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Pornography, Prostitution and the Trafficking of People

A Sinister —
and Growing —
Business Model.

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A Sinister — and Growing — Business Model

Pornography is not a ‘harmless pastime,’ but the fuel that drives prostitution, sex shops and human slavery.

by Bob DeMoss

Warning: This article might not be appropriate for children.

The baseball bat found its mark. Wood crushing flesh and bone.

Sacha’s arm was broken. So was her will.

There would be no more attempted escapes. Even if she had been successful breaking free, her captors had taken her passport.

“If I have a smile on my face, it doesn’t mean I’m here of my own will. Doesn’t mean I appreciate this job and I want to be here. I was not free to leave. I was kept; enslaved.”

Twenty-year-old Katya finally escaped from her captors

She’d never make it back to her homeland in the Ukraine. What’s more, they had guns and had threatened to kill her family — a risk she wasn’t willing to take. She was trapped, just another one of the forgotten human slaves trafficked into the sex and porn industry against her will.

Sacha’s story is far too common.

The U.S. Department of State estimates 600,000 to 800,000 victims are trafficked internation-

ally every year for purposes of entering the sex trade (stripping, prostitution, pornography, and live-sex shows), and labor exploitation (sweatshops and domestic servitude). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports, "After drug dealing, human trafficking is tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world today."

It's also the fastest growing.

Girls like Sacha might have responded to an advertisement to be a waitress, model or a singer. Upon arrival from Eastern Europe or Asia, they're typically met by men who inform them that "plans have changed." These human traffickers will seize their passports and then systematically terrorize their captives to purge any thoughts of escaping.

Twenty-year-old Katya, who did manage to safely run away from her captors, explained she was forced to produce \$1,000 a day at the Cheetah strip club in Detroit. Katya told MSNBC of her year-long ordeal, saying, "If I have a smile on my face, it doesn't mean I'm here of my own will. Doesn't mean I appreciate this job and I want to be here. I was not free to leave. I was kept; enslaved."

The stories told by survivors are as heartbreaking as they are horrifying.

According to Traffick911.com, an organization dedicated to ending the sale of American children for sexual slavery, "One little girl finally told her captor just to kill her — she couldn't do it anymore. The pimp refused, telling her he makes too much money off her. If she wouldn't do what he told her to, he would kidnap her 8-year-old little sister and pour battery acid over her face while she watched. The little girl complied, living in a dog cage when she wasn't being sold to

Disturbing Statistics About Child Pornography and Exploitation

In 2004, Internet Watch Foundation found 3,433 child abuse domains. In 2006, the number skyrocketed to 10,656.

- Of known child abuse domains, 54 percent are housed in the United States.

- The fastest-growing demand in commercial websites for child abuse is for images depicting the worst type of abuse, including penetrative sexual activity involving children and adults, and sadism or penetration by an animal.

- File-sharing program Gnutella has 116,000 daily child pornography requests.

- In a study of arrested child pornography possessors, 40 percent also sexually victimized children.

- Of those arrested for child pornography crimes between 2000 and 2001, 83 percent had images involving children aged 6 to 12;

39 percent had images of children aged 3 to 5; and 19 percent had images of infants and toddlers.

- According to a National Children's Homes report, the number of Internet child pornography images has increased 1,500 percent since 1988.

- Approximately 20 percent of Internet pornography involves children; more than 20,000 images of child pornography are posted on the Internet every week.

- Child pornography is estimated to be a \$3 billion-a-year industry.

- Research indicates that one in five girls and one in 10 boys is sexually victimized.

- Between 100,000 and 300,000 American youths are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation. ●

Source: *Enough is Enough*. For more information, visit enough.org.

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Dr. Donna M. Hughes, professor of women's studies at the University of Rhode Island

man after man."

While the horrors of human trafficking stir many hearts to ac-

tion, there is far less anger directed toward mainstream commercial sex businesses, such as strip clubs and pornography that act as feeder industries for trafficking operations.

In the business of commercial sex, pornography serves as the marketing vehicle. Or, as Patrick Trueman, CEO of Morality in Media and former chief of the Chief of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the U. S. Department of Justice, testified before a congressional subcommittee several years ago, "Pornography is a powerful factor in creating the demand for illicit sex."

Human Trafficking Facts

- Trafficking of persons exists in two distinct types: labor trafficking and sexual trafficking.
- Sexual trafficking is the recruitment, transport within national or across international borders, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Sexual trafficking is accomplished by means of fraud, deception, threat of or use of force, abuse of a position of vulnerability or other coercion.
- The U.S. State Department estimates at least 600,000 to 800,000 human beings are trafficked across international borders each year. Numbers within national borders are much higher.
- Among trafficking victims, 80 percent are women and girls, 50 percent are children and 70 percent are forced into sexual servitude.
- UNICEF reports that around the world, over 1 million children enter the sex trade every year, and approximately 30 million children have lost their childhood to sexual exploitation over the past 30 years.
- Annually, an estimated 14,500 to 17,500 women and children are trafficked into the United States.
- Despite an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 sex slaves in the U.S., fewer than 1,000 victims have been assisted through the efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement since 2001, when services for trafficking victims were first made available.
- In February 2001, Interpol announced that human trafficking generates \$19 billion annually.
- The United Nations claims that the trafficking of human beings has surpassed the drug trade to become the second largest source of money for organized crime, after the illegal arms trade.

Source: *The Salvation Army's Initiative Against Sexual Trafficking.*

For more information, visit iast.net.

Trueman told *Citizen* how traffickers are leveraging the online consumer's money to fund their operation. "There are websites which offer sexual acts with a girl via remote camera. Using your credit card, you 'hire' her to engage in various degrading sex acts while you watch. Technically speaking, that's prostitution — sex acts for money. Many of these prostitutes are trafficked women." He adds, "Once you pay for that sex act, that act is recorded and kept on the website for others to 'rent.' In other words, the viewer actually pays the production costs of pornography. That's how the porn criminals have figured this out."

"Pornography is a powerful factor in creating the demand for illicit sex."

*Patrick Trueman,
CEO of Morality in Media*

Dr. Donna M. Hughes, professor of women's studies at the University of Rhode Island, estimates from her research that at least a third of women in prostitution have been involved in the making of pornography and that patrons of prostitution are twice as likely to be porn users.

"The categories we have for things like pornography, stripping, prostitution — we tend to think of them as really separate categories," she said. "But if you're actually in the sex industry, they're quite seamless. There are so many variations that I think our old categories are rather obsolete."

Even if human trafficking didn't play such a big role in the porn

Porn = Stripping = Prostitution

Prostitution is legal in some parts of Nevada, but despite what some think, not Las Vegas. Nevertheless, Sin City may be the clearest place to see the interconnectivity of the sex industry in action, as documented by Melissa Farley in her book *Prostitution & Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections*.

Some excerpts:

“There is a crossover of people involved in legal prostitution and illegal prostitution and back again. Similarly, Web-based video and print pornography are inseparable from the rest of the sex industry, with the same kinds of crossovers from prostitution to pornography to sex trafficking. Some Nevada

legal brothel pimps have declared their economic interest in ‘cross fertilizing’ prostitution with other legal adult businesses such as strip clubs, Internet sites and pornography. ‘The Girls of Cheetah’s’ is pornography made at a Las Vegas strip club.

“A law enforcement investigation in Las Vegas located a multi-use sex industry operation that included online prostitution. Looking like a small office complex from the street, it blended pornography production with escort prostitution. The pimp/pornographer rented 5-6 offices on Tropicana Avenue which functioned simultaneously as Internet pornography, cyber-peepshow

prostitution, and a location out of which women were pimped to Las Vegas hotels and to an illegal brothel.

“Webcam video and escort prostitution sites have recently merged with adult dating sites. Since 2000, there has been (an increase in) prostitution advertising on dating (websites) with the major dating (websites) now largely consisting of locations where johns seek women who they presume to be prostituting. Adultfriendfinder, for example, features gonzo [amateur] pornography of women seeking dates for prostitution in dozens of countries and every state in the United States.” ●

and sex industries, Lisa Thompson, liaison for the Abolition of Sexual Trafficking at the Salvation Army, points out the toxic side of porn for the user: “Pornography robs people from the ability to have an intimate, loving and committed relationship with their spouse where they can explore their sexuality within the safety of an exclusive union, because it programs the mind with debase, degrading, brutal and violent ideas about what human sexuality ought to look like.”

Because pornography is harmful on virtually every level, Morality in Media has been working for decades to get the federal laws on illegal, hard-core pornography enforced. They’ve also worked aggressively behind the scenes with hotel chains like Marriott to stop carrying in-room, pay-per-view hard-core pornography.

Marriott recently announced, “As we transition to this new platform, adult content will be off the menu for virtually all of our

newly built hotels. Over the next few years, this will be the policy across our system.” Pat Trueman told *Citizen* that the porn industry has expanded so rapidly that now

“I wondered what in the world we were doing as a company giving this kind of option to anybody, particularly young kids. It just isn’t the right thing to do for us, or really, for anybody.”

Robert Rowling, owner of Omni hotels

pay-for-view pornography in hotels is passé, declining in revenue “because people can view the same — and far worse — pornographic material on their laptop or smartphone.”

Likewise, Phil Burrell, Presi-

dent of Citizens for Community Values, said, “Marriott did the right thing for the wrong reasons.” He believes Marriott is attempting to generate some good will with customers with this move, when in reality the pay-per-view porn service is an outdated business model.

By contrast, 12 years ago when in-room porn was highly profitable, Texas billionaire Robert Rowling, a Christian, made the move to pull all pornographic movies from his Omni hotel chain. His decision was made on moral, not financial, grounds. “I wondered what in the world we were doing as a company giving this kind of option to anybody, particularly young kids,” Rowling told *Citizen*. “It just isn’t the right thing to do for us, or really, for anybody.” ●

Bob DeMoss is a New York Times bestselling collaborator, co-author of Finding Home and founder of PluggedIn. His latest book is The Devil in Pew #7.