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Testimony before the United States Senate,  
Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space  
of the  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

on

"The Brain Science Behind Pornography Addiction and  
the Effects of Addiction on Families and Communities"

November 18, 2004

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Judith Reisman, Ph.D., President of The Institute for Media Education, Scientific Advisor to the California Protective Parents Association and the Subcommittee on Junk Science for The American Legislative Exchange Council's April 2004 report.<sup>1</sup>

I specialize in the communication effects of images on the brain, mind and memory; fraud in the human sexuality field; and the addictive properties of sexually explicit images, commonly called pornography.<sup>2</sup>

My working, *scientific* definition of pornography is *measurable*: "intimate private-space behavior in public space forums, provoking psychopharmacological responses in viewers that puts the model and those s/he *represents*, at risk." See Appendix A.

Thanks to the latest advances in neuroscience, we now know that *emotionally arousing images imprint and alter the brain*, triggering an instant, involuntary, but lasting, *biochemical memory trail*.

This applies to so-called "soft-core" and "hard-core" pornography, which may, arguably, subvert the First Amendment by overriding the cognitive speech process.

Once our neurochemical pathways are established they are difficult or impossible to delete. Erotic images also commonly trigger the viewer's "fight or flight" sex hormones producing *intense arousal states* that appear to fuse the conscious state of libidinous arousal with unconscious emotions of fear, shame, anger and hostility.<sup>3</sup>

These media erotic fantasies become deeply imbedded, commonly coarsening, confusing, motivating and addicting many of those exposed. (See "the Violence Pyramid" at <http://www.vbii.org/violence.html>).

Pornography triggers a myriad of endogenous, internal, natural drugs that mimic the "high" from a street drug. Addiction to pornography is addiction to what I dub *erototoxins* – mind altering drugs produced by the viewer's own brain.

How does this 'brain sabotage' occur? Brain scientists tell us that "in 3/10 of a second a visual image passes from the eye through the brain, and whether or not one wants to, the brain is structurally changed and memories are created - we literally 'grow new brain' with each visual experience."<sup>4</sup>

Children and others who cannot read can *instantly decode and experience images, hence images are not speech.*<sup>5</sup> In fact, *erotic (any highly arousing) images commonly subvert left hemisphere cognition.*<sup>6</sup>

Since the 50s, as pornography became mainstreamed and pushed the envelope of normal sexual conduct, law enforcement reported that sex crimes mimicking comparable acts were being inflicted on women and children. (See OJJDP study)<sup>7</sup>

I have spent decades addressing the effects of pornographic "humor" and photos on children, fathers, husbands and wives and communities, much of which is found in my book, *"Soft" Porn Plays Hardball*, 1990,<sup>8</sup> in my U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) report, *Images of Children, Crime and Violence in Playboy, Penthouse and Hustler*,<sup>9</sup> and in my white paper on "The Psychopharmacology of Pictorial Pornography: Restructuring Brain, Mind & Memory & Subverting Freedom of Speech" (<http://www.dJjudithreisman.com/brain.pdf>).

A basic science research team employing a *cautiously protective* methodology should study erototoxins and the brain/body. As with tobacco, these data could be helpful in public education and in legal change.

Testimony from victims and police commonly finds pornography to be an on-site-sex-abuse manual.<sup>10</sup>

An offensive strategy should be planned mandating law enforcement collection of all pornography data, as with guns, drugs, etc, at crime sites.

Judges, police, legislators and lawyers should be trained in the hard data of sexology fraud and erototoxins as changing the human brain, mind, memory at unconscious levels and therefore absent *informed* consent.

Congress should consider ceasing the funding of educational institutions that train their students via the flawed methodology of *Kinseyan "academic" pornography.*<sup>11</sup>

Congress should consider determining which sexology institutes have received financial support from *pornographers*. *Based on this obvious conflict of interest, their authority to confer professional credentials or to hold themselves out as expert witnesses might be rescinded.*

These initial steps can help reestablish the blessings of liberty and tranquility for our children, our communities and our country.

Thank you very much.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> See *vitae* for other details (<http://www.drjudithreisman.org/vitae.htm>).

<sup>2</sup> I also document the ways pornography commonly involve "estrus" displays, falsely presenting human females as non-human animals in "heaf" and triggering both anger and libido in male, even some female, viewers. The full definition relies upon the four scientific disciplines of Proxemics, Ethology, Neuropsychology and Psychopharmacology, seen ve in Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Restak, (1988). *The Mind*, Bantam Books, New York. *"Inhibition rather than excitation is the hallmark of the healthy brain. If all of the neurons in the brain were excitatory we would be unable to do something as simple as reaching out for a glass of water,"* p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> Restak in Bill Moyers, 'Mind & Body: The Brain,' PBSTV, February 1993.

<sup>5</sup> *On the undeveloped adolescent brain and its lack of cognitive maturity see Science, "Neuroscience: Crime, Culpability, and the Adolescent Brain,"* Vol 305, Issue 5684, 596-599, July 2004. Shall teenagers under 18 get the death sentence--based in part on brain studies, pp. 596-599.

<sup>6</sup> See Gary Lynch in Restak (1984). *"The Brain, Learning & Memory"* The Annenberg/CPB Collection, in his discussion of the way arousing images alter the structure of the human brain, WNET/NY, full documentation in 8. Exhibits 1 and 2.

<sup>7</sup> Exhibit 1.

<sup>8</sup> Exhibit 2.

<sup>9</sup> Exhibit 3.

<sup>10</sup> John Rabun, now COO for the National Center For Missing & Exploited Children. See Senate Hearings on "Effect of Pornography on Women and Children," 1984. In that Senate hearing, Rabun testified that when arrested, "all, that is 100%" of rapists, pedophiles, etc., in their study possessed adult pornography, "such as Playboy, on up." Also see Dr. C. Everet Koop on pornography as a "crushing" health problem, in *American Medical News*, (October 10, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Exhibit 3. See JA Reisman, *Kinsey, Crimes & Consequences*, 2003, pp. 160-180, esp. 170-'80: for the use of the SAR, Sexual Attitude Restructuring, as days, weeks or months of viewing pornography to be "accredited" as a certified sex educator, or to earn a Masters, PhD., etc., in Human Sexuality, AIDS Prevention and the like.