



## The Link Between Pornography, Sex Trafficking, and Abortion

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## **Introduction**

Human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and pornography are all linked, and all three are on the rise across the globe. This presents a great crisis for society. As of 2016, the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index estimates that there are almost 45.8 million people living in slavery around the world today.<sup>1</sup> Most of those in slavery are forced into labor, but some estimates indicate that 4.5 million people are slaves in the sex industry.<sup>2</sup> Sexual exploitation is a problem in every country, and it cannot be overlooked. As the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) website says, "sexual exploitation is no one's 'job,'" nor should it ever be. Of the 7,621 total reported cases of human trafficking in 2016 in the U.S., 5,593 were cases of sex trafficking according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.<sup>3</sup> Of these total reported cases, 2,412 involved minors in 2016.<sup>4</sup> These numbers have been increasing every year.<sup>5</sup> Many more cases exist, but are never reported or discovered by authorities.

## **Pornography Saturation and Consumption**

According to a 2015 Barna Group poll, one in three Americans seek out pornography at least once a month.<sup>6</sup> Among generational groups, young adults ages 18-24 are the most frequent consumers of pornography.<sup>7</sup> Almost six in 10 young adults seek out porn either daily, weekly, or monthly. A little over one third of teens consume pornography at these rates as do almost three in 10 adults ages 25 and up.<sup>8</sup> Some 40 million adults regularly view porn in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, since the 1980's, the largest consumers of pornography have been teenage boys between the ages of 12 and 17 who are not even included in the Barna Group data.<sup>10</sup> According to another 2015 report by Covenant Eyes, 68 percent of young men and 18 percent of young women view pornography every week.<sup>11</sup> Covenant Eyes also has an ongoing count of the number of internet porn searches since the beginning of 2015, which is over 6 billion and climbing.<sup>12</sup> Pornography use can be addictive, and 18 percent of all men (21 million) in this country think that they are, or may be, addicted to viewing pornography.<sup>13</sup>

Pornography is easily accessible, especially with the dawn of ordinary internet usage. Statistically, "30 percent of all data transferred across the Internet is porn."<sup>14</sup> Google is the leading search engine choice for people seeking adult content, with 83.48 percent of all the global adult site internet traffic originating there due to its familiarity for internet users.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, 61 percent of all pornography is now consumed on mobile devices.<sup>16</sup> Pornographic websites get more unique visitors each month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter combined.<sup>17</sup> There are 11 pornographic sites that are in the top 300 most popular sites globally, with Pornhub.com coming in at number 23 grossing 1.1 billion visits monthly.<sup>18</sup> Many of these are pay-per-view websites, accounting for 69 percent of the total pay-per-view internet content market – more than all other sources combined.<sup>19</sup> People spend more money for online pornography than for all online news, sports, video games, and all other content combined.<sup>20</sup> Nine out of 10 internet pornography users only use free material.<sup>21</sup>

## **Pornography Creates the Demand for Sexual Exploitation**

Pornography viewers' use of pornographic material fuels the demand for sexual exploitation. Pornographers frequently use children and women who are forced, coerced, or fraudulently induced to be filmed or photographed engaging in sexual acts; this pornographic media is then sold for profit.<sup>22</sup> Laura Lederer, JD stated her findings on Capitol Hill in which she recounted sex trafficking victims' experiences, revealing that 29.3 percent had to recreate scenes from pornography and 17.1 percent were forcibly recorded for pornographic purposes.<sup>23</sup> Over 25 percent of child traffickers in Lederer's study took pictures of the children they were exploiting.<sup>24</sup> Across all ages and in nine different countries, 49 percent of rescued sex trafficking victims report they were forced to participate in the production of

pornographic material.<sup>25</sup> Over half of U.S. women used in commercial sexual exploitation were either in pornographic material or threatened with the possibility.<sup>26</sup> Many of these women report that making pornography is a routine aspect of being in prostitution, and oftentimes women who are trafficked are forced to make hardcore pornography.<sup>27</sup> This hardcore pornography is sold and distributed online. Viewing pornography increases the demand for paid sex and the demand for sex-trafficked women.<sup>28</sup> It is a vicious cycle.

### **Federal Obscenity Laws Regulating the Production and Distribution of Pornography**

A little known fact is that there are federal obscenity laws to regulate the production and distribution of pornography. Current federal law actually prohibits the distribution of obscene adult pornography on the internet, on cable and satellite TV, on hotel and motel TVs, in retail stores, and through the mail. Obscenity is not protected speech, just like other forms of unprotected speech such as blackmail, defamation, or child pornography. Therefore, the U.S. Supreme Court has continually upheld obscenity laws against First Amendment challenges.

However, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has chosen not to enforce existing federal laws against illegal pornography producers and distributors, thereby enabling them to continue operating their dirty business. This has resulted in an unprecedented rise in illegal pornography production and distribution in the last decade.

Under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, prosecution of obscenity radically declined, and under President Barack Obama it stopped completely when in 2011 former Attorney General Eric Holder dismantled the Obscenity Prosecution Task Force. As a result of the DOJ's lack of enforcement of obscenity laws, NCOSE included the DOJ on their "Dirty Dozen" list in years past, and now has the DOJ on its watch list.<sup>29</sup>

There is reason to hope that the current Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, will address this gross negligence. Sessions has taken a strong stance on obscenity, saying in January 2017 that obscenity cases should "continue to be effectively and vigorously prosecuted in the cases that are appropriate."<sup>30</sup> In June 2017, Sessions also delivered remarks at NCOSE's National Law Enforcement Training on Child Exploitation.<sup>31</sup>

### **Pornography's Effect on the Brain**

Viewing pornography produces effects on the viewer's brain similar to the effects of illegal drugs.<sup>32</sup> Dr. Reisman also characterized pornography as an "erototoxin."<sup>33</sup> Her evidence for this characterization stems from the fact that the same chemicals found in drugs are produced in the body while a person watches erotic materials.<sup>34</sup> Seeing pornographic images automatically triggers the body to flood the brain with dopamine, thus inducing feelings of pleasure.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, the brain produces oxytocin, the bonding hormone, which binds a person's memory to whatever it is that provided the good feeling.<sup>36</sup> However, instead of creating a healthy bond such as with one's family, friends, or spouse, it becomes similar to the bond between a drug addict and his cocaine.<sup>37</sup> Porn addicts develop a tolerance of these stimuli and require exposure to more extreme forms of pornographic material before their bodies produce the same high.<sup>38</sup> Those who are addicted also experience withdrawal symptoms if they stop watching pornography.<sup>39</sup> Some common symptoms include anxiety, depression, mood swings, insomnia, agitation, lack of concentration, and loss of libido.<sup>40</sup> Other studies have shown that frequent pornography use has negative consequences on brain functionality, compromising an individual's

ability to make smart decisions and experience sexual stimulation as well as increasing the risk of depression.<sup>41</sup>

## How Pornography Shapes Sexual Desires

This addictive effect is the first of four effects identified by clinical psychologist Victor B. Cline.<sup>42</sup> He writes that watching pornography has four effects:

- 1) **Addiction-effect**, which causes the viewer to keep coming back for more.
- 2) **Escalation-effect**, in which the content being consumed increases in explicit and deviant sexual material.
- 3) **Desensitization-effect**, in which material that was once shocking to the viewer is no longer repulsive, and
- 4) **Behavior-effect**, where the viewer demonstrates an increasing tendency to act out the behaviors viewed in pornography.<sup>43</sup>

As Cline's research suggests, the addictive effect is followed by the escalation effect.<sup>44</sup> Prolonged consumption of pornography has been shown to lead to boredom and dissatisfaction among viewers.<sup>45</sup> A study from the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* also found that a higher consumption of pornography is related to lower commitment to romantic partners.<sup>46</sup> This boredom and dissatisfaction with pornography and romantic partners often leads to the consumption of more extreme forms of pornography which are necessary to create the same high.<sup>47</sup> In a survey of pornography users on Reddit, 64 percent indicated that their tastes in pornography became more deviant and/or extreme over time.<sup>48</sup>

Prolonged exposure to pornography also has a desensitizing effect on viewers.<sup>49</sup> In testimony before a U.S. Senate Committee, the American psychiatrist and author Dr. Jeffrey Satinover explained that "prolonged exposure to pornography trivializes rape as a criminal offense."<sup>50</sup> He also stated that men who watch a great deal of pornography are less likely to think that rape is a serious crime.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Satinover argues that those desensitized towards sexual crimes tend to trivialize nonviolent sexual abuse of children.<sup>52</sup> A late 2015 report funded by the U.S. DOJ also found that a person who has consumed pornography or visited a strip club in the last year was more likely to have knowledge about human trafficking but less likely to think it is worth the government's intervention.<sup>53</sup> Heavy exposure to pornography not only desensitizes viewers to criminal behavior but also increases the viewer's acceptance of "recreational sexual engagements."<sup>54</sup>

The fourth effect of pornography identified by Cline is the behavioral effect as described in the next section. Porn's addictive, escalating, and desensitizing effects have an ultimate effect on behavior. One porn user admitted, "[T]he more I've watched pornography, the more specific my wants have become. Watching pornography has also shaped my sexual desires. I watch pornography and I discover, 'Hey, that really turns me on,' and I want to recreate what I've seen in porn."<sup>55</sup>

Pornography is a powerful force which distorts those who view it.<sup>56</sup> Pornography teaches viewers that sex is designed only for self-gratification.<sup>57</sup> Over time, being exposed to these lessons from pornography teaches the viewer that sexual predation is normal, acceptable, common, and harmless.<sup>58</sup> These beliefs cause those who view pornography to be much more likely to seek out prostitutes and be involved in sexual exploitation.<sup>59</sup>

## **The Link Between Pornography Use and Paid Sex**

There is a very strong correlation between the use of pornography and the use of women in prostitution.<sup>60</sup> A study by Monto and McRee from 2005 found that men who used pornography were far more likely to solicit women in prostitution than those men who did not use pornography.<sup>61</sup> Even among men who use pornography, those who seek women in prostitution, even just once, are also likely to consume more pornography than those who never solicit female prostitutes.<sup>62</sup> The sexual acts depicted in pornography affect the behavior of men in the way they sexually exploit women in paid sex.<sup>63</sup> Men who view sexual scenes depicted in pornography are more likely to force women to re-enact those scenes.<sup>64</sup> Many of these scenes depict violence against women. In an analysis of hundreds of pornographic sex scenes, it was found that 88 percent of them depicted violence.<sup>65</sup>

These violent desires often drive men who watch pornography to turn to more drastic measures such as rape. Men who watch pornography admit that they have a greater proclivity to commit rape than those who do not watch pornography.<sup>66</sup> A late 2015 study by Wright, Tokunaga, and Kraus found that the likelihood of committing acts of sexual aggression increases with each hour of pornography watched.<sup>67</sup> One-third of rapists confessed that they watched pornography immediately before committing their crime.<sup>68</sup> A 2017 report entitled “The Sexualization of Harm in Contemporary Pornography” stated, “Pornography is teaching male children violent and abusive sexual scripts, and teaching them that these are normative ways of being male and of relating sexually to women.”<sup>69</sup> Pornography has inspired many rapes, where the rapist replicated the violent scenes that he viewed in pornography – even to the point of killing the victim and tying her in various positions as depicted in pornography.<sup>70</sup>

## **Pornography: A Public Health Crisis**

These and other ill effects of pornography are finally being recognized. In March 2016, the state of Utah officially declared pornography a “public health crisis,” declaring its negative effects on society and the need for policy changes that will address it.<sup>71</sup> In February 2017, the states of South Dakota and Virginia have subsequently passed similar legislation to Utah’s, declaring pornography to be public health crisis and naming pornography responsible for “lessening desire of young persons to marry.” The resolution recognized that pornography contributes to risky sexual behavior among teens, poor body image and mental disorders, sex addictions, the normalization of violence against women and children, and is a detriment to the family unit.<sup>72</sup> Alexander Rhodes, the founder of NoFap, a platform dedicated to helping those who want to quit using pornography, defended the Utah state resolution (S.C.R. 9), suggesting that internet pornography addiction is just as concerning as alcoholism or “internet gaming disorder” and that Utah’s statement is a way to open up the conversation.<sup>73</sup>

In March 2017, the Tennessee Senate unanimously passed a resolution recognizing pornography as a “public health hazard leading to a broad spectrum of individual and public health impacts and social harm.”<sup>74</sup>

Similarly, in 2017 the state of Arkansas introduced H.R. 1042 which officially recognizes pornography as a public health crisis. Supporters of this resolution have cited the impact pornography has as a social harm and the addictive properties that it has.<sup>75</sup>

Pornography poses a legitimate concern for the health of individuals and the safety of society, and it is time for those who have felt or witnessed its negative effects to speak.

## **Money Talks: The Pornography Industry's Profit**

Despite its massive negative effects, pornography continues to saturate our world. The pornography industry generates over \$97 billion every year worldwide.<sup>76</sup> The U.S. pornography industry generates \$13 billion each year.<sup>77</sup> A substantial portion of that money comes from internet pornography, which brought in \$3 billion in 2015 in the U.S. alone.<sup>78</sup> Because pornography is such a massive financial industry, it is unlikely that those producing the content will reduce the amount that is available if the demand continues.

Every click of the mouse to view a pornographic image generates revenue for the industry. Further, when an individual supports the pornography industry through porn use, this increases the likelihood that this same individual will seek out the prostitution industry, and vice versa. This creates an increased demand for both pornographic materials and women in prostitution or sex trafficking. The annual revenue from prostitution in the United States is estimated to be over \$14 billion.<sup>79</sup> This amount places the prostitution industry at number five of the top 10 major industries in the U.S. per a 2014 report, ahead of Human Resources (\$12.3 billion), Logistics and Transportation (\$11.1 billion), Consumer Products and Services (\$10.7 billion), Construction (\$10.3 billion), and Telecommunications (\$9.4 billion).<sup>80</sup> The pornography and prostitution industries continue to exist symbiotically and grow each other's revenues.

## **The Link Between Pornography and Sex Trafficking**

There are anywhere from 14,000 to 17,500 women being trafficked into the American sex trade every year.<sup>81</sup> Further, those who are actors in pornographic material are often women who have been sex-trafficked and sometimes child sex slaves, some of the most vulnerable members of our society.<sup>82</sup> U.S. citizens account for 83 percent of all sex trafficking victims who have been found in this country.<sup>83</sup> Victims of sex trafficking are subjected to physical mistreatment, and are often forced to recreate pornographic scenes.<sup>84</sup>

Sex traffickers understand the methods of exploitation, both mentally and economically, to keep vulnerable individuals in the industry.<sup>85</sup>

## **Pornography Use in Trafficking Initiation**

Sex traffickers often use pornography to "groom" the victims of sex trafficking for the practices in which they are expected to engage.<sup>86</sup> Women and children are shown pornography by their traffickers to train before they are sold for sex.<sup>87</sup>

## **Sexual Exploitation Is Nobody's Job**

There are many organizations that push for legitimizing sexual exploitation as "sex work." Sexual exploitation is nobody's job. Sexual exploitation is a horrendous violation of people's physical and psychological health and safety. The elements of sexual exploitation which is often paraded as "sex work" include: "routine verbal degradation; threat of physical assault and a wide array of physical injury; extreme risk of sexual assault and rape; being groped, pinched, licked, bitten and breathed upon by people who pay to use you; serial utilization of one's orifices as a receptacle for male genitalia and other objects; likely acquisition of drug/alcohol addiction; likely acquisition of post-traumatic stress disorder; likely acquisition of any number of (potentially incurable) STDs; and possible premature death as the result of homicide."<sup>88</sup> Sexual exploitation is abuse and should not be raised to the level of "work."

## **Violence Against Trafficking Victims**

The victims of sex trafficking are violently mistreated, even killed. Even before entering the sex industry, over 80 percent of sexually exploited teenage girls were already sexually abused as children.<sup>89</sup> The average life expectancy of someone in commercial sexual exploitation is seven years; in other words, a 14-year-old would be dead by age 21.<sup>90</sup> The mortality rate is 200 times higher among women being trafficked for sex than a non-exploited person of the same age.<sup>91</sup> Those who were involved in the sex trafficking industry reported the severe violence to which they were subjected. In interviews with over 100 survivors of trafficking, 95.1 percent reported some form of violence or abuse including being forced to have sex, punched, beaten, kicked, threatened with a weapon, strangled, etc.<sup>92</sup> Many of these acts are inspired by violent pornography since 88 percent of scenes in pornographic films contain acts of physical aggression.<sup>93</sup> There are horrible accounts of violence and abuse in the industry, and the victims have absolutely no protection.

## **Sex Trafficking and Abortion: The Numbers**

It is nearly impossible to know the total number of abortions committed on sex-trafficked women. In a survey of 66 women who survived sex trafficking, about 71 percent reported that they became pregnant at least once while being trafficked, and about 21 percent said they had five or more pregnancies while being trafficked.<sup>94</sup> Due to the violence trafficking victims undergo and the lack of proper care they receive, many of those pregnancies ended in miscarriage. Over half of the women suffered a miscarriage, and nearly 30 percent of them suffered from multiple miscarriages.<sup>95</sup> Over half of the women in the survey reported at least one abortion, and nearly 30 percent reported that they had multiple abortions.<sup>96</sup> The survey found that these 66 women had a total of 114 abortions among them while being trafficked.<sup>97</sup>

## **Forced and Coerced Abortions**

In general, women who endure abortions are very often coerced into them.<sup>98</sup> In a national study of women, 64 percent of those who have had abortions indicated they felt pressured by others to do so.<sup>99</sup> Women compelled to abort are often subjected to violence in order to coerce them into the abortion.<sup>100</sup> Many women have been killed by their partners who are trying to prevent the birth of their unborn child.<sup>101</sup> According to a 2002 study, being pregnant increases a woman's risk of being physically attacked.<sup>102</sup>

If women who have not been trafficked suffer this kind of coercion to abort, how much more likely is it for women who have been trafficked? Steven Wagner, former director of the Human Trafficking Program at the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services, argued that coercion to abort among pregnant women who are being sex trafficked is universal.<sup>103</sup> It is nearly impossible for a woman to have any means of advocacy when she is being trafficked, so clearly it is virtually impossible for her to protect both herself and her unborn child. In a survey of women who have survived sex trafficking, more than fifty percent of those who had abortions during their exploitation reported forced abortions.<sup>104</sup> One victim noted that in her six abortions, "I was under serious pressure from my pimps to abort the babies."<sup>105</sup> Another survivor whose abuse at the hands of her traffickers was particularly brutal reported a total of seventeen abortions, and indicated that at least some of them were forced upon her.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, women and girls who were forced to have an abortion were often made to return to prostitution work the day after the procedure.<sup>107</sup> Pimps and sex traffickers stand to gain more profit from exploiting women by forcing them right back on the streets.

## **The Healthcare Industry is Failing Sexual Exploitation Victims**

Nearly all trafficking survivors report suffering at least one injury, illness, or impairment and many still deal with long-term health issues.<sup>108</sup> Yet only 87.8 percent of those who had been injured reported that they received any treatment from health professionals.<sup>109</sup> The primary source of treatment is a trip to the emergency room.<sup>110</sup> According to Lederer's 2014 study, nearly 30 percent of the treatment received was from Planned Parenthood – which does not provide any trauma care at all.<sup>111</sup> Around 20 percent of victims who responded to the study reported being treated by a general physician, and similar percentages reported treatment by urgent care clinics, women's health clinics, or neighborhood clinics.<sup>112</sup> From these statistics, it is clear that though almost 90 percent of trafficking victims had come in contact with healthcare providers, these medical professionals either failed to recognize or turned a blind eye to the victim's circumstance.

## **Where Abortions for Trafficking Victims are Committed**

About 67.6 percent of trafficking victims who underwent abortions identified a clinic as the site for their procedures.<sup>113</sup> About 16.2 percent reported that the abortions were performed at hospitals and another 13.5 percent were performed at a site identified as "other."<sup>114</sup> Many women having multiple abortions while trafficked received their repeated abortions at the same location each time. These abortion facilities only aided pimps and traffickers by allowing them to continuously exploit their victims.<sup>115</sup>

## **Planned Parenthood's Complicity with Sex Trafficking**

Abortion chains like Planned Parenthood, which are willing to commit abortions on trafficked women, are facilitating their sexual exploitation.<sup>116</sup> By committing abortions on women who are sexually exploited and not reporting the abuse, Planned Parenthood is complicit in the abuse. The "treatment" that Planned Parenthood supplies often includes abortion. Planned Parenthood commits roughly 330,000 abortions annually, one-third of all U.S. abortions.<sup>117</sup>

The determination of Planned Parenthood to cover up sex trafficking and provide abortions was dramatically documented in a series of undercover videos conducted by Live Action in 2011.<sup>118</sup> These videos were conducted at Planned Parenthood facilities.<sup>119</sup> Planned Parenthood is the largest abortion provider in the United States, and receives more than \$500 million in taxpayer dollars every year.<sup>120</sup>

When Live Action actors posing as pimps and sex slaves visited a Planned Parenthood in Perth Amboy, N.J. on January 13, 2011, they told the employee that they were the managers of sex workers – including girls as young as 14 years old.<sup>121</sup> In the state of New Jersey, sex with a minor (defined as someone age 16 or younger) is considered sexual assault, which is a form of statutory rape.<sup>122</sup> In addition, using individuals under 18 for a commercial sex act is defined as a severe form of human trafficking in the United States.<sup>123</sup> However, the Planned Parenthood employee responded by assuring the actors that Planned Parenthood would be able to commit abortions as long as the pimp kept them "out of the loop" about the age of the child and the man who impregnated her.<sup>124</sup>

In another Live Action video, an actor portraying a pimp who was prostituting children as young as 13 asked how long it would take after the abortion for the girl to get back to sex trafficking.<sup>125</sup> The Planned Parenthood employee did not flinch at the thought of children being sex trafficked, and actually suggested other sex-related ways the teenaged girl could bring in revenue for the presumed trafficker while she recovered from her abortion.<sup>126</sup> No Planned Parenthood employee reported the sex trafficking to any authority until after Planned Parenthood officials caught on to the fact that Live Action had



conducted the undercover sting.<sup>127</sup> It is evident by the actions of Planned Parenthood that the abortion industry is not interested in the well-being of individuals who are victims of sex trafficking.

### **The Abortion Industry's Stake in Sex Trafficking Profit**

Revenue is the driving force behind the behavior of these abortion providers. The cost of an abortion follows a sliding scale based on the state where the center is located and how far along the pregnancy is. According to the Guttmacher Institute, an abortion on average costs between \$382 and \$485.<sup>128</sup> First trimester abortions cost about \$397 and second trimester abortions cost about \$854 on average.<sup>129</sup> Late-term abortions cost \$2,014<sup>130</sup> on average but can run up to around \$10,000 per abortion.<sup>131</sup> Abortion, unfortunately, is a profitable business.

While Planned Parenthood holds non-profit status, its total revenue for 2015-2016 was \$1.354 billion, the highest in its history. In 2015-2016, Planned Parenthood reported an excess of revenue over expenses of \$77.5 million.<sup>132</sup>

Former Planned Parenthood managers Abby Johnson and Susan Thayer have exposed the fact that Planned Parenthood has abortion quotas at their centers.<sup>133</sup> In fact, the organization gives out awards to centers who increase the number of abortions they provide within a given time frame.<sup>134</sup> “[M]y director told us that our goal was to create every phone call, every client visit into a revenue generating visit,” said Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood employee turned pro-life advocate.<sup>135</sup> This explains why Planned Parenthood employees were eager to avoid getting information about the ages of the sex-trafficked girls during the Live Action undercover investigation. That information would require them to report the crime and prevent them from gaining any revenue from that instance or a pimp’s repeated visit.

### **Survivor Testimonies Regarding Abortion**

Each woman’s story in sex trafficking is different, but it is clear from survivor stories that the toll abortion takes on trafficked women is severe. The abortion industry is unconcerned with these women’s best interests. It is not about healthcare but about profit. The abortion industry pushes to turn a profit by aborting babies conceived through trafficking, as exhibited through Live Action’s investigation. The pimps and the abortion industry stand to gain in this equation. The women and children caught in the crosshairs are the ones suffering. Furthermore, pimps pass the cost of these forced abortions along to the trafficked women, increasing the “debt” these women have to their pimps.<sup>136</sup>

The following are some testimonies from women who have lived through the nightmare of forced or coerced abortions. Taken by Bruce under false pretenses when she was just 14 years old, Jill was forced by violence into prostitution. When she became pregnant by one of her violators, Bruce tried to commit the abortion himself. He was unsuccessful and took her to a hospital to finish the job. The hospital never questioned Jill without Bruce present, never performed a mental evaluation, and released her back into the torturous situation after three days.<sup>137</sup>

Another survivor said, “We worked six days a week, twelve hours a day ... If anyone got pregnant, we were forced to have abortions. The cost of the abortion was then added to our smuggling debt.”<sup>138</sup> Kayla, another survivor said, “I had forced unprotected sex and got pregnant three times and had two abortions ... Afterward, I was back out on the street again.”<sup>139</sup> Another survivor talked about the different means of abortion, and the consequences of the indifference and failure of the abortionist to report the abuse she was experiencing due to his conflict of interest: “I got pregnant six times and had six

abortions. Several of them were from a doctor who was a client – he did them ‘back door’ – I came in the back door after hours and paid him off the books. This kept my name off any records ... I think he felt like he was helping. At least one of my abortions was from Planned Parenthood because they didn’t ask any questions. ... I had so much scar tissue from these abortions because there was no follow-up and in a couple of cases I had bad infections, so bad that I eventually lost my fallopian tubes [and had to have a hysterectomy].”<sup>140</sup>

The sex trafficking industry is brutal – rife with abuse, violence, and coercion. Forcing or coercing women to have abortions is just another method that pimps use to wield their power over women. It has immeasurable negative effects on their physical and mental health.

### **Hopeful Developments in the Fight Against Sexual Exploitation**

In addition to the states that have joined in declaring pornography a public health crisis and the hope that the current Attorney General will address the issue of the enforcement of federal obscenity laws, there are more and more organizations that are getting involved in the fight against sexual exploitation. Fight the New Drug<sup>141</sup> and NCOSE are also addressing the pervasive problem of pornography and the connection it has with sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. NCOSE’s goal is to expose “the seamless connection between all forms of sexual exploitation.”<sup>142</sup> There are also hundreds of member groups that focus on ending sexual exploitation by education, prevention, advocacy, legislation, and recovery efforts.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, an increasing number of researchers are now studying the harmful effects of pornography on the brain.

Other organizations such as SELAH Freedom and Rescue Freedom work to end sex trafficking by helping to train law enforcement, staging rescues, providing aftercare, and supporting victims physically, psychologically, and financially as they search for new beginnings and overcome the trauma they have experienced.<sup>144 145</sup>

Another group called the Global Centurion Foundation has begun holding a series of roundtables for healthcare providers, which are intended to give providers the tools to recognize and report human trafficking when a victim is brought in to them for care.<sup>146</sup>

There are also safe houses being created to help victims of sexual exploitation heal from their trauma and be reintegrated back into society.

Individuals who have been negatively affected by pornography and sexual exploitation are also speaking out. There are young men who have recognized negative side effects of their adolescent pornography use and they are speaking against it. An article in *Time* magazine interviewed some of these men, who have experienced sexual dysfunction that they believe results from their addiction to pornography.<sup>147</sup> A study published by the Public Library of Science backs up their claims that men who have groomed themselves to respond sexually to explicit material struggle to experience sexual stimulation in sexual encounters with real women.<sup>148</sup> Another study done in France found that problematic use of online sexual activities is associated with higher sexual desire, lower overall sexual satisfaction, and erectile dysfunction.<sup>149</sup> The young men have founded recovery forums such as Reboot Nation and NoFap as well as other resources for those who want to stop using pornography.<sup>150</sup> There are more than 260,000 members of such online forums today.<sup>151</sup>

## Conclusion

These initiatives are a promising start, but more needs to be done to fill the gaps to end sexual exploitation in the U.S. and around the world. There is still a long road ahead in educating the public about the harms of pornography and of sexual exploitation. In the past, the United States Surgeon General's office issued warnings and ad campaigns against cigarette smoking. The same must be done by declaring pornography a public health crisis nationally and teaching people about its detrimental effects to the individual and to society. This work has already begun in Utah, and other states are following suit. As discussed, pornography has similar effects on the brain as highly addictive drugs, and it contributes to sexual dysfunction in men. Further, it normalizes aberrant and violent sexual behavior. Those who consume pornography are also much more likely to become consumers in the sex industry.

Pornography fuels the sex trafficking industry. Each click of pornography creates a demand for more pornography and brings in a profit to the industry. The demand causes traffickers, pimps, and those involved in the sex industry to abuse their victims by filming them in sex acts. Victims of sex trafficking have had to bear the trauma of sexual abuse, physical abuse, drug abuse, coercion, and oftentimes abortion. They have a long way to recovery. In short, pornography consumption is a public health crisis and creates a further demand for sexual exploitation. We must continue to hold organizations such as Planned Parenthood accountable, who are complicit in covering up sex trafficking and who make a profit on abortions from women who have been trafficked.

We must train medical, law enforcement, transportation, and hospitality industry personnel in identifying and helping sex trafficking victims. We must also crack down on those who facilitate sexual exploitation and hold them legally responsible. The public needs to be educated about the harms of pornography, take measures to increase public decency, and support new programs that provide education, advocacy, and recovery for victims of sexual exploitation.

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