



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Pornography: A Public Health Crisis – Part 1

Guest(s): Patrick Trueman

Air Date: September 25, 2025

Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today's topic is one that's very sensitive in nature and it's intended for mature audiences, but it's a program that you definitely need to hear because this has been an ongoing epidemic in our culture ever since Dr. Dobson began working to fight it back in the 1980s. We're about to hear a classic program featuring the late Dr. James Dobson and his good friend, Patrick Trueman, addressing the dark subject of pornography and its devastating effects on our society. The multi-billion dollar industry, pornography, is literally stealing our children, destroying marriages and casting adrift an entire generation. Did you know that most young people are unintentionally exposed to explicit content before they reach their teenage years? And once these images are viewed, they are literally seared into the mind. In other words, you can't unsee them. Patrick Trueman is president of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation and has dedicated decades to fighting this battle. Again, as I mentioned at the start, parental discretion is strongly advised for the mature content in today's program. And now here is Dr. James Dobson to introduce Patrick Trueman and a conversation on pornography, a public health crisis on today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: One of the most difficult and disgusting things I've ever done in my life was serving on the Attorney General's Commission in pornography. That was 1985, 1986. I didn't even know if I was going to survive that. I don't think I would have if it hadn't had been for Alan Sears, who was the executive director of the commission. On the first day of the commission, we bonded, we met and I saw what his heart was for righteousness and the two of us were allies. Through this, he went on to become the founder of the Alliance Defending Freedom and has been the major pornography fighter in the entire country. I love that man, and I appreciate him today. The materials that we examined and analyzed were conducted under the most terrible of circumstances. We heard so many testimonies of victims of pornography and their families, and it broke my heart.

We produced, as a result of that 18 month study, a 2,000 page report, which brought about 26 changes in the law. They were signed into law by Congress and then signed by President Ronald Reagan, and I was working with him throughout that time. For a time, the clock on pornography began to run

backwards, but then the gipper left, and George Herbert Walker Bush was elected. Now, he also had a heart to fight pornography, and I'm grateful that he did. And he got his Department of Justice to continue the work that we had started and Herbert Walker Bush left office and Bill Clinton defeated him and he was elected and he began dismantling the effort to defeat pornography and the industry and the pornography industry cheered when he did, and he appointed people to the Department of Justice who would not prosecute it. And the whole thing unraveled.

And the work that we did was essentially lost. And then our findings and recommendations were largely ignored and that filth began to grow in culture. And because the internet came in at that time, there was no stopping it. Fast forward now many years, and everywhere you look is evidence of the pornification of America. It's in the movies, you see it in magazine covers at every grocery store, every checkout line. And you even see it in many of the fashions sold to young girls. In fact, young girls and boys are the ones exploited and damaged by it. Everywhere there are sexualized images targeting younger and younger children, but there are many people starting to wake up to the danger that we warned about all those years ago. It has a devastating effect, especially on boys who are captured and held in addictions, many of them for the rest of their life.

Having stumbled on this stuff on the internet, and more and more people are seeing this, more parents are seeing it in the fight to clean up images saturating the media. My guest today is Patrick Trueman, who is like a brother to me. He was on the staff at the Department of Justice for the pornography commission. That's where I met him, 1985. And he's still a leader in that battle. He has not backed off one bit in all these years, and it has been a tough struggle. Patrick Trueman now is president of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, and you're also a lawyer. Patrick also founded the New Law Center, which is seeking to create and defend legislation to fight obscenity in the culture. He's here today to talk about some of his organization's responsibilities. And again, he was at the Department of Justice during that time that I was working there. So Patrick, you're a lawyer who specializes in opposing this stuff, thank you for not backing off. Thank you for giving your life's work to this cause and start by going back to those days in 1985 and 86, what do you remember about 'em and how do you feel about it today?

Patrick Trueman: The first thing I remember about the issue of pornography was a film that you produced back then, Jim, "The War on Illegal Pornography." I believe that was the title.

Dr. James Dobson: "It's a Winnable War."

Patrick Trueman: "It's a Winnable War." Yeah, that's right. And I saw that film and pornography wasn't an issue with me at all. I had given my eyes over to the Lord years ago before that. But that struck me that we really have a problem in America. And then at the same time, the commission was going on and I was at the

Department of Justice when the commission finished its work, it had many recommendations, but two very important recommendations were to update all those laws on pornography so we could fight the pornographers. The second one was to have a special strike force of prosecutors in the criminal division to go after the major producers and distributors.

And I was asked to be the number two person in that office. And then the head of that office left soon thereafter. And I suddenly became the head prosecutor at the office.

Dr. James Dobson: Department of Justice.

Patrick Trueman: At the Department of Justice. And we had a big task because the pornography industry had never been prosecuted. The Justice Department hadn't done any cases in a number of years. But what we discovered when we began prosecuting and we went after the biggest companies, the companies that were producing the most films and distributing 'em to 50 states. What we discovered in jury trials is that the juries wanted to convict because they didn't want to think that their communities would be overrun by this kind of material. And as part of your prosecution, you have to take into account community standards and the jury gets to say whether it meets their community standards or not.

Juries want to say our community's better than this. And so we never lost a trial. And Jim, I think today, if the Justice Department would start prosecuting again, and we know they haven't been doing it for years, I think you would have an even more receptive jury pool because now as your comments, introductory comments point out, it's so devastating. It's really affecting in one way or another, every family in America, anyone who has kids, teen or older, they know about incidences with their own kids getting exposed or someone in their neighborhood, some incident at school, et cetera. And the statistics back us up on this because it shows that in teen boys, until you're about 24 something in the area of 90% are looking at pornography. Now is this what parents want? Of course not. And it's like 60% of the girls.

Dr. James Dobson: It's really difficult to treat. Once you're addicted to this stuff, you are hooked and maybe for life. And the problem that we hear is that the husband is hooked on it and the wife is not, and she's offended by it and he wants her to do things she won't do, and it destroys the sexual relationship for the marriage.

Patrick Trueman: Right and he thinks she's not beautiful because he's looking at an 18-year-old. He's looking at a touched up model. And so it destroys marriages, but it destroys childhoods too. One thing we're noticing a rise in is child on child sex abuse. And this is not just an American phenomenon, it's a worldwide phenomenon. And the only reason for the rise is the use of pornography, the exposure to pornography of young children. It's upended society. That's why we call this it public health crisis. It's not just a problem for one family or another. It's a problem for society. And we can't solve it unless we...

Dr. James Dobson: And child pornography is very much a part of it.

Patrick Trueman: Of course it is.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's been the one thing that the Department of Justice has been willing to fight a little bit. They won't fight obscenity.

Patrick Trueman: They won't fight adult pornography, but by not fighting adult pornography, they're allowing for more child pornography. Because as you know, when these people are looking at pornography, they always have to have something harder and more deviant. They keep moving towards something and many of them turn to child pornography.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, it's progressive and it is addictive, and it marches you down the road, as you said, toward harder and more violent and more gross images. And what stimulates one day will not be enough tomorrow. There was a time when seeing just stalking, turn the guy on, but now it goes farther and farther in the direction of the paraphilias. That means abnormal, far out things like homosexual violence and child pornography and bestiality and all those, and violence against women. That's where Ted Bundy got his addiction. He told me that the night before he died.

Patrick Trueman: There's a study out a few years back, Dr. Anna Bridges and her team, they looked at the top 50 most popularly sold porn films in America. And they went scene by scene in it and discovered that 88% of the scenes in those top 50 movies depicted sexual violence against women. So when we see the sexual violence in society, we don't have to ask where it comes from. We're training young people on sexual violence and what does it say about our society when we have such high numbers of young men looking at pornography and we know what they're looking at, sexual violence against women. These will be our leaders. These will be what our ministers, our politicians. The pornography trains the brain. And that's what the problem is.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm not going to try to describe what that violence looks like, but I can tell you it will turn your stomach. And we had to sit and look at that stuff and then hear from women who had been abused in that way. I'm telling you it's not a victimless crime. It is sexploitation of the worst order, and it's taking place on college campuses, taking place on high school and junior high campuses now. The graphicness of Scripture will tell you just how evil sin is and how wicked sin is and how wicked immorality is. And it has never been more true of other forms of sin than this one because it goes to the heart of human nature and the human soul.

Patrick Trueman: Yes. And we try to talk at our organization, National Center on Sexual Exploitation, about the seamless continuum of exploitation. When we're feeding kids the sexually exploitive imagery as kids; the Cosmopolitan Magazine that they see in the checkout counter and what's on television and whatnot. And

then they're in grade schools and parents are giving their kids a cell phone in grade school and they have some excuse. "Oh, well, he needs to call me to make sure he gets a ride home." And the phone is unfiltered, but the kids are talking about sex and they look it up and they get it there. And then you're on the college campuses in the next part of your life and pornography is on the walls. It's everywhere and kids are experimenting. What they see they want to do, and then they're into the military after that, or they're trying out prostitution in numbers. College kids are, and with prostitution comes sex trafficking. They don't ask whether the person is a traffic victim or not. So you see these seamless connection between all forms of sexual exploitation, but it's the pornography that is the glue that holds it all together.

Dr. James Dobson: How can we put into words that will help people understand how ubiquitous this pornography really is? I mean, it is everywhere.

Patrick Trueman: Someone at one of our annual events, Dr. Gail Dines, talked about pornography as the wallpaper of our children's lives. And that's really what it is. It is everywhere and they know how to find it. Kids today can use the internet to go anywhere in the world. They know how to go anywhere, and they know how to go to porn sites, and the porn industry knows that about them. So they have all these free porn sites out there. Parents may not be aware of it, but it's just unlimited amounts of free pornography. And every, as you said, paraphilia, whatever you are looking for and stuff you never knew existed. But at a young age, kids, an adult can't handle this. I wouldn't want to look at this, but at a young age, what's that mind like that a child has or a teenager has?

Dr. James Dobson: Men are made that way. I want to confess something to you, Patrick, that I feel I need to be honest about. We're all affected by it. We're all vulnerable to it. When I was a very young man, Playboy and Penthouse appealed to me and I didn't buy 'em, but I would read 'em somewhere and the Lord began talking to me. I get teary-eyed about it now. The Lord cared enough about me to say, "That's not My will for you." And I made a commitment and I said, "Lord, I will not touch it again." I want to tell you how vicious Satan is. But I was on a plane alone and I was married and I was on my way back and I'd made that commitment and I was living with it, and someone left in the back of the seat in front of me, a brand new Hustler and a brand new Playboy. There it sat. Nobody would ever know if I picked it up, no one would ever condemn me. I was on the inside seat and I didn't touch it, Pat.

Patrick Trueman: Good for you.

Dr. James Dobson: I didn't touch it, and I have not picked up one since. And I tell you, that's the resolve you got to have because it'll get you. If you were looking at a congregation of a thousand men, how many of 'em do you think are addicted to pornography?

Patrick Trueman: Well over 50%. I would guess It's over 50% Now, addicted is a term that people define in various ways, but let's just say this, how many have pornography in their life every day? And I'll bet it's more than 50%.

Dr. James Dobson: I would be inclined to say it's more.

Patrick Trueman: More than that.

Dr. James Dobson: I would put it at 70 and maybe 80. And I tell you something else, we had evidence at our ministry with a hotline that pastors could call that. That was the number one reason they called because they used to have to go into a porn shop and bring something out in a brown paper bag that people would see. Now they go in their office and say, I'm working on my sermon. And they close the door.

Patrick Trueman: Yes, that is a big problem. The church has a problem, Jim. You know something that to be concerned about is that most churches in America, probably 90%, if a man has a pornography problem and he goes to that church to find some literature, some help, he gets nothing. There's no literature about the pornography problem, nothing that tells him who the local counselors are or what they can do to solve that problem. And the man's suffering with his work. He's suffering with his marriage. He looks on women every place he goes in a way that he shouldn't, but he wants help. Shouldn't the church be the first place that you could get help? But here in America, it isn't.

Dr. James Dobson: You know, the pastors, if they're not hooked on it themselves, are afraid to talk about it because they're afraid they'll offend the men. And some of the women, more women are being involved in pornography because their husbands are pulling them into it.

Patrick Trueman: They are. That's right. But if they would talk about it, and I realize it's hard for a pastor who's got a pornography problem to be talking about it, but I don't think that excuses them from having a men's group where you bring in a speaker once a year.

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, absolutely not. But there are these organizations that are out there and there are counselors who know how to deal with it. You and I have a friend, Dr. Jerry Kirk, and Jerry is another one who grabbed hold of this issue in the eighties. He came to our commission. He was pastor of College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, and he fought it there in Cincinnati to a standstill, but he's a hero of mine.

Patrick Trueman: Yes, he's accomplished a lot. There's the old guard. I'm pleased to be part of that old guard, 30 years in this work. But there's a new guard too. You'd be surprised, Jim, how many young people are standing up to this? I could have 500 interns every summer from college campuses. When we put the word out that we're looking for interns, we are overwhelmed. People want to be working

on this. And frankly, it's particularly the women who don't like the college culture of exploitation that they're expected to fit into and they want to do something about it. And I'm always pleased when we see these young men who apply and they come and we've got one now working on these issues. So the young aren't necessarily all buying into this culture. They know there's something wrong and many are willing to stand up.

Dr. James Dobson: How can they reach you, Pat?

Patrick Trueman: At our website, which is endsexualexploitation.org.

Dr. James Dobson: Alright, we're going to do another program. We're going to talk right about that. Patrick, thanks for being here. Let's do it again tomorrow.

Patrick Trueman: Thank you, Jim.

Roger Marsh: Dr. Dobson's vulnerable confession about his own struggles with temptation and his decisive choice to walk away from those magazines on that airplane reminds us that victory over pornography requires both divine strength and personal resolve. That's the kind of transparency and practical wisdom that families desperately need to hear. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk featuring a sobering conversation with Dr. Dobson and his good friend and colleague, Patrick Trueman, discussing pornography's devastating impact on our culture. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share it with someone who needs to hear this message, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

The mission of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has never been more urgent than it is today with cultural forces working overtime to undermine everything we hold dear. Your partnership enables us to be a beacon of truth in the darkness. Through these broadcasts, we're reaching families who desperately need hope and practical guidance rooted in God's Word, but we can't do this work alone. When you support the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, you're investing in the next generation's future and helping preserve the values that make family strong. To make a secure donation, visit Dr. James dobson.org. That's Dr. James dobson.org. Or call us at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. You can also set a donation through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh inviting you to join us again next time for part two of this conversation featuring Dr. James Dobson and Patrick Trueman discussing how pornography has truly become a public health crisis. That's coming your way on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. James Dobson: Does your home provide an emotional safe harbor for your children? A place where they feel protected and nurtured?

Roger Marsh: With today's Dr. Dobson minute, here's Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: A classic study of child rearing practices followed over 1500 boys from pre-adolescence through young adulthood and produced three very interesting findings. First, when love and appreciation are communicated to children, their self-esteem grows. Now, that's not so surprising perhaps, but the second finding was the parents of the high self-esteem children were not only strict, but consistent in their discipline as well. If children find that rules at home are not being enforced, they often assume it's because no one cares enough to get involved. The third ingredient that marked the homes of the high self-esteem children was openness. Once the boundaries for behavior had been established, there was freedom for individual personalities to grow and develop.

Roger Marsh: For more information, visit drdobsonminute.org.