered that he was sexually molesting his sister. We found on investigation that cable TV was in the home, and late at night on one of the channels, there were some very graphic, rough, very violent depictions of sexuality. He got up at two in the morning, went downstairs, and watched these films night after night. They became the training manual or "sex education" that triggered him to assault his sister sexually.

### **EFFECTS OF DIAL-A-PORN ON CHILDREN**

With the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Justice, I was commissioned to conduct a pilot field study on the effects of dial-a-porn on children (mostly pre-teens or early teens) who had become involved with this type of pornography, and their parents.

At the time of the study, any youngster of any age could call these porno lines and get these

messages from nearly any place in the country. All they needed was a phone number to call, and the numbers were very easy to come by. If parents put a "block" on their phone to prevent these calls, the children merely found another phone to use.

With every one of the children we studied, we found an "addiction-effect." In every case, without exception, the children (girls as well as boys) became hooked on this sex by phone and kept going back for more and still more. In some cases, more than 300 long distance calls were made by particular children.

One 12-year-old boy in Hayward, Calif., listened to dial-a-porn for nearly two hours on the phone in the empty pastor's study between church meetings one Sunday afternoon. A few days later he sexually assaulted a four-year-old girl in his mother's day care center. He had never been exposed to pornography before. He had never acted out sexually before and was not a behaviour problem in the home. He had never heard of or knew of oral sex before listening to dial-a-porn. And this was how he assaulted the girl, forcing oral sex on her in direct imitation of what he had heard on the phone.

Since I conducted this study, Congress enacted legislation prohibiting obscene dial-a-porn messages and restricting access to indecent messages. Many dial-a-porn services, however, continue to operate in violation of this law, and neither the Justice Department nor the FCC is doing much about it.

### **THE VALUES THAT PERMEATE HARDCORE PORN**

In a study reported to the 1986 Attorney General's Commission on Pornography by Dr. Jennings Bryant, 600 American males and females of high school age and above were interviewed about their "out in real life involvement with pornography." He found that 91% of the males and 82% of the females admitted having been exposed to X-rated, hard-core pornography. Two-thirds of the males and 40% of the females reported wanting to try out some of the behaviours they had witnessed.

And, among high school students, 31% of males and 18% of the females admitted doing some of the things sexually they had seen in the pornography within a few days after exposure. This clearly suggests the modelling-effect or imitative-learning effect, as well as "triggering effect," that even non-violent pornography has on human sexual behaviour in some individuals.

As Dr. Bryant comments, "If the values which permeate the content of most hardcore pornography are examined, what is found is an almost total suspension of the sorts of moral judgement that have been espoused in the value systems of most civilized cultures. Forget trust. Forget family. Forget commitment. Forget love. Forget marriage. Here, in this world of ultimate physical hedonism, anything goes.

"If we take seriously the social science research literature in areas such as social learning or cultivation effects, we should expect that the heavy consumer of hardcore pornography should acquire some of these values which are so markedly different from those of our mainstream society, especially if the consumer does not have a well developed value system of his or her own."

### **PORNOGRAPHY AS A TRAINING MANUAL**

We also have a great deal of information that suggests that pornography is used by sex offenders as a "training manual" in not only acquiring their own deviation but also as a device to break down the resistance and inhibitions of their victims -- especially when the targets are children.

In an in-house study conducted by the Los Angeles Police Department's Administrative Vice division, in 60 percent of the child molestation cases referred to them over a 10-year period, adult or child pornography was used to lower the inhibitions of the children molested or to excite or sexually arouse the perpetrator of the abuse. In another study of 43 pedophiles, child pornography was found used in every one of the cases investigated. The officers reported the abusers repeatedly saying the same thing: "I used this stuff to stimulate the child, to break down his inhibitions." (The World and I, December 1992: p. 508)

It is mainly pedophiles who create true child pornography using children. They do this for their own use as well as to exchange or sell the materials they produce. When this occurs, the children are doubly abused: at the time the films or videos or pictures are made, and when others observe these works in the future and get turned on sexually.

Child pornography invariably produces great shame and guilt in the children involved, especially as they get older and more fully comprehend the enormity of their abuse and know that there is a permanent record of their degradation.

#### **4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF PORNOGRAPHY'S EFFECTS**

##### **PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY WHAT THEY SEE**

Some Americans strongly hold the belief that pornography, while it may be vulgar and tasteless, is still essentially harmless and has no real effect on the viewer.

However, for someone to suggest that pornography cannot have an effect on you is to deny the whole notion of education, or to suggest that people are not affected by what they read and see. If you believe that a pornographic book or film cannot affect you, then you must also say that Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, or the Bible, or the Koran, or advertising have no effect on their readers or viewers.

Astute businessmen do not spend billions of dollars a year on advertising if their visual and verbal messages and imagery did not motivate people to buy deodorant or diapers or automobiles. The key question is, not whether, but what kind of an effect does pornography have?

##### **PORNOGRAPHY AS A FORM OF SEX EDUCATION**

Sex counselling clinics use explicit sexual pictures, films, books, and videos to change couples' sexual behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes. However, these materials are as carefully selected and prescribed as particular drugs prescribed by a physician to treat a specific illness or infection. No responsible doctor would ever send a patient to a pharmacy and say, "Take anything available on the shelf." And no responsible sex therapist would ever say to a patient who had a specifically focused sexual problem, "Go down to the adult bookstore and help yourself to anything you find there."

Consider also the spread of sex education courses in schools throughout the United States. The assumption is that you can change attitudes and behaviours about sex through some form of teaching and instruction. If you assume that this is so -- still a controversial issue among researchers -- then you have to admit that to the possibility that pornography which models rape and the dehumanization of females in sexual situations are also powerful forms of sex education.

Anyone who has seen much pornography knows that most of it is made by men for male

consumption; is extremely sexist; gives a great deal of misinformation about human sexuality; is devoid of love, relationship, and responsibility; mentions nothing about the risks of sexually transmitted diseases; and, for the most part, dehumanizes male and female participants.

Pornography portrays unhealthy or even anti-social kinds of sexual activity, such as sado-masochism, abuse and humiliation of the female, involvement of minors, incest, group sex, voyeurism, exhibitionism, bestiality, etc. If we just examine its educative impact, it presents us with some cause for concern.

### **WHY SOME CLAIM 'NO EFFECTS'**

Some of the "experts" who publicly suggest that pornography has no effects are just unaware of the research and studies suggesting harm. Others really do not believe what they are asserting. Still others will only reluctantly admit to the possibility of harm from "violent pornography."

In some cases, they are pretending not to know because of their concern over what they falsely believe is censorship or loss of First Amendment rights. Some fear the tyranny of a moralist minority who might take away their rights to view and use pornography, then later take away free speech and expression. Some are themselves sex addicts with a hidden agenda behind their public posturing.

Thus, for some of them, the issue is political. It also has to do with their personal values and much less with what any contrary evidence might suggest.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this brief essay, it is not possible to review all of the studies on pornography's effects. But the studies and other evidence set forth here still should be sufficient to give the reader a sense of the field, and thus answer for himself or herself the question of pornography's potential to change or influence sexual attitudes and behaviour.

In my clinical practice, I have treated both children and adults who have been unequivocally and repeatedly injured by exposure to pornography. If anyone still has doubts about pornography's effects, I would suggest that he or she get invited to some meetings of "Sexaholics Anonymous" and personally witness the pain and trauma first hand.

In a society where some types of pornographic material are protected by the Constitution and obscenity laws go unenforced, some individuals may choose to immerse themselves in pornography.

These individuals should be made aware of the health hazards involved. This kind of knowledge is most important for parents, since most sexual and pornographic addictions begin in middle childhood or adolescence, most of the time without the parents' awareness or the children have an insufficient understanding of the risks involved.