

Teenagers as Victims

Mark Kastleman

Porn Places Teens and Adults in the Same Sexual Category

Pornographers make no attempt to separate the sexual development and maturity of teenagers from that of adults, by placing teens and adults in the same general category. In fact, pornographers go to great lengths to satisfy the "young teen sex" fetish by making their models appear to be as young as possible.

Pornography fosters the message that as soon as a boy or girl reaches puberty, he or she should be having sex and viewing pornography right along with the adults. Likewise, Hollywood works hard to push teens into an adult world with its teen-oriented movies.

I recently read an article in the movie section of a local newspaper with this headline: *"Teen Movie" Is Becoming a Sexual Euphemism*

The article read, in part:

Nobody, apparently, was asked to vouch for the under-17s who made up at least half the audience at last week's preview screening of "Cruel Intentions," which opened Friday. This film version of the novel "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" stars Sarah Michelle Gellar and Ryan Phillippe as bored, rich high schoolers who make a bet as to whether Phillippe can seduce a committed virgin. The wager? A night with Gellar's character.

It's difficult to imagine anyone too far beyond 17 having any interest in "Cruel Intentions." And it's even harder to conceive that any parent with a teenager could sit through this movie without squirming. It's as raunchy as they come, with references to sexual practices of every variety. Yet it represents a trend.

Of the five teen-oriented films released by a major studio this year, four have been rated R, primarily for language and sexual content. "Cruel Intentions" was released by Columbia, which also released "Jawbreaker," about teens who conspire to cover up the accidental death of a girl in their clique. It sports a sequence in which their ringleader asks a boy to show her how he'd like a sex act performed. This scene elicited squeals from the girls in front of me at the screening, who were probably around 14. But maybe they were older. I could've been mistaken. What is not mistakable is that the major studios, emboldened by the pervasive sexualization of teen culture in advertising, magazines, pop music, and television, are upping the ante...

The teenage audience has become increasingly important to Hollywood because movies like "Cruel Intentions," with their young casts, inexpensive directors and low production overhead, usually cost less than Harrison Ford's salary. "I Know What You Did Last Summer" earned almost 10 times its production cost, while "Six Days Seven Nights" barely broke even.

So the rating system, designed to protect children, becomes another code for kids to crack, while the term "teen movie" becomes another sexual euphemism, like "adult bookstore" and "mature audience." Perhaps it's time to add yet another rating: GR-for Get Real.

And so, what are the results of teens involving themselves in adult sexual activity? In the U.S., approximately one in four sexually active teens acquires a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Infectious syphilis rates have more than doubled among teenagers since the mid 1980s. One million teenage girls become pregnant each year.

Males who are exposed to significant amounts of porn before the age of 14 are more sexually active and engage in more varied sexual behaviors as adults than males who are not exposed. Pornography's menacing message to teens is clear: **Sex without responsibility is not only acceptable but preferable and desirable.**

TEENAGE GIRLS as Victims of Internet Pornography

Teenage girls as a group are fast becoming one of the most vulnerable to pornography of any category. There are certain times in a girl's development when she is more impressionable and sensitive to outside stimuli. When cellular-memory groups and neural pathways are laid down during these times, they are large, deep, dominant and cast in concrete. The girl's attitudes, emotions, self-esteem and core beliefs are swayed for life.

We live in a time when increasing numbers of teenage girls are going in for plastic surgery-nose jobs, chin jobs, eye jobs and breast implants. Why are they so dissatisfied with how they look? How are these ideas getting into their brains and bodies? Just look at the magazine covers on the grocery store rack, the sit-coms on TV, the movies at the theater, and the Internet porn that men and teenage boys (and increasing numbers of women) are obsessing over.

Some teenage girls begin early trading sex for affection and acceptance from teenage boys. I address this issue in greater detail in other chapters. Suffice it to say, teenage girls are constantly being sent the message through magazines, television, movies, comedy, and pornography, that teenage boys and men want to look at sensuous, voluptuous female bodies and have sex with them.

Sexual Violence Becomes Acceptable and Fun

At the core of many pornographic fantasy scenarios is the sexual assault of the "girl next door." Standard fare includes jokes about raping women after drugging them or plying them with alcohol; scenes showing women enjoying being gang-raped; and "entertainment" depicting the rape of coeds, girlfriends, students, secretaries, maids, neighbors, and children. In fact, Playboy publisher Hugh Hefner once bragged about his success in tearing down the barrier erected by Judeo-Christian beliefs that at one time protected "good girls" from being viewed as "bad girls."

Hefner said:

In the prudish moral climate of the Fifties, Playboy unabashedly championed sexual liberation. Before Playboy, women were typecast either as Madonna or as whores. But the wholesome, unselfconscious sexuality of Playboy's "girl-next-door" Playmates conveyed-to men and women alike-the unsettling and exciting message that "nice girls" like sex, too.

This "wholesome, nice-girls-like-sex" message has also helped change the "nice boys" attitudes toward sexual violence against "nice girls." In fact, rape is now often euphemistically referred to as "rough sex."

In May 1988 the Rhode Island Rape Crisis Center asked 1,700 sixth- to ninth-grade students to share their attitudes about sex and rape. More than half the boys and girls considered sex to be acceptable after six months of dating-even if rape was necessary to achieve it. Roughly half agreed that if a boy spends \$10 to \$15 on a girl, he has the right to force a kiss.

Sixty-five percent of the boys and 47 percent of the girls said that forced sex was acceptable if a couple dated for six months. Without realizing that "forced" sex is rape, nearly a quarter of the boys and a sixth of the girls accepted rape if a boy had spent money on a girl.

What does it mean when boys and girls grow up believing that "rough sex" is merely erotic or flirtatious play? According to the *Washington Post* (May 6, 1988), of 1,035 rapes reported to the Rhode Island Rape Crisis Center in 1987, 79 percent of the victims were raped by a person known to them. Moreover, experts estimate one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually assaulted before they are 18 years old, generally by a relative or another trusted acquaintance.

In 1988, Michigan reported an astounding 681 juveniles convicted of sexually assaulting younger children. The average age of the victims: seven! Almost 60 percent of the assaults involved penetration, and further, "93% of the [juvenile] offenders were acquaintances, friends, babysitters, or relatives of the victims."

The horror of this new wave of juvenile sexual assaults is just the tip of the iceberg. On October 11, 1984, the *Washington Post* reported an instance in which a high school girl was raped in a boys' school bathroom while at least ten other boys looked on, cheering.

The *Boston Herald*, on June 28, 1984, ran a story about a 12-year-old Pawtucket, Massachusetts, boy who raped a ten-year-old girl on a pool table in a "reenactment" of the infamous "Big Dan" pool table gang rape of a woman. The "Big Dan" pool table case had recently received wide media coverage in the Pawtucket area.

With every type of sex act and perversion involving female children, teens, and women being displayed, glorified and promoted over the Internet, the type of atrocities cited above will become commonplace.

Porn Encourages Anorexia and Bulimia

In her book *Soft Porn Plays Hardball*, Dr. Judith Reisman states:

Porn subtly communicates that the value of a woman is determined by her body shape and size. Only those women with a perfect physical appearance are valuable and worthy of being admired, desired and loved. This can have detrimental effects on how women and girls view themselves. I often wonder how many young girls who struggle with anorexia, bulimia, and other eating disorders are unknowingly struggling to measure up to the "perfect 10" image projected by the airbrushed centerfold.

TEENAGE BOYS as Victims of Internet Pornography

Teenage boys are extremely vulnerable to pornography's seductive allure. In her book *Kids Online*, Donna Rice Hughes shares some valuable insights:

Print and movie pornography tend to trap males more often than females. It would be easy to believe that males are more visually oriented than females, but the evidence is not clear enough to make that assertion. What we do know is that the male's hydraulic sex system and the exterior genitals keep him more aware of his sexual feelings than the typical female is.

His ejaculation pattern, once begun, will continue, and his psycho-social sexual appetite tends to be fully developed within thirty-six months after that first ejaculation. The porn market, therefore, exploits this normal development of male sexuality, with the tragic effect that addiction to pornography tends to desensitize the male, such that a bonded heterosexual relationship is not only unlikely to develop, but the genuine relationship with one exclusive person is not even desired.

Giving porn to a teenage boy is like giving crack to a baby: addiction is almost guaranteed. No wonder boys ages 12 to 17 are the porn industry's core target, as determined by the 1986 Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. Instant addiction equals customers for life. With 20 times the normal amount of testosterone suddenly coursing through a male teen's system at puberty, how can one say that he should have the presence of mind and the self-control necessary to decide on his own whether or not to continue looking at porn once he is exposed to it? Come on! This is no choice at all. Again, it's like feeding crack to a baby, then expecting him to wean himself from it when he becomes older.

Pornographers Use Nature against Men and Boys

The power that drives men to procreate, to mate, to commit themselves to a wife and family is one of the most powerful forces in the universe. Compound this with the fact that teenage boys and girls are equipped at puberty with dormant cells containing sexual commands and instructions, just waiting to be activated. How these cells are activated and the images, emotions and attitudes stored there initially will have a direct impact on the teenagers' future sexual attitudes and practices.

Pornographers use this natural biological phenomenon to their advantage. In order to sexually arouse, their products show females that appear to be in estrus or in heat to excite the male mating instinct. Pornographers don't want males to think, they want them to react. Instinct is the key to unlocking the male appetite-not rational logic and thought- so females are erotically posed with their lips glistening in red lipstick, their genitals exposed, their bodies assuming a mating position so that the viewing male will quickly, instinctively be aroused.

But it isn't simply sexual drive that impels teenage boys to get hooked on Internet porn and masturbation. There are countless things going on in the brain and body of a teenage boy, any of which can trigger his need to "self-medicate." Think about the teen years-zits, extreme self-centeredness, bodily changes, peer pressure, girl problems, shyness, and the list goes on. The entire male teen mindbody is in upheaval, a state of constant flux. And then, Bam! Like the marijuana, crack or heroine dealer, the Internet pornographer is there to "make it all better." This faceless porn-dealer offers the already vulnerable and troubled teen an instant and easy recipe for escape.

The teen is given all the "drugs" he could ever want, all at his beck and call and in the privacy of his own room. He can completely immerse himself in the fantasy filth world of nudity, sex, perversion and the self-medication of repeated masturbation. This teen, trapped in the blurry world of puberty, becomes a client for life, assuring the Internet pornographers of obscene profits well into the future.

The Boy Who Couldn't Give Blood

When teens get sucked into the porn trap, they suffer the same dark consequences that men suffer when they view pornography. But teens suffer a misery that seems to have an extra sharp bite. With the images permanently stored, they often find themselves slaves to a cruel master who may alter the course of their lives.

The young college student's mother was in the hospital, literally bleeding to death. A blood transfusion was desperately needed to save her life. Her son recruited his college friends and they all drove to the hospital to donate the needed blood. The young men were first tested for blood type and several proved to be a match for the dying woman. One young man's blood, however, was found to be unfit because he tested positive for venereal disease. He was unable to give the needed aid to the woman-his own mother.

Earlier in his life, this young man had become addicted to pornography. His addiction escalated to the point where he began acting out his fantasies with dozens of women, including prostitutes. Walking the pornographic path rendered this young man unable to give aid to his own mother at a time of crisis. In fact, he added to her pain and suffering when she learned of his diseased condition.

Teen-in-a-Box Tragedy

I remember years ago reading a most tragic and heart-wrenching account of human suffering. It was written by the victim himself, now a man, recalling the horrific experience of his youth. From the time Matt was a tiny child, his mother had kept him confined 24 hours a day in a large cardboard box! This was his entire world; this was all he knew. I cannot recall the exact details, but I believe that Matt remained in the box until he was eight or nine years old. His situation-and his mother's treachery-was finally brought to light, and he was released and put into foster care.

Matt spoke of the wonder and awe he felt upon seeing and experiencing things for the very first time-things you and I take for granted: seeing a blue sky, touching the leaves on a tree, rolling in the new-mown green grass, tasting a freshly baked chocolate chip cookie. And how surprised he was when he discovered that all children don't live out their early lives inside a cardboard box. Imagine the exhilaration and joy he must have felt the day he was set free into a world that wasn't confined and black and smothering!

I often think of that child and his tortured beginnings. I grieve at the marvelous experiences and wonders he was deprived of during those years. What an awful tragedy! Then I think of all the teenage boys in this country who are trapped inside their own "cardboard box" of Internet pornography addiction. This is a tragedy of monumental proportions. I also ponder the sad state of the pornographers, who, like the deranged and demented mother, are obsessed with the profit potential of luring young men into the box and then keeping them there, sealed off from so many of life's beauties, deprived of hope for the future, stifled by the disabling captivity of such an insidious addiction.

In next month's article I will discuss how men are victims of pornography.

Mark B. Kastleman is the author of the revolutionary new book titled **The Drug of the New Millennium-the Science of How Internet Pornography Radically Alters the Human Brain and Body-A Guide for Parents, Spouses, Clergy and Counselors**. Many leading scientists, psychologists, therapists and religious leaders consider this book to be one of the most important works ever written on this subject, and a must-read for parents, spouses, clergy and counselors.

To learn more about the harms of pornography please visit www.contentwatch.com