

The Pornification of America: How Young Girls Are Being Groomed by Sexual Predators

by [John W. Whitehead](#)

February 05, 2020

[Source](#)

"The brutal reality is that a predator doesn't have to be in the same room, building, or even country to abuse a child. And that's what they're doing – subjecting children to psychological and sexual abuse."—["I'm a 37-Year-Old Mom & I Spent Seven Days Online as an 11-Year-Old Girl. Here's What I Learned," Medium](#)

What can we do to protect America's young people from sexual predators?

That's the question I keep getting asked by people who, having read my article on the growing danger of young boys and girls ([some as young as 9 years old](#)) being bought and sold for sex, want to do something proactive to stop these monsters in their tracks.

It is estimated that the number of children who are at risk of being trafficked or have already been sold into the sex trade [would fill 1300 school buses](#).

While those who seek to buy young children for sex come from all backgrounds, races, ages and work forces, they do have one thing in common: [99% of them are men](#).

This is not a problem with an easy fix.

That so many children continue to be victimized, brutalized and treated like human cargo is due to three things: one, a consumer demand that is increasingly lucrative for everyone involved—except the victims; two, a level of corruption so invasive on both a local and international scale that there is little hope of working through established channels for change; and three, an eerie silence from individuals who fail to speak out against such atrocities.

Sure, there are things that can be done to catch those who trade in young flesh: police need to do a better job of training, identifying and responding to these issues; communities and social services need to do a better job of protecting runaways, who are the primary targets of traffickers, and educating parents and young people about the dangers; legislators need to pass legislation aimed at prosecuting traffickers and “johns,” the buyers who drive the demand for sex slaves; and hotels need to stop enabling these traffickers, by providing them with rooms and cover for their dirty deeds.

However, these are *reactive* responses to a menace that grows more sophisticated by the day.

We need to be *preemptive* and *proactive* in our understanding of the threats and smarter and more sophisticated in our responses, as well.

What we are dealing with is a culture that is grooming these young children, especially young girls, to be preyed upon by men.

As Jami Nesbitt writes for *Bark*, [“Grooming is the process by which someone befriends and gains the trust of a child \(and sometimes the child’s friends and family\) in order to take advantage of the child for sexual purposes.”](#)

There are usually [six stages to grooming by a sexual predator](#): friendship (targeting and gaining trust); relationship

(filling the child's needs); gauging the level of protection surrounding the child; exclusivity (isolating the child from others); sexualization (desensitizing the child to sex talk and activities); and abuse.

All of those screen devices being passed along to children at ever-younger ages? They have become the sexual predator's [primary means of gaining access to young people](#), and it's primarily happening online. As *The New York Times* reports:

"Sexual predators have found an easy access point into the lives of young people: [They are meeting them online through multiplayer video games and chat apps, making virtual connections right in their victims' homes.](#) Many of the interactions lead to crimes of 'sextortion,' in which children are coerced into sending explicit imagery of themselves."

Indeed, video games such as Minecraft and Fortnite, social media apps such as TikTok and Instagram, and online chat forums have become ["hunting grounds" for sexual predators](#).

Again from *The New York Times*:

"Criminals strike up a conversation and gradually build trust. Often they pose as children, confiding in their victims with false stories of hardship or self-loathing. Their goal, typically, is to dupe children into sharing sexually explicit photos and videos of themselves – which they use as blackmail for more imagery, much of it increasingly graphic and violent. [Reports of abuse are emerging with unprecedented frequency around the country, with some perpetrators grooming hundreds and even thousands of victims.](#)"

One *Bark* investigator, Sloane Ryan, a 37-year-old woman who

poses as an 11-year-old girl online in order to better understand predation and help those who are fighting it, wrote a chilling account of the kinds of solicitations she received after merely uploading a generic photo (of her 11-year-old self) to Instagram. “By the end of two-and-a-half hours, I’ve had seven video calls, ignored another two dozen of them, text-chatted with 17 men (some who had messaged her before, gearing back up in hopes for more interaction), and seen the genitalia of 11 of those,” notes Ryan. [“I’ve also fielded \(and subsequently denied\) multiple requests for above-the-waist nudity \(in spite of being clear that Bailey’s breasts have not yet developed\) and below-the-waist nudity.”](#)

This is the new face of how predators are grooming young girls (and boys) to be trafficked, molested and raped. However, it starts much earlier, with a culture that has brainwashed itself into believing that sexual freedom amounts to a Super Bowl half-time show in which barely-clad women spend 20 minutes twerking, gyrating (some of it on a stripper pole) and showing off sexually provocative dance moves.

This is part and parcel of the pornification of American culture.

As commentator Dixie Laite writes for *Bust* magazine:

Sex sells. Madonna knew it when she crawled the VMA stage very much not “Like a Virgin”. Rihanna, Beyonce, Britney and countless others have climbed that ladder to fame... Last time I looked, we as a nation absolutely adored this so-called slutty behavior. I see people voting with their dollars and their attention to Playboy’s Bunnies, Victoria’s Secrets, strippers, people who dress like strippers, and girls who’ve gone wild.

[“Pop culture and porn culture have become part of the same seamless continuum,”](#) explains theatre historian and University of Illinois professor Mardia Bishop. “As these images become

pervasive in popular culture, they become normalized... and... accepted.”

This foray into porn culture—the increasing acceptability and pervasiveness of sexualized imagery in mainstream media—is where pop culture takes a dark turn. “Visual images and narratives of music videos clearly have more potential to form attitudes, values, or perceptions of social reality than does the music alone,” notes author Douglas A. Gentile in his book *Media Violence and Children*. In fact, music videos are among the worst culprits constantly bombarding young people today with sexual images and references.

Screen time has become the primary culprit for the oversexualization of young people.

Little wonder when [8-to-12-year-olds spend almost 5 hours daily on screen media \(teens rack up nearly 8 hours on screen devices\)](#) and that does not include time spent using those devices for school or homework.

A good chunk of that screen time is gobbled up by YouTube, which has been repeatedly red flagged by watchdog groups for [peddling violent imagery, drug references, racist language and sexually suggestive content](#) at young viewers.

Music videos overwhelmingly contain sexually suggestive materials, and with the advent of portable technology, children’s television and music are often unmonitored by parents or guardians. In fact, one study found that more than 80% of parents have caught [young children repeating offensive lyrics or copying “porn-style” dance moves after being exposed to explicit pop music](#).

Numerous studies have found that [exposure to sexual content in music, movies, television, and magazines accelerate adolescent sexual behavior](#): this is how young people are being groomed for sex by a predator culture.

As Jessica Bennett notes in “The Pornification of a Generation” for *Newsweek*:

“In a market that sells high heels for babies and thongs for tweens, it doesn’t take a genius to see that sex, if not porn, has invaded our lives. Whether we welcome it or not, television brings it into our living rooms and the Web brings it into our bedrooms... All it takes is one look at [social media] photos of teens to see examples—if they aren’t imitating porn they’ve actually seen, they’re imitating the porn-inspired images and poses they’ve absorbed elsewhere. Latex, corsets and stripper heels, once the fashion of porn stars, have made their way into middle and high school... Celebrities, too, have become amateur porn stars. They show up in sex tapes (Colin Farrell, Kim Kardashian), hire porn producers to shoot their videos (Britney Spears) or produce porn outright (Snoop Dogg). Actual porn stars and call girls, meanwhile, have become celebs. Ron Jeremy regularly takes cameos in movies and on TV, while adult star Jenna Jameson is a best-selling author.”

How we got to this place in time, where children are sexualized at an early age and trotted out as easy targets for all manner of predators is not really all that hard to decipher, but it requires a certain amount of candor.

First, there is nothing sexually liberating about young women—young girls—reducing themselves to little more than sex objects and prancing about like prostitutes.

Second, this is a dangerous game that can only end in tragic consequences: there are sexual predators out there only too eager to take advantage of any innuendo-laced sexual “invitations” being put out there, intentional or not.

Third, if it looks like porn, sounds like porn and imitates porn, it is porn, and it is devastating on every front, turning women into objects for male aggression.

Fourth, no matter what its champions might say about the First Amendment and women's liberation, pornography in all its forms—whether overtly packaged as skin flicks and mags or more subtly disguised by pop culture as trendy music videos and precocious clothing—is about one thing only: money.

Fifth, parents: turn off your cell phones for a change and tune into what your kids are watching, reading, listening to, and whom they are emulating.

And finally, remember that the sexualization of young children is part of a larger continuum in America that runs the gamut from sexualized entertainment, the glorification of a pimp/ho culture, and a billion dollar sex industry built on the back of pornography, music, entertainment, etc., and ends with these same young people being bought and sold for sex. It is [estimated](#) that the porn industry brings in more money than Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Apple, and Yahoo.

That this issue continues to be treated with a shrug, especially by those who claim to care about the state of our freedoms, is not only surprising and unnerving but also dangerously oblivious.

Like so many of the evils in our midst, sex trafficking (and the sexualization of young people) is a cultural disease that is rooted in the American police state's heart of darkness. It speaks to a sordid, far-reaching corruption that stretches from the highest seats of power (governmental and corporate) down to the most hidden corners and relies on our silence and our complicity to turn a blind eye to wrongdoing.

You don't have to be a parent to care about what's happening to our young people. Likewise, you shouldn't have to subscribe to any particular political viewpoint to recognize and be alarmed by the authoritarian trajectory of the nation.

Those concerned about the emerging police state in America, which I detail in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the](#)

[American People](#), should be equally concerned about the sex trafficking of young girls (and boys) and the pornification of America: they are two sides of the same coin.

As Aldous Huxley explains in his introduction to *Brave New World*:

As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. And the dictator (unless he needs cannon fodder and families with which to colonize empty or conquered territories) will do well to encourage that freedom. In conjunction with the freedom to daydream under the influence of dope and movies and the radio, it will help to reconcile his subjects to the servitude which is their fate.