

Sexual Violence Prevention E-News

November 30, 2004

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1. Cross These Games Off Holiday Gift Lists

Posted on Mon, Nov. 29, 2004, St. Paul Pioneer Press and wire service sources

Death and degradation score high in many video games available this season

By Rubén Rosario

When you head to the stores with your holiday shopping list for your kids or others, check to see if any of the video games in the box next to this column are on it.

If you find them, think hard about who you're buying for, and consider a fruitcake or a scarf instead. Unless, that is, you think that shooting, beheading, setting fire to, running over, urinating on or killing people, or having sex with hookers in order to score points and win a game is fine and dandy entertainment.

The list was compiled and released by the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility and a group of other organizations and individuals concerned about the violent and sexually graphic content, plus gender and racial debasement, contained in such games.

Most of these games are addictive technological marvels. But some of the content is garbage for the mind, if not the soul.

Consider the debut this week of "JFK Reloaded," an online game that replicates the assassination 41 years ago of President John F. Kennedy. In fact, the players who simulate one of our nation's darkest moments with uncanny precision might win prize money.

"This game shocks the conscience," said Eric Gioia, a New York City Council member. "The only thing I can think of worse than this is making a game driving planes into the World Trade Center."

Wait awhile.

Gioia, along with others, held a conference call last week with reporters across the country to issue the list and alert parents and others to the "blood-soaked and antisocial content of the games" that could be purchased as holiday gifts for children. They also called on the multibillion-dollar video game industry and major retailers to do a better job of educating consumers about graphic content and of preventing sales to minors.

"There is no 7- or 8-year-old child in America who will be well served in any way by gaining access to these cesspools of bloodlust, degradation of women and racial stereotyping," said Pamela Eakes, president and founder of Mothers Against Violence in America.

But apparently kids are gaining access.

Gioia launched an undercover probe, sending out underage buyers to 35 stores in New York City. All but one sold games rated M, for mature audiences, to the minors. Three of the stores sold the items even after asking for and obtaining proof of age from the buyers.

"Some retailers are allowing children and teenagers to purchase the most violent, the most graphic and the most sexually explicit video games ever created, notwithstanding ratings and warnings on the packaging," Gioia said. "Killing cops, beating women and committing hate crimes are not something I want my children practicing, in living, vivid color."

The concern is not art (if you call it that) imitating life so much as influencing behavior, thought and perceptions. Studies by credible researchers in recent years have demonstrated a link between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior and attitudes in young children, particularly males.

An Iowa State University study released earlier this year queried 600 Minnesota eighth- and ninth-graders about their video game habits, as well as their social and academic experiences in school. The researchers found that teens with more passive personalities who played violent games for nine hours or more a week were 10 times more likely to get into a physical fight than teens who

didn't play such games.

"There are lots of risk factors for violent and aggressive behaviors: poverty, drugs, gang membership," Douglas Gentile, the head study researcher, told a Canadian newspaper. "The difference between media violence and all those other ones is it's the one that's easier controlled. We can just turn it off. We can say: 'No, you can't play that game. No, you can't watch that show.' "

Easier said than done.

The more violent, the more popular, it seems.

To learn more about the list of violent video games and related issues, go to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility Web site. www.iccr.org.

RATED 'G' FOR GROTESQUE

Doom 3

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas

Gunslinger Girls 2

Half-Life 2

Halo 2

Hitman: Blood Money (2005 release)

Manhunt

Mortal Combat: Deception

Postal 2

Shadow Heart

Rubén Rosario can be reached at rrosario@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5454. © 2004 [St. Paul Pioneer Press and wire service sources](#). All Rights Reserved.

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2. New Journal: American Journal of Sexuality Education to Be Published This Spring

More information about the [American Journal of Sexuality Education](#) is available online. You can also subscribe to the American Journal of Sexuality Education if you are interested in joining a separate, free list serv for all journal announcements, and calls for papers. For more information, [e-mail the American Journal of Sexuality Education](#) or contact:

[Elizabeth Schroeder, MSW](#)

Professional Trainer/Consultant

120 Willowdale Ave

Montclair, NJ 07042

(973) 655-1172

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3. Check out the parent education opportunities at Shoulder to Shoulder...and/or post your opportunities

Many classes and presentations are posted at [Shoulder to Shoulder](#). Learn about [events and link to information](#) on teen brain development, media, positive parenting strategies, parenting after divorce, bullying and many other topics.

Does your organization offer learning (and/or support) opportunities and resources for parents of adolescents? If these opportunities are open to parents outside your immediate reach, you might like to consider posting your events on the [Shoulder to Shoulder](#). It's simple to do! Just e-mail your info to [Dawn Cedergren](#) at the Minnesota Institute of Public Health, or at (763) 427-5310.

Shoulder to Shoulder is a partnership between public health agencies in the Metro area, the University of Minnesota, Prevent Child Abuse--Minnesota and the Minnesota Institute of Public Health.

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4. Job Opening: Part-time Community Outreach Coordinator and Advocate

The Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass & Hubbard Counties is seeking a part-time Community Outreach Coordinator and advocate. Duties will include initiating, coordinating and providing community education presentations regarding issues of sexual violence and providing direct advocate services to survivors of sexual violence (Equal Opportunities Employer). For more information, write to [sap_be!](#). To send a letter of application, complete resume and list of three references to:

Executive Director
SAP
P.O. Box 1427
Bemidji, MN 56619-1472

Kim Zimmerman
Advocacy Services Coordinator
Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass & Hubbard Counties
PO Box 1472
1819 Bemidji Ave NW
Bemidji, MN 56619
(218) 444-9524 (phone and fax)

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5. Job Opening: Communications Manager

Stop It Now! Minnesota, a program of Project Pathfinder, Inc., is seeking a versatile, unflappable, results oriented person to join our small, fast paced team as a full-time Communications Manager. The Communications Manager reports to the Program Director of Stop It Now! Minnesota.

Stop It Now! Minnesota's mission is to prevent child sexual abuse before a child is harmed by:

- ▶ Increasing the public's knowledge of the perpetration of child sexual abuse in Minnesota
- ▶ Teaching adults the skills to recognize signs of sexually abusive behavior
- ▶ Working with families, peers, and friends on how to intervene before a child is harmed
- ▶ Challenging those who abuse and the family and friends who influence them to seek help, stop abusing, and face accountability

The Communications Manager is responsible for all aspects of communication including media relations, marketing strategies, web page content, and database management and also provides communications support for outreach and education activities and fund raising.

The Communications Manager will be responsible for:

- ▶ Developing and implementing a strategic communications plan and evaluating the success of overall communication strategies to increase visibility for Stop It Now! Minnesota's mission and activities

- ▶ Maintaining high visibility in the media through media relations, press releases, public service announcements, writing opinion pieces and letters to the editor, pitching stories, and initiating press events
- ▶ Developing, implementing, and evaluating marketing plans to promote educational materials, workshops, the web site, and Stop It Now!'s 1-888-PREVENT helpline
- ▶ Managing contact database
- ▶ Maintaining and improving the [Stop It Now! Minnesota](#) site

Successful candidates will have the following:

- ▶ B.A. and 2-3 years successful communications experience in a non-profit setting
- ▶ Media skills including successful story pitching and building relationships with reporters, editors, and producers
- ▶ Demonstrated writing skills: press releases; opinion pieces; newsletter articles; web content; and feature articles
- ▶ Self-starter personality who is able to work independently, stay on task, and bring projects to completion
- ▶ Preference to work in a fast paced environment where initiative and innovation are appreciated
- ▶ Demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse communities and groups
- ▶ Experience using social marketing to change behavior is a plus
- ▶ An interest in preventing the perpetration of child sexual abuse and a willingness to learn more about this challenging topic

Salary Range: \$28,321 - \$41,482

EOE/AA

Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, and appropriate writing sample to:

Stop It Now! Minnesota

Attn: Marilyn

1821 University Avenue, Suite N385

St. Paul, MN 55104

Or e-mail to [Marilyn Radmer](#)

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6. Website for the Sexual Violence Research Initiative is Now Live

The [Sexual Violence Research Initiative](#) (SVRI) aims to build an experienced and committed network of researchers, policy makers, activists and donors to ensure that the many aspects of sexual violence are addressed from the perspective of different disciplines and cultures. The SVRI web site provides information about the SVRI and contains links to documents and other resources on sexual violence and sexual violence research. It is also [possible to join](#) and [e-mail](#) online.

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7. Partners In Prevention Youth Violence Conference Call for Submissions

Violence in the World of Our Youth conference, sponsored by the [Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute](#), is designed to bring together a diverse group of experts in the field of youth violence prevention, intervention, and advocacy. Through education, sharing best practices, and evaluating future solutions, professionals will explore what strategies are working and which are not.

Conference participants will include educators, psychologists, counselors, parents, social workers, youth, clergy, advocates, probation and law enforcement officers, youth service workers, and others. A youth panel will be incorporated to provide attendees with valuable feedback from the source. The overall goal of the conference is to further education and work together to stimulate multidisciplinary solutions to the problem of youth violence.

The [Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute](#) invites presenters to submit workshops for the May 5-7, 2005 Youth Violence Conference, on one or more of the following topics:

- ▶ Teen Dating Violence
- ▶ Prevention Programs
- ▶ Violence in the Home
- ▶ Cultural/Diversity Training
- ▶ Sexual Assault
- ▶ Policies and Legislation
- ▶ Advocacy/Outreach
- ▶ Substance Abuse
- ▶ School Violence
- ▶ Gangs
- ▶ Community Collaborations

▶ Traumas

Submission Address:

[Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute](#)

Attn: Youth Violence Conference

6160 Cornerstone Court East

San Diego, CA 92121

(858) 623-2777, ext. 442

[E-mail](#)

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8. Making Sense of Rape in America: Where Do the Numbers Come From and What Do They Mean?

VAWnet's new report, [Making Sense of Rape in America: Where Do the Numbers Come From and What Do They Mean?](#), is designed to help [public policy](#) officials, health care professionals, and other pertinent professionals understand how rape in America is measured, what the numbers mean, and what the limitations are of existing research.

Summary

Making Sense of Rape in America: Where Do the Numbers Come From and What Do They Mean? (September 2004) was written by Dean G. Kilpatrick, Ph.D. and Kenneth J. Ruggiero, Ph.D., National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina.

How many adults and children in the United States have ever been raped? How many victims are raped each year at the national, state, and local levels? How does the scope of the problem in one setting compare to that in another (e.g., urban vs. rural; New York vs. California; Pacific vs. mid-Atlantic regions)?

Without answers to these questions, it is impossible to know the magnitude of the rape problem in a particular setting or to put it in perspective. Public policymakers, the public health system, the criminal justice system, and rape crisis centers cannot estimate the success of their efforts to prevent rape, apprehend and punish rapists, and provide effective services to rape victims without such information. Further, efforts to advance practice and policy are impeded when decisions are based on inaccurate, mixed, or contradictory statistics.

Unfortunately, existing sources have produced inconsistent estimates on the prevalence of rape. As

a result, service providers and policymakers have been faced with the burden of approximating the degree to which each source accurately estimates the true prevalence of rape at the national, state, or local level. In turn, this process hinders sound, efficient decision-making.

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9. Sex Trafficking Strikes Closer to Home than Thought

November 18, 2004

By S.M. Berg, Portland Alliance

A bed, a teddy bear, and a roll of paper towels are the only contents of a closet-sized room where a trafficked 13-year-old girl was sold for sex by pimps to 20-30 men a day.

On Nov. 5, 2003, a woman taken from the Lloyd Center shopping mall was found to have been drugged awake for three straight days of sexual slavery by traffickers in Vancouver, Canada.

Traffickers forced three dozen Mexican men and boys recruited in Arizona to work 60 hours a week on farms near Buffalo, N.Y. for \$30 a week.

These are a small sampling of stories relayed Oct. 4 during an educational forum on human trafficking convened by The Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] and The Protection Project of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. About 70 local social service, healthcare, law enforcement, and human rights professionals attended the daylong conference at the Benson Hotel to launch the new HHS Rescue and Restore anti-trafficking program.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 [TVPA] was the first comprehensive federal U.S. law addressing human trafficking with a plan for ending what is often referred to as modern slavery. Part of TVPA charged federal health service providers with finding victims and offering them benefits provided by the new law, but despite their outreach efforts it's estimated less than one percent of victims came forward for assistance. In 2003, TVPA was reauthorized with more extensive amendments, and the Rescue and Restore program was created to increase public awareness about the horrors of human trafficking, a factor which posed a serious barrier to successfully identifying and assisting victims. With CIA estimates that 500,000 victims of trafficking are brought into the United States and the United Nations claiming 4 million people are trafficked worldwide annually, most of us have likely encountered a trafficked person at some point and not known it.

So where are these women, men and children who have been forced to endure slave-like conditions and where can we find them in Portland? Despite 33 percent of the opening anecdotes being about

men and boys trafficked for labor, only 20 percent of trafficking is of males and less than half of all trafficking is for labor. Considering 75 percent of female victims are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, a boom industry in Portland, it was rightly stated by speaker Mohamed Y. Mattar that, "too many people in this country do not understand the link between prostitution and crime, between prostitution and AIDS, between prostitution and trafficking."

Mattar is an Adjunct Professor of Law and Co-Director of The Protection Project of the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and he is quick to implicate sexually oriented businesses in the multiple human rights offenses that surround human trafficking. "In fact, in most cases women are trafficked in this country to work in strip clubs, massage parlors and other sexually oriented establishments that are used as fronts for prostitution and rely on public misconceptions that such activities are harmless expressions of adult sexuality."

When Mattar recounted that Portland's Broadway Massage was closed for sexual exploitation and prostitution, Officer Greg Duvic of the Portland Police Vice Division offered, "Every escort agency, every massage business we have ever investigated has turned out to be a front for prostitution." Duvic assisted with an undercover effort to expose the so-called "escort" ads in the back of Portland's alternative weekly papers for the illegal prostitution they obviously are. The sting operation definitively identified at least 80 percent of escort ads were for prostitution, and as Duvic, a seven-year veteran of the vice division, added, "The other 20 percent just took the money and left." He mentioned what it took to dislodge his own misconceptions about the harmlessness of sexual capitalism, "When I first started as a cop many years ago I thought prostitution was not a big deal, that the girls were making good money and chose to be there. Now I know it's an evil, horrible crime, the worst destruction that can happen to a person." He estimates there are at least 2,000 adult women currently being prostituted in Portland, a destination stop on an organized crime circuit that moves women and children up and down the west coast.

The prevalence of interstate trafficking as evidenced by large networks of organized crime underscores that the term trafficking does not only apply to foreign citizens coerced, forced or frauded into prostitution but also to U.S. citizens similarly exploited. Most U.S. state prostitution laws treat prostituted people as criminals. They are arrested more often than the pimps and johns who demand sexual servitude from these vulnerable populations, despite the Department of Justice's 2003 finding that the average age of entry into the U.S. sex industry is 13. New amendments in the reauthorized TVPA reclassify prostituted people as victims of sexual exploitation and provide an outline for administering assistance, but meeting the conditions for assistance can still let many sexually brutalized victims fall through the cracks.

Brian Willis of ECPAT-USA (Ending Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes-USA) gave the following example of how the best laws against sexual slavery are inadequate if public perception of prostitution doesn't change. A brothel in Queens could be

raided and a 10-year-old prostituted child from Honduras can be given federal assistance while a 10-year-old prostituted child from Brooklyn is sent to jail.

It sounds too unbelievable to be true, but as New York Times writer Leslie Kaufman revealed in a Sept. 15 article, a 12-year-old prostituted child was sentenced to a secure juvenile detention center by a Bronx Family Court judge who said she needed to get "proper moral principles."

Well-intentioned laws are not enough, and changing pervasive public myths that maintain prostitution is a choice and is driven by willing sex workers is crucial to ending the abuses of sex trafficking. The sex industry deliberately hides the truth that the true cause of sex trafficking is not the free choice of prostitutes but men's demand for and sense of entitlement to prostituted bodies, usually those of young girls and women.

Says Willis, "Decreasing men's demand for bodies to sexually abuse needs to become a larger part of the Rescue and Restore strategy."

Focusing on demand reduction is a position Patricia Barrera feels adamant about. As an advocate for prostituted people for more than a decade and Director of Community Education for the Lola Greene Baldwin Foundation, a Portland nonprofit organization assisting survivors of the sex industry, Barrera couldn't agree more. "For far too long, men have gotten away with believing they could buy women and children with impunity. Those days must come to a close. We need incarceration, certainly, and we also need intensive and extensive diversion programs and treatment programs for this population of sex offenders. And we better do it quick, because people are literally dying from their behavior."

[S.M. Berg](#) is an activist, bicyclist, and freelance writer.

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