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The Black Plague of Pornography

Statement of Charles H. Keating, Jr.
to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee

A flood tide of filth engulfs our Nation. The families of this Nation need help, not destruction. The people of this Nation need leadership, not retreat.

Though I do not relish the assignment, it has become my avocation to speak out about hard truths many people in government seem to have forgotten. Hundreds of thousands of citizens have written to encourage my fight for strong laws against the crime of pornography. They expect protection against the pornography Kingpins. They want Congress to clean up the filth polluting the moral environment. They want aggressive protection of fundamental public decency.

The issue is not just a few "dirty words" in bland novels, but rather a diseased education system spewing out lies about life, sex, decency and civilization itself from almost every magazine stand and many movie houses in the country. Pornography does indeed cause crime. There is big money in the sex-exploitation racket.

*The pornographers in our country do a \$4,000,000,000 per year business, more than the legitimate film and record industry combined.

*The average porn magazine sells for between \$6 and \$10 each. Films range up to \$50; the countless ones involving children bring even more.

*In Los Angeles alone, the porno business does \$100,000,000 a year in gross retail volume.

*The Crime Syndicate skims off the "cream" of these profits and uses it to fund its other illegal activities; thus if pornography is not controlled effectively it will be virtually impossible for law enforcement to show significant success against gambling, prostitution or narcotics.

*There is a torrent of porn spreading into every city in the country: There is heterosexual porn . . . homosexual porn . . . kiddie porn . . . bondage porn . . . sexual devices porn (so-called "toys" including the double-ended penis for lesbian copulation, the "---k" pillow, etc); there is porn depicting bestiality and even the porn "snuff film" (perverted sex acts culminating in actual murder of one participant), and there is live porn, massage parlors, *ad infinitum*.

*Police vice squads report that 77% of child molesters of boys and 87% of child molesters of girls admitted trying out, or imitating, the sexual behavior modeled by pornography. In one group of rapists, 57% indicated they had tried out the sexual behavior they had seen depicted by pornography.

*VD is pandemic. Gonorrhea of the throat is epidemic! Doctors are being advised to culture for gonorrhea in all persistent sore throats; it has been found in infants as young as 18 months.

*Most of the stuff is manufactured in the United States. In many cases it is imported. It is shipped across state lines, sent through the mails, advertised in hundreds of magazines, transmitted through the channels of Interstate Commerce. It

is demonstrated and sold in thousands of stores — indeed, there are hundreds of magazines and movies showing scenes of unspeakable vileness right within five miles of the Senate Office Building, scenes so perverted that no Senator would want anyone, much less his own family, to look at them even once; so perverted that no Senator would dare tell his constituents what they contain and then tell them that he did not vote for strong laws against them.

I proceed on the assumption that the members of both the Majority and the Minority would vote for strong laws against pornography, if they realized how widespread it is; how profoundly it perverts; and how terribly harmful it is to individuals and to the Nation as a whole.

My assumption is that the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate as a whole have not yet looked carefully at the facts about the moral pollution that is contaminating the entire country. Just as it took some decades of noxious gases piling up over our cities, of lethal fumes in and near our factories, of growing reports by the public authorities on shortened lifespan and higher frequency of disease — before the Congress during the last decade would pass tough anti-pollution laws and create a strong Environmental Protection Agency . . . so also it has taken two decades of moral pollution corrupting practically every city and town in the land to bring us to the point where Congress can no longer look the other way.

But the Senate must first disabuse itself as to what modern pornography is all about. We are not talking about a few bawdy cartoons from a 1939 issue of *Esquire* . . . nor about parts of the writings of D. H. Lawrence . . . nor about a few "dirty words" put into B-grade novels for spice . . . nor even about the "centerfold" of the 1969 issues of *Playboy*.

There is a "culture lag" here: We imagine the future, we judge the present, by our experience in the past. But the "dirty books" that one might have glanced at in his youth resemble today's pornography magazines/videocassettes/films about as much as smoke from a cigarette resembles a forest fire out of control; or as much as shoplifting by a juvenile resembles murder-assassination by a Mafia "hit man."

We have reached a qualitative watershed. We are now talking about something so hideous and barbaric that people who have not seen it cannot believe it exists, that people who have seen some of it grope for euphemisms to dilute its vileness, and that people who indulge their morbid fantasies with it do so furtively, keeping their private collection of perverted picture books so no one knows their lusts. In an article from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (Feb. 11, 1979), Reo M. Christenson, the distinguished liberal political scientist, wrote:

"Those appalled by the prospect of censorship usually

not realize what they are protecting, or what, through postal subsidies, they help distribute with their tax dollars.

"It is imperative that the public know what is really in *Hustler* . . . (It) is not a "girlie" magazine or another *Playboy*. Rather, it is full of pictures and descriptions of such gross sexual perversion, such bizarre forms of bestiality and such nauseating accounts of excretory activities that few if any newspapers feel free to explicitly inform their readers of what is in the magazine."—*The Judgment on Hustler: Sanity, not Censorship*

The protean monster that is modern pornography takes many forms: These include, in livid color, with zoom-lens close-ups,

- women having intercourse with dogs and horses;
- lesbian masturbation and the devices enabling lesbian copulation;
- techniques of rape;
- heterosexual and homosexual sadomasochism, with instruments;
- methods of seducing and/or molesting children;
- "snuff films" in which the victim is attacked sexually and then *actually murdered before the camera*;
- gang sex clubs in which, typically a group of men kidnap a young woman, chain her to a post and then simultaneously have sex with her in groups of two or three or even more;
- fetishistic ways to stimulate oneself autoerotically, e.g., demonstrations of how to hang oneself by a woman's stockings or slip, just long enough to become aroused;
- close-ups of male and female sex organs in massively turgid arousal;
- in all, the protagonists, whose only purpose of sexual activity and instant and continuous gratification, and usually the foil or victim, are shown in ecstasy-like transports of total animal pleasure (never, in the films or photo-essays, is shown physical or psychic harm such as VD or neurosis).

The Senate must face up to the extent of all this. In every city there are tens and sometimes hundreds of "adult bookstores," which deal in magazines, pictures and films of the material (and live porn) I have just summarized. There are between 260 and 280 monthly magazines catering to pedophiles — people who get their "kicks" by looking at the nude bodies of eight-year-olds and younger in compromising poses. There are private syndicates or clubs of sometimes hundreds of people who, through the mails, order and trade pictures of such children, in poses distinctively appealing to the individual's personal twist. And there are nationwide clubs that trade in children themselves.

The porno industry grosses about *four billion dollars* annually. That's *billion*, which means the purveyors of porn do better than the entire legitimate motion picture and record industries.

It is likely that literally millions of young people, in their impressionable teens and certainly in their early and mid-adult years, view films of bestiality, lesbian masturbation, rape techniques, gang sex and other typical forms of pornography.

And now the industry is moving into videotapes so that it can make another billion in the hotel, motel and home cassette markets. That is, if the Congress does nothing, soon every neighborhood is virtually certain to have a few people who entertain themselves with these kinds of pornography — which means that when our little girls go babysitting they may chance to view these, and no one will be certain that when his teenage son is invited to a classmate's home for a party, and it happens that the parents are out — or they are home! — "stag films" of S-M and masturbation will not be shown.

Modern pornography causes immense harm. It creates anti-social attitudes. It degrades women. It causes sex crimes. Some members of Congress seem to believe that pornography is a "victimless crime," i.e., that it causes no harm. There is a curious inconsistency here: We feel quite certain

that smoking causes cancer. We are quite sure that "racist attitudes" cause specific acts of racial discrimination. We are beginning to recognize the mounting evidence that violence on television and in the movies causes violent conduct. As the liberal columnist, Nicholas von Hoffman, wrote in an essay, "Assault by Film," *The Washington Post* (April 13, 1979), p. D-4:

"Why is it liberals who believe "role models" in third grade readers are of decisive influence on behavior when it concerns racism or male chauvinist piggery, laugh at the assertion that pornography may also teach rape? Every textbook in every public school system in the nation has been overhauled in the last 20 years because it was thought that the blond, blue-eyed suburban children once depicted therein taught little people a socially dangerous ethnocentrism. If textbooks, those vapid and insipid instruments of such slight influence, can have had such a sweeping effect, what are we to surmise about the effects on the impressionably young of an R- or X-rated movie, in wide-screen technicolor, with Dolby sound and every device of cinematic realism?"

Later in the same essay, von Hoffman added:

"Network television executives who deny the likelihood their programs can alter human behavior lie and they know it. All you have to do is listen to what these same gentlemen say to their advertisers. They boast, they brag, they bellow about what an effective sales medium their networks are . . . how good they are at getting people to alter their behavior and part with their money."

The evidence on violence, the clinical, professional-psychologist-developed evidence, continues to mount. But in structure (and often in practice) what happens in the human mind and consciousness — and unconsciousness — when sex is depicted is no different from what happens when violence is depicted.

Two things happen: (1) some overly-impressionable viewers do act out what they have seen; (2) *all* the viewers are left with lasting impressions which sink into the subconscious and, if frequent enough (and for some persons, even if not frequent), these impressions influence and warp their entire attitude about life and about other persons. As Dr. Fredric Wertham put it in an article titled, "Medicine and Mayhem" (*M.D. Magazine*, June 1978, p. 11):

"Negative media effects do not generally consist in simple imitation. They are indirect, long-range, and cumulative. Violent images are stored in the brain, and if, when and how they are retrieved depends on many circumstances. It is a question not so much of acts as of attitudes, not of specific deeds but of personality developments."

One wonders about pornographic sadomasochistic videocassettes when he reads the comment later in Wertham's essay:

"The saturation of people's minds with brutal and cruel images can have a long-range influence on their emotional life. It is an effect that involves human relations in fantasy and in fact and can become a contributing factor to emotional troubles and adjustment difficulties."

Congress could call as a witness a man of Dr. Wertham's credentials (Consulting Psychiatrist at Queens Hospital Center, New York; formerly Associate in Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins Medical School; author of several books on the subject) and ask him to elaborate on this statement from the cited essay:

"With regard to sex, the explicit display of sadomasochistic scenes may have lasting effects. They may supply the first suggestions for special forms or reinforce existing tendencies. The whole orientation of young people with re-

gard to the dignity of women is affected. By showing cruelty with erotic overtones, we teach that there can be pleasure in inflicting pain on others."

In this connection, the American Civil Liberties Union magazine, *The Civil Liberties Review* (January/February 1978), p. 51, contained the highly pertinent article, "Violent Pornography & the Women's Movement." The essay summarizes the founding and work of a feminist group called Women Against Violence Against Women (WAWAW) "which grew out of organized opposition to the showing in Los Angeles . . . of "Snuff" — a film that depicted as entertaining the murder and mutilation of a woman. Taking as a case in point a billboard ad for a Rolling Stones album, which ad depicted a beautiful scantily-clothed woman, her wrists, ankles and torso bound with heavy cords, her bare legs bruised and bleeding, but nonetheless saying, "I'm 'Black and Blue' from the Rolling Stone — and I love it!", the article describes WAWAW as

"an activist organization working to stop the gratuitous use of images of physical and sexual violence against women in mass media — and *the real world violence against women it promotes . . .*"

and quotes a member:

"We think it's harmful in that it contributes to the overall environment that romanticizes, trivializes and even encourages violence against women."

The author, an ACLU staff attorney, observes:

"WAWAW probably cannot demonstrate that particular media portrayals are directly responsible for antisocial conduct, although *it is not irrational to believe that the offending material may well have harmful effects*. As WAWAW claims: 'When millions of people see women portrayed as victims day in and day out, an impression is created that women *are* victims, that it's safe, OK and in fact normal to pick on women . . . Furthermore, a lot of record advertising uses image of violence to women in a joking . . . manner — which . . . trivializes and demeans the very real pain that raped and battered women suffer . . .'" (Emphasis added.)

It is encouraging to see this serious libertarian journal publishing an article which acknowledges that still photos, even, on mere billboards and record album covers, can promote actual violence in "the real world" and that it is socially important to worry about the "overall environment."

But when the writer states that "WAWAW probably cannot demonstrate that particular media portrayals are directly responsible for antisocial conduct," she has fallen into a trap of her own making. The words *particular* and *directly* and *demonstrate* confine her — artificially — to a form of proof that in other fields no one demands, e.g., we do not insist on rigid *empirical* proof when we conclude that poverty "causes" — i.e., predisposes to — crime, or even that cigarette smoking or polluted city air causes cancer. She appears to believe that there are no cases where the immediate and palpable impact of pornography is so obvious that any fairminded observer would have to say: "Looking at that stuff made him commit that crime."

However, *ten years ago* while on the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, I produced extensive documentation of the fact that in some cases, enough to be statistically significant, pornography does indeed cause crime. In my *Memorandum Re Statistical Study of Relationship of Obscenity to Crime and Other Antisocial Behavior*, directed to Chairman William B. Lockhart in a letter of August 11, 1969 (and reprinted in my Minority Report, September 30, 1970), I cited 26 cases, drawn from all over the country, where immersion in pornography immediately preceded serious sex crimes, many of which were admitted by the perpetrators to be enactments of pornography absorbed

shortly before. Typical of some of the cases I cited:

Rape Case. Seven Oklahoma teenage male youths gang attack a 15-year-old female from Texas, raping her and forcing her to commit unnatural acts with them. Four of the youths, two the sons of attorneys, admit being incited to commit the act by reading obscene magazines and looking at lewd photographs.

Assault. Male youth, age 13, admits attack on a young girl in a downtown office was stimulated by sexual arousal from a stag magazine article he had previously read in a public drugstore, which showed naked women and an article on "How to Strip a Woman."

Attempted Rape—Juvenile Delinquency. A 15-year-old boy grabbed a nine-year-old girl, dragged her into the brush and was ripping off her clothes. She screamed and the youth fled. The next day police picked him up. He admitted that he had done the same thing in Houston, in Galveston and now in San Antonio. He said his father kept pornographic pictures in his top dresser drawer and that each time he pored over them the urge would come over him.

Rape Case. The Santa Clara County District Attorney reported that one youth, after seeing a beautiful girl kidnapped and held prisoner in a movie, carted off a girl and held her for 18 hours while he forced her to commit every act you can possibly imagine. In his home police found nothing but this type of magazine.

Juvenile Delinquency—Sex Gang. A juvenile sex gang involving boys seven to fifteen was discovered in Oklahoma. An attorney representing one of the 15-year-olds revealed the boy told him they had bought magazines at various grocers and drugstore newsstands and were incited by pictures of men committing unnatural acts and men and women in lewd photos.

These are not just isolated cases. A recent study done by the Michigan State Police, using a computer to classify over 35,000 sex crimes which were committed in that state alone over a 20-year period, found that 43% were pornography-related. *These are the cases where the perpetrator was apprehended.* No one knows how many cases of sexual assault, lewd conduct, voyeurism, quasi-consensual perversion, bestiality, rape-murder and other crimes were motivated by pornographic immersion, but the authorities never apprehended the actor and thus could never obtain the materials that triggered his sick conduct. Nor do we know how many cases of sexual promiscuity, unwanted pregnancy and venereal disease are due to experimentation induced by the pornographic trash we euphemistically call "sexually explicit" material. But the iceberg below the surface is always far bigger than the tip we see above.

Even if pornography did not cause sex crimes in many cases, the psychological harm it causes makes it a deadly threat to the future of our society and justifies strong laws against it.

In the first section of this Statement, I demonstrated that modern pornography is not innocuous, and that it has nothing to do with the classic "naughty magazines" that featured leggy models in skimpy bathing suits. Rather, it is thousands of magazines, quickie films and now videotapes with close-ups of nothing more than bestiality, masturbation, rape, sadomasochism, gang sexual assault, fetishes, and even sex-murder actually occurring.

Here I ask the Congress to consider what happens to the mind, the consciousness, the subconsciousness, that way of looking at life and sex, the entire value-orientation of a man who is a devotee of this stuff . . . who entertains himself for hours on end, devouring each new issue of the magazines, collecting pornographic films, joining "sex clubs" to watch in someone's bedroom the orgies the films and videotapes and magazines instruct in how to carry out. Let us assume for the sake of argument that *this man* — whether from lack of oppor-

tunity or lack of boldness — never actually commits a pornography-related crime; that is, he never commits a crime that is sexually-related and that amounts to an acting out of fantasies depicted in his pornography collection.

For all of that, would the members of Congress feel comfortable with such a man as a next-door neighbor?

Consider what he has made himself: He is a person who entertains himself by paying to watch women have intercourse with dogs. He is a person who *enjoys* watching helpless women being raped on film. He has filled his mind, his memory and his very subconsciousness with gory scenes of sadomasochistic torture. As he watches, he joins the perverted action and takes part vicariously. He wants to cannibalize, in his imagination, the pleasure he sees — and approves — and wants for himself as he views the protagonist abuse his erotic victim. The more fully he can immerse himself in these scenes the more pleasure he pirates for himself: He would like to *be* the actor in the film, just the way people at a boxing or wrestling match identify with one participant as he batters the other into a bloody pulp. (But they attended such spectacles rarely and, in modern times at least, the barbarities are infrequent; our modern pornophile can pursue his self-debasement for hours on end, and typically he seeks ever new kicks through an endless pursuit of ever more twisted pictures of perversion.)

Unless Congress acts, it is inevitable that almost every neighborhood in the country will have such a person resident.

In the article already cited, the Psychiatrist Wertham observed:

“Negative media effects do not generally consist in simple imitation. They are indirect, long-range, and cumulative. Violent images are stored in the brain, and if, when and how they are retrieved depends on many circumstances. It is a question . . . of personality developments.”

What is true of violence is also true of scenes of animal sex. As practitioners of hypnosis have demonstrated, the subject, under hypnosis, can be made to “regress” to infancy even; and as he travels back mentally through his personal history, he can recall specific scenes and experiences which had long been dormant in his subconscious. Thus Wertham notes that negative media effects are long-range and cumulative, that images are stored in the brain — if ordinary childhood experiences such as the first day of grammar school or even losing a toy, how much the more scenes of sexual torture or rape? On one level, it is quite true that we never fully forget what we have learned; it is also true that *visual experiences constantly repeated and reinforced penetrate the subconsciousness and become part of the very psychic being of the person.*

This is no longer a question of how the man down the street entertains himself in private. *It is now a question whether my other neighbors and I have a right to quarantine and prevent the spread of sickness in our neighborhood.*

It is also a question whether my children will attend schools where some of the teachers have made themselves psychologically sick, a condition we see too often in these times.

Modern pornography is an education system. It teaches. Its message is: Human beings are mere animals; the highest value is immediate pleasure; other people may be used and then discarded.

“Its message is that sex is divorced from love, commitment, morality and responsibility; that it is a purely animal act, no more and no less; that it is unrelated to privacy; that deviant sex is the most adventurous and exciting sex; that women’s importance is to be found in their genital organs, which are fair game for whoever wishes to exploit them; that irresponsible sex has no consequences — no venereal disease, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, premature marriages, psychic traumas. Some message!” — Dr. Reo Christenson, *The Judgement on Hustler; Sanity, not Censorship* (*The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Feb. 11, 1979).

The Threat to Our Nation

Modern pornography now threatens even our political existence as a nation. A citizenry that indulges in orgies will simply be incapable of the “blood, sweat and tears” that Winston Churchill called for in rallying his countrymen to sacrifice at the beginning of World War II. In an era that places great store in the “quality of life” the Senate must consider the Moral quality of public life; as Irving Kristol has incisively observed:

“The purpose of any political regime is to achieve some version of the good life and the good society . . . [The classic idea of democracy] starts from the proposition that democracy is a form of self-government, and that if you want it to be a meritorious policy, you have to care about what kind of people govern it . . . if you want self-government, you are only entitled to it if that “self” is worthy of governing.” — *On The Democratic Idea In America*, 41-42.

And a reflective reading of Jefferson, Madison, Adams and the other Founders shows conclusively that they considered public virtue an essential foundation for any lasting republic.

Both because of individual tragedies caused by pornography — neuroses, many sex crimes, warped adolescent attitudes persisting into adult life — and because of the impending collapse of public morality with its consequent political enfeeblement of the Nation as a whole, *The Senate has a constitutional duty to protect the American people from this plague.*

Now we are at a watershed. In our system, it is the Legislature which has the duty to use the Police Power to protect public health, safety, welfare and morals. I urge upon you the incontrovertible truth: pornography corrupts all four: health, safety, welfare, and morals. If the Congress cares about the “quality of life” in our country, it will pass strong laws against pornography. If the Congress cares about “consumer protection,” it will do all it can to prevent the consumption of pornography. If the Congress cares about “truth in advertising” it will try energetically to prevent the spread of lies about life and about sex and about the value of women that pornography teaches. If the Congress is concerned about our young people’s education, it will criminalize the counterfeit education-system that is pornography. If the Congress is to be a worthy heir of the great men who led the first Congress and wrote our Constitution, it will return to their understanding of the absolute political necessity of “republican virtue.”

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