A Pedophiles New Playground: How Primetime Television and Movies Are Supporting Pedophilia

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I. INTRODUCTION

A nine year old dancing like a stripper.¹ A sixteen year old involved in a romantic relationship with her teacher.² A ten year old girl self-gratifying.³ High school students dressing, dancing, and acting provocatively.⁴ These may sound like scenes from a pedophile’s fantasies, but in fact they are scenes anyone can see by turning on their television or going to the movies. However, the more disturbing fact is that these are scenes from the fantasies of a pedophile. Primetime television and movies are making it so that pedophiles no longer have to purchase illegal pornography to fulfill their perverted desires. Pedophiles can simply turn on the television or go to the movies and see depictions of minors acting sexually or having a relationship with someone over the age of 18. These depictions could lead a pedophile to believe that it is acceptable for them to view children as sexual objects and acceptable for children to engage in sexual acts. Even more dangerous than a pedophile starting to believe that children are sexual objects and that it is acceptable for adults to engage in sexual relationships with minors is that minors may start to believe that these are acceptable behaviors. It may be easy for the average viewer to only view a television show or movie that paints a minor as a sexual being for the entertainment value. However, the public needs to realize that pedophiles and minors do not have

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² LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE (Fox Searchlight Pictures 2006) [hereinafter MISS SUNSHINE].  
³ Pretty Little Liars (ABC Family 2010) [hereinafter Liars].  
⁴ Mad Men: The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (AMC Television Broadcast Aug. 22, 2010) [hereinafter Mad Men].  
⁵ Glee (20th Century Fox Television 2009) [hereinafter Glee].
this same ability. Society needs to decide whether the potential of high ratings and entertainment value provided by these shows is worth encouraging or supporting pedophiles and confusing and victimizing children.

Section II of this paper will discuss how the media is giving pedophiles materials that they can watch privately to fulfill their desires, replacing illegal child pornography. Child pornography is a form of child abuse that presents unique dangers to the victims. This section will discuss part of the history of American court’s treatment of child pornography. This section will demonstrate how the line between prime time television and pornography is becoming increasingly blurry. It is disturbing to think that the types of images that a pedophile uses to satisfy their perverted desires are the same images that are shown during the largest watched time slot on television.

Section III of this paper will discuss how pedophiles use child pornography to victimize children, and how different television shows and movies are making it possible for pedophiles to move away from using illegal child pornography. Pedophiles use child pornography to desensitize children to sexual acts and to give the child something to mimic. This section will discuss how the provocative scenes in movies like Little Miss Sunshine and network television shows like Glee can be used by pedophiles to seduce children.

Section IV of this paper will briefly question whether the increasing number of television shows and movies that sexualize children has the possibility of resulting in a greater acceptance of this type of behavior. The media has historically desensitized society to many controversial topics. Multiple groups are fighting for recognition and support for relationships between minors

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5 SHIRLEY O’BRIEN, CHILD PORNOGRAPHY 649 (1983) [hereinafter O’BRIEN].
7 MISS SUNSHINE, supra note 1.
8 Glee, supra note 4.
and adults. Physical relationships between adults and minors are present in different shows and movies, including shows that are on “family friendly” stations like ABC Family. Research has shown that media plays an important role in adolescent sexual socialization. This role may lead to a greater acceptance of minors acting sexually, and an eventual desensitization and acceptance of sexual relationships between adults and minors.

II. FOR THE PEDOPHILE’S VIEWING PLEASURE

A. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

According to the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography:

What is commonly referred to as “child pornography” is not so much a form of pornography as it is a form of sexual exploitation of children. The distinguishing characteristics of child pornography, as generally understood, is that actual children are photographed while engaged in some form of sexual activity, either with adults or with other children.

Child pornography can be defined as “the use of underage persons as subjects or models in the production of sexually suggestive, provocative, or explicit materials.” Child pornography was “discovered” as a national problem in the late 1970s. Statistics regarding the prevalence of child pornography vary widely, making it very difficult to quantify just how significant, or insignificant, a problem child pornography really poses. In May, 1977 the Chicago Tribune

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9 One such group is the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). Formed in 1978, NAMBLA’s goal is to “end the extreme oppression of men and boys in mutually consensual relationships.” NAMBLA, An Introduction to NAMBLA: Who We Are, http://www.nambla.org/welcome.htm (last visited Nov. 28, 2010).

10 Specifically the show Liars, supra note 2.


13 Id. at 405


reported that “child pornography has become a nation-wide multi-million dollar racket that is luring thousands of juveniles into lives of prostitution’ and exploiting up to 100,000 children at any time.”

In a 1983 House Report, Congress estimated that “tens of thousands of children under the age of 18 are believed to be filmed or photographed while engaging in sexually explicit acts.” While there were differing reports of the prevalence of child pornography from its discovery though the early 1990s, the invention and wide availability of the internet has led the United States into “the golden age of child pornography.”

Child pornography is used by pedophiles in many different ways. Some of these ways include blackmail, profit, instructional aids, self-gratification, conditioning, advertising, collections, sexual record, and access. This section will focus on the uses of child pornography that has led many to conclude that “child pornography is child abuse.” The danger of child pornography has led some to believe that child pornography is “an even greater threat to the child victim than… [routine] sexual abuse.” This is because the pictures or video not only is a permanent documentation of the abuse, but the “recording of the act also becomes a collateral violation against the child’s dignity.” A child must not only deal with the abuse he or she suffered, but they must also go through their lives knowing that there is a recording of their abuse that is “circulating within the mass distribution system for child pornography.”

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19 SEXUAL TRAFFICKING, supra note 14, at 118.
20 Commission, supra note 12, at 406.
22 Adler, supra note 15, at 216.
23 Shouvlin, supra note 21, at 545.
The idea that child pornography is child abuse has shaped the way the Supreme Court has decided cases dealing with child pornography. As demonstrated below, the Court, when analyzing the danger of child pornography, discusses how child pornography is a part of child abuse.

**B. SUPREME COURT CASES REGARDING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

The Supreme Court first looked at the specific problem of child pornography in 1982.\(^{24}\) In this case the Supreme Court, for the first time, put child pornography in a special category of constitutional inquiry and concluded that child pornography is not protected by the First Amendment.\(^{25}\) In *New York v. Ferber*\(^{26}\) the court looked at whether a New York state statute that prohibited persons from “knowingly promoting sexual performances by children under the age of 16 by distributing material which depicts such performances”\(^{27}\) was constitutional. In deciding to uphold the New York statute, the Supreme Court noted that the state has a legitimate interest in “protecting the physical and emotional well-being of youth even when the laws have operated in the sensitive area of constitutionally protecting rights.”\(^{28}\) The Court also stated another reason to prohibit the distribution of child pornography was that child pornography is “intrinsically related to the sexual abuse of children in at least two ways.”\(^{29}\) Those two ways are that there is a permanent record of the child’s abuse created which leads to further harm to the child as the material is circulated, and that this circulation of the pornography must be prevented if the sexual exploitation of the victims is ever going to be controlled.\(^{30}\) The Court also moved away from the standards set in the *Miller* case, noting that child pornography should be considered differently

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\(^{25}\) Id. (citing *Ferber*, 458 U.S. at 756 and 764).


\(^{27}\) Id. at 749.

\(^{28}\) Id. at 757.

\(^{29}\) Id. at 759.

\(^{30}\) Id. (citing Shouvlin, *supra* note 21, at 545).
than other materials that are being scrutinized for legal obscenity. The reason for this difference, according to the Court, relates to the abuse and harm to children that occurs in the production and distribution of child pornography.31

After deciding that child pornography does not have to be afforded First Amendment protection, the courts later analyzed whether actual nudity or depictions of sexual acts is required for material to be considered child pornography in Knox v. United States.32 In this case the courts specifically looked at whether what was referred to as “panty-flashing” videos could fall under the child pornography laws.33 Panty-flashing videos are videos which “do not feature any nudity or explicit sexual acts but depict fully or partially clothed children posing while the camera zooms in and focuses for extended periods of time on their covered genital or pubic areas.”34 These videos were specifically marketed towards pedophiles to use for their own sexual gratification.35 The courts decided that material could be considered child pornography even if the victims were not naked or performing a specific sexual act, as long as the “material depict some ‘sexually explicit’ conduct by the minor subject which appeals to the lascivious interest of the intended audience.”36 Therefore, it is possible for material to fall under the category of child pornography even if there is no nudity or actual sexual act portrayed in the material.

C. Mainstream Media as a Pedophile’s Substitute

31 Id. at 761 (discussing how the questions of the Miller test have no connection to the physical or psychological harm of the child victim or the sexual exploitation of the child).
35 Knox, 977 F.2d 815, 818 (3d Cir. 1992).
36 Knox, 32 F.3d at 747.
Consider again the scenes described at the beginning of this note. A nine year old dancing like a
stripper.\textsuperscript{37} A sixteen year old involved in a romantic relationship with her teacher.\textsuperscript{38} A ten year
old girl self-gratifying.\textsuperscript{39} High school students dressing, dancing, and acting provocatively.\textsuperscript{40}
These are the types of scenes that are depicted in many pornographic films. Again, however,
since these are scenes from movies and prime-time television shows, pedophiles no longer have
to worry about being caught with this type of material. While these shows may not be as graphic
as scenes in “regular” child pornography or the type of pornography analyzed in \textit{Knox}, a
pedophile can still find satisfaction by viewing these scenes. Also, not only can a pedophile
achieve satisfaction by watching these shows, they have found a way to avoid prosecution for
their possession of sexual depictions of minors.

Not only can a pedophile use prime time television and movies for their own viewing
pleasure, but they can also use the same material to seduce their victims. It is possible that the
same scenes that the pedophile watches for their own viewing pleasure could be suggestive
enough to be used for children to mimic.

\textbf{III. CREATING A PREY-GROUND}

\textbf{A. Use of Child Pornography by Pedophiles}

The Supreme Court has recognized that child pornography can be used to victimize more
than just the child portrayed in the material. Specifically, in a 1990 case\textsuperscript{41} the Court noted that
“evidence suggests that pedophiles use child pornography to seduce other children into sexual
activity.”\textsuperscript{42} One source that the Court used to reach this conclusion was the Attorney General’s

\textsuperscript{37} \textsc{Miss Sunshine}, \textit{supra} note 1.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Liars}, \textit{supra} note 2.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Mad Men}, \textit{supra} note 3.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Glee}, \textit{supra} note 4.
\textsuperscript{41} Osborne v. Ohio, 495 U.S. 1691 (1990).
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Id.} at 111 (citations omitted).
Commission on Pornography,\(^{43}\) which noted that “[c]hild pornography is often used as part of a method of seducing child victims.”\(^ {44}\) When a pedophile is interacting with a child who may be “reluctant to engage in” the sexual activity the adult is requesting, the pedophile will use materials that show other children having “‘fun’ participating in the activity.”\(^ {45}\) Having this material enables the pedophile to “lower the inhibitions of the child and entice him or her into a desired activity.”\(^ {46}\) Using pornography as “sex education” is one of the most common techniques used by pedophiles.\(^ {47}\) The pedophile will use the images to show the child that other children are sexually active and that sex is acceptable and desirable.\(^ {48}\) Repeated exposure to these types of images eventually desensitizes the child and lowers their inhibitions towards sexual activity.\(^ {49}\) Not only will pedophiles use these images to lower inhibitions, but they also use it as an “instructional tool.”\(^ {50}\) The pedophile will show the victim the pornographic images and then “ask the child to pose as the performers have depicted, or ask the child to engage in the activities that are depicted.”\(^ {51}\) The use of child pornography to seduce children was also discussed in the *Report of the Surgeon General’s Workshop on Pornography and Public Health.*\(^ {52}\) This report stated:

> Involvement with pornography does seem to have a place in the dynamics of sexually exploiting children. Pornography has been used by adults to teach children how to perform sexual acts and to legitimize the

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\(^{43}\) Commission, *supra* note 20.

\(^{44}\) *Id.* at 649 (citing Kenneth Lanning, *Collectors, in Child Pornography and Sex Rings* 86 (Ann Wolbert Burgess ed., 1984)).

\(^{45}\) *Id.* (citing U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Fed. Bureau of Investigation, *Child Molesting: A Behavioral Analysis for Law Enforcement*, 61 (1986)).

\(^{46}\) *Id.*

\(^{47}\) O’BRIEN, *supra* note 5, at 649.

\(^{48}\) *Id.*

\(^{49}\) *Id.*

\(^{50}\) DAVIDSON, *supra* note 6, at 4 (citation omitted).

\(^{51}\) *Id.* (citation omitted).

\(^{52}\) *Id.*
children’s participation by showing pictures of other children who are
“enjoying” the activity. In some cases involvement in the production of
pornography has led to other sexual activity; in others, pornography
involvement has followed sexual activity.\textsuperscript{53}

Before discussing how pedophiles can use mainstream media to encourage
sexual behavior by children, one must first look at how sexual content in the
media in general influences children.

\textit{B. Effect of Media on Teens}

According to a recent study done by The Nielsen Company, children in the United States
are watching more television than ever before.\textsuperscript{54} According to this study, American children two
to five years old spend, on average, over thirty-two hours per week in front of a television screen,
with almost twenty-five hours a week specifically spent watching television.\textsuperscript{55} American children
six to eleven years old spend, on average, over twenty-eight hours per week in front of the
television, with about twenty-two hours a week specifically spent watching television.\textsuperscript{56}

Not only are children spending more time in front of the television, but the media plays
an “important role in adolescent sexual socialization.”\textsuperscript{57} The media’s portrayal of sex has an
influence on adolescents’ views of “‘normal’ sexual patterns and practices, including how sexual
relationships evolve, attitudes about casual sex, and higher estimates of peers’ sexual

\textsuperscript{53} Id. (citation omitted).
\textsuperscript{54} Patricia McDonough, \textit{TV Viewing Among Kids at an Eight-Year High}, NielsenWire, Oct. 26, 2009,
McDonough]. The Nielsen Company “measures activity and engagement at every consumer touchpoint… [which]
enables [them]… to provide deeper insight into current markets, creating future opportunities for growth.” Nielsen,
\textsuperscript{55} McDonough, \textit{supra} note 54.
\textsuperscript{56} Id.
\textsuperscript{57} Kinnick, \textit{supra} note 11, at 20.
activities.” Watching television has led many adolescents to form the belief that “everybody’s doing it,” usually overestimating the “frequency of teen sex, teen pregnancy and marital infidelity.” Teens and children are constantly bombarded with sexual images. Some of these sexual images are of adults acting in a sexual manner. However, there are a surprising number of television shows and movies that have characters under the age of eighteen engaging in sexual activity. These kinds of shows contribute to the misconceptions many adolescents have about sex and relationships.

The media not only shapes ideas and perceptions about sex, it also affects the sexual behavior of those watching. There have been many studies since the 1990s that have “confirmed a causal relationship between exposure to sex on television and an acceleration of sexual activity leading to intercourse.” A study done in 2006 of twelve to fourteen-year-olds found that exposure to “sexual content in television, movies, music, and magazines…accelerated sexual activity.” The authors of that study concluded that the “more sexual media a teen saw, the more likely he or she was to become sexually active over the next two years.” Studies have also found that the adolescents are engaging in different sexual activities than in the past. Over the last ten years, oral sex has doubled in proportion among teens and young adults. Girls are also

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58 Id. (citations omitted).
59 Id. at 21.
60 Id.
61 Many times the characters in the show or movie are supposed to be high school age or younger, but the actors playing the characters are over the age of eighteen. For example, the television show Glee is set in a high school, but all the actors are over the age of eighteen. Issues caused by this age difference, including actual teenage girls trying to look and act like women that are older than they are, are beyond the scope of this paper.
62 Kinnick, supra note 11, at 21.
63 Id. (citation omitted).
64 Id.
65 Id. at 22
66 Id. (citation omitted).
engaging in behaviors typically seen in porn; including performing oral sex and kissing other girls while being watched by teenage boys.\textsuperscript{67}

These studies show that teens are influenced by what they see on television. The way the media treats sex is leading teenagers to have misconceptions about sex. Part of this problem is caused by the fact that many shows and movies that involve sex glamorize the experience, without discussing the risks that early and frequent sex with multiple partners can cause. In fact, in shows which have teenage characters engaging in sexual activity, fewer than “one in four of those episodes included references to risks and responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{68} A study that looked in depth at the amount and type of sexual content on prime-time television was three successive studies published by the Kaiser Family Foundation.\textsuperscript{69} The 2003 study is the most recent study published by the Kaiser Family Foundation.\textsuperscript{70} In that study, research showed that “64 percent of all shows had sexual content, but 83 percent of the top twenty teen shows had sexual content.”\textsuperscript{71}

One may assume that programs that have sexual content air during the early morning hours or while children are in school. However, many of the shows that have sexual content, especially sexual content this note argues presents a danger to children air during the prime time slot\textsuperscript{72}. Glee\textsuperscript{73} and Pretty Little Liars,\textsuperscript{74} two shows discussed below as material valuable to

\textsuperscript{67} Id. (citations omitted). Researchers have also found that oral sex is almost exclusive performed by girls, with boys rarely reciprocating. Id. (citation omitted).

\textsuperscript{68} Id. at 25.


\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Young People}, supra note 69 (citing Kunkle et al., supra note 70)

\textsuperscript{72} Prime time is generally between the hours of 8 and 11 p.m., and is known as usually having the largest viewing audience of the day. Dictionary.com, \textit{Prime Time}, available at http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/prime+time [hereinafter Dictionary.com].
pedophiles, air at 8 p.m.\textsuperscript{75} These shows are on during a time that, according to the definition of prime time, usually has the largest viewing audience of the day.\textsuperscript{76} This gives juveniles and pedophiles easy access to programs that sexualize minors. In fact, “one in three prime-time shows contained sexual behaviors, up from one in four in the first study.”\textsuperscript{77} Prime-time also had “more sexual talk per hour (5.8 scenes per hour) and more sexual behaviors (2.3 scenes per hour) than the previous seasons.”\textsuperscript{78}

The use of child pornography by pedophiles to seduce their victims and the shown influence television and movies have on adolescents has the possibility of a dangerous outcome. Instead of breaking the law to obtain child pornography, a pedophile can use regular movies and television shows to achieve the same results: the seduction and victimization of a child.

\textit{C. Use of Mainstream Media by Pedophiles}

There are numerous television shows and movies that show underage characters behaving in sexual ways, which will be discussed below. A pedophile can use those shows in the same way they use child pornography – to encourage reluctant children to act like the characters they are seeing on television. As stated above, most shows that have teenagers engaging in sexual activity do not portray the negative consequences of their actions. In fact, the shows usually portray the characters enjoying what they are doing. A pedophile can show their intended victim these shows to desensitize the victim to the sexual act and to lower their inhibitions. Studies have shown that teenagers are influenced by the sex that they see in movies and television shows – this is the exact influence pedophiles will be taking advantage of. The shows and movies that

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Glee}, supra note 4.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Liars}, supra note 2
\textsuperscript{76} Dictionary.com, supra note 7272.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Young People}, supra note 69 (citing Kunkle et al., supra note 70)
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Id.}
have underage characters having sex or acting provocatively possibly have a higher degree of danger, since they not only introduce or expose juveniles to sexual topics or behavior, but the characters engaging in said behavior are supposed to be the same age as they are. This will help the pedophile convince the child that everyone their age is acting a certain way, making it more likely that the child will go along with the suggestion.

One television show that sexualizes adolescent characters is Glee.\textsuperscript{79} The main characters in the show are in a high school glee club. One of the episodes of the show had songs by Britney Spears.\textsuperscript{80} The clips of the girls singing the songs by Britney mirrored many of her very sexual music videos. While it is true that a pedophile can easily show a Britney Spears music video to an intended victim to encourage the victim to dance like Britney, there is a difference when the person dancing is the same age as the intended victim. Seeing another adolescent dancing provocatively can lower a child’s inhibitions and lead them to believe that it is acceptable for them to dance that way as well. Another sexual scene in the show that could be used by a pedophile as an example for the victim occurs between two female characters. In the episode, two cheerleaders are shown lying on a bed together, with one of the girls kissing the neck of the other girl.\textsuperscript{81} The girls say that what they are doing is a nice break from scissoring.\textsuperscript{82} The one cheerleader tells the other that the only reason she is intimate with her is because her boyfriend is away. When one girl tries to take the intimacy between them too far her friend tells her “I’m like a lizard. I need something warm beneath me or else I can’t digest my food.”\textsuperscript{83} This can portray the message that people should kiss and be intimate with whoever they can, and that just because they may be intimate with someone of the same sex does not mean that they are homosexuals.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Glee, supra} note 4.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Glee: Britney/Brittany} (20th Century Fox Television Sept. 28, 2010).
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Glee: Duets} (20th Century Fox Television Oct. 12, 2010).
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Id.}
\end{footnotesize}
pedophile could show two girls this clip and not only have them imitate what the girls are doing, but also desensitize them to the idea of making out with people of the same sex. These are just a few examples of the sexual content on the show. Many of the musical numbers that the characters sing in are very sexual. It may be easy for an adult to look at the show for pure entertainment, but seeing “teenagers” acting sexually may be what a younger child needs to mimic what they see. The show becomes more than entertainment for them. It becomes an example for how the “cool” kids act.

A movie that has a scene that could potentially be used by a pedophile is Little Miss Sunshine. In this movie a nine-year-old is in a beauty pageant. For her talent portion of the show she dances to the song “Super Freak.” Not only are the lyrics of this song suggestive for a nine-year-old, the character’s grandfather has taught her how to dance like a stripper. The scene shows the little girl starting by hitting her butt. She then proceeds to rip her pants off and throw them into the crowd (she is wearing orange short shorts under her pants), and then rip her shirt open (she is wearing a sleeveless tank top under the shirt). The whole time the little girl has a huge smile on her face, seemingly unaware that she is dancing in a way that is inappropriate for her age. A pedophile could show a child this clip and have the child imitate the character in the movie, dancing like a stripper. Again, the girl in the movie looks like she is having a wonderful time, and her family eventually winds up dancing with her on stage. Another fact that makes it more likely that a child would be willing to mimic something a pedophile shows them is that

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84 Teenagers is in quotes because while the characters are all in high school, the actors portraying these characters are all between the ages of 18 and 25. This distinction may be difficult for a child to understand.
85 In one episode a character talks about how if everyone would “put out” the school’s football team would be winning. *Glee: Never Been Kissed* (20th Century Fox Television Nov. 9, 2010).
86 *MISS SUNSHINE*, *supra* note 1
87 Abigail Breslin was eleven when she starred in this movie.
89 While beyond the scope of this paper, it is also disturbing to think about the fact that the actress dancing like a stripper is only eleven. One must ask if it is possible for a child actor to understand that dancing like a stripper is “appropriate” for the movie scene, but not appropriate in real life.
some studies estimate that “85 to 90 percent of…victims have had some contact with the adult previous to any sexual encounter.” 90 Pedophiles can take advantage of the previous relationship that they may have built up with the victim to help encourage the victim to act out whatever movie or show they decide to have the victim watch. A victim might not think there is anything wrong with what they are doing if they are acting like a show that is on television or a movie that anyone can purchase.

Mad Men 91 is another show that had a scene with a younger child acting sexually. In an episode that aired in 2010, an eleven year old actress (her character is around nine years old) was caught “playing with herself” by a friend’s mother. 92 The episode not only talked about a young child masturbating, but actually showed the eleven year old actress start to move her hands under her nightgown. This is just another example of a show that can be used by pedophiles as examples for their intended victims to mimic. The pedophile will be able to show younger girls that it is not just teenagers who are acting sexually, but that girls as young as nine are sexual as well.

Not only can pedophiles use scenes from shows and movies to encourage their victims to act provocatively, they can also use clips that seem to encourage and glamorize relationships between adults and children. In Glee 93 one of the students talks about having sexual relationships with adult women. 94 He is portrayed to be one of the cool guys at the school, and part of his cool

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90 O’BRIEN, supra note 5 at 47.
91 Mad Men, supra note 3.
92 Id.
93 Glee, supra note 4.
factor is sleeping with women, his age or older. In the same season of the show he sleeps with an adult and gets one of his classmates pregnant.

Another show that glamorizes relationships between adults and adolescents is Pretty Little Liars. In this show a sixteen year old girl has a physical relationship with her teacher. While there is some mention throughout the season of how the teacher could lose his job for having a relationship with a student, the focus is really on the fact that these two are in love and they shouldn’t let a little thing like age or the law keep them apart. The writers of the show write their relationship so that viewers want the relationship between the characters to work out. This show can be used to desensitize children to the idea of adults and children having romantic, sexual relationships. The pedophile can mimic the teacher on the show and deceive a young girl that all that matters is how people feel about each other. The more a young girl is exposed to these kinds of images the more she will begin to believe that she is in love with the older man and that all that matters is that he loves her as well.

Evidence of this desensitization can be seen in the kinds of videos that people post to internet websites like YouTube. Searching for the characters names from the show Pretty Little Liars brings up multiple videos where people have taken scenes of the two characters kissing and set the scenes to love songs. An even more chilling picture is painted when one reads the comments people post to these videos. One person commented that Ezra Fritz (the teacher) is “SO HOT” and that they really want him and Aria (the student) to continue to have a “secret relationship” and that they are the “cutest couple.” Yet another comment states that “for some

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97 *Liars, supra* note 2.
reason, being teacher and student make[s] them twice as hot as a normal couple." Another person states that their English teacher is “soo [sic] hot” and that she wishes that she could have the same kind of relationship with her teacher. These comments indicate that the show is achieving its goal of glamorizing the illegal relationship between the student and the teacher (adult and child). The focus of people watching the show is not on the fact that Mr. Fritz is breaking the law, but rather that he and his student are both attractive and that they love each other, so therefore they should be together. In fact, one person comments that the couple is “adorable” and that they “don’t care how ‘wrong’ it is. [P]eriod.” This show bombards juveniles with images of a minor and her teacher involved romantically, and presents the relationship in such a way that is making juveniles focus on what feels good rather than what is right. A pedophile could easily take advantage of this desensitization. It is not too difficult to imagine a situation where a teacher, who is attracted to their student, uses this show to try to convince the student that there is nothing wrong with their relationship as long as they are in love. A student who is shown the relationship between Aria and Mr. Fritz could easily be desensitized to the idea of having a relationship with their teacher, allowing themselves to become the pedophiles victim.

IV. MOVING FROM PEDOPHILIA TO ADULT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

99 Posting of momomiwinxran to Aria and Ezra – Kisses Scenes (PLL), YOUTUBE, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nlzJuuJEVk (Nov. 27, 2010).
100 Posting of TheRadChristina to Aria and Ezra – Kisses Scenes (PLL), YOUTUBE, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nlzJuuJEVk (Sept. 2010).
101 Even though the bulk of the comments on the video montage of the kissing scenes talk about how great the relationship is, there is one person who comments “aw, what a cute almost-statutory rapist.” Posting of uofc57 to Aria and Ezra – Kisses Scenes (PLL), YOUTUBE, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nlzJuuJEVk (Oct. 2010).
102 Posting of unouluvme516 to Aria and Ezra – Kisses Scenes (PLL), YOUTUBE, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nlzJuuJEVk (Sept. 2010).
Once upon a time married couples were shown on television sleeping in separate beds.\textsuperscript{103} In fact, it wasn’t until twenty years after the first show showing a married couple having one bed aired that another couple was shown having one bed.\textsuperscript{104} Showing a toilet was also something that television shows avoided, first showing a toilet (just the lid) on Leave it to Beaver,\textsuperscript{105} and the first toilet flush sound on an episode of All in the Family.\textsuperscript{106} The idea of not being able to show married couples sharing a bed or something as natural as a toilet in a bathroom most likely sound ridiculous to someone who was born after 1980, but these used to be things that were considered inappropriate to show on television. In the same way, the type of topics and images shown on television today would never have been considered possible to someone growing up when it was inappropriate to show a married couple sharing a bed.

As discussed already, repeated exposure to certain things can desensitize the viewer to the topic. Repeated exposure to images of a married couple sharing a bed has desensitized society to this idea. There is no controversy when a television show or a movie shows a couple married or not in bed together, much less showing that there is only one bed in their bedroom. Another controversial topic that the media has repeatedly shown is extramarital affairs. At one time, a study found that as many as one-fifth of television shows studied showed someone cheating on their spouse.\textsuperscript{107} There also seems to have been a shift from showing how affairs destroy marriage to writing affairs in such a way that makes the viewer sympathize for the

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\textsuperscript{103} Rob and Laura Petrie slept in separate beds in The Dick Van Dyke Show. \textit{The Dick Van Dyke Show} (CBS 1961-66).
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Mary Kay and Johnny} (DuMont Television Network 1947) was the first television show that had one bed for a married couple (interestingly, the only reason this happened was probably due to the fact that the show was shot in the couple’s real apartment). After this show aired it would be twenty years before a married couple was shown sharing a bed again. Christoper Stires, \textit{Firsts in Television} (2007), http://www.bewilderingstories.com/issue259/tv_firsts.html
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Leave it to Beaver} (CBS 1957-63).
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{All in the Family} (CBS 1971-83).
\end{flushright}
cheating spouse and cheer for the extramarital relationship to prevail. The basic conclusion that can be drawn from the change in television over time is that the media continually seems to take societal taboos and weave them into television shows until society as a whole becomes desensitized to the taboo, and suddenly what was once taboo is now widely accepted.

If television continues in the way it is going now, it appears that the next controversial topics that society will eventually become desensitized to is the idea of minors being sexual objects and relationships between adults and minors being normal and encouraged. As discussed above, shows like Glee and Mad Men and movies like Little Miss Sunshine all show minor characters acting sexually. Not only are the characters acting sexually, but the sexual behavior is glamorized, seeming completely normal and acceptable. The more society is bombarded with sexual images of children and teenagers, the less shocked people will become when a twelve year old starts acting and dressing like those characters. Also, as long as shows like Pretty Little Liars continue to glamorize relationships between minors and adults generally (and teachers and students specifically) the less shocked people will become when they hear about teachers and students becoming romantically involved. The effect of this show can already been seen in the number of comments that girls are making about wanting to have the same kind of sexual relationship with their teachers and wanting the characters to stay together, even if it is wrong.

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108 This is purely the observation and opinion of the author.
109 Glee, supra note 4.
110 Mad Men, supra note 3.
111 MISS SUNSHINE, supra note 1.
112 While beyond the scope of this paper, this can already be seen in the types of clothing that retailers sell for children and teenagers. See Mardia J. Bishop, The Making of a Pre-Pubescent Porn Star: Contemporary Fashion for Elementary School Girls, in POP-PORN 45 (Ann C. Hall & Mardia J. Bishop eds., 2007).
113 Liars, supra note 2.
114 See supra notes 92-96 and accompanying text.
Some may think that surely there are some topics, such as relationships between adults and minors, that would never receive support on a large scale. However, there are groups that already exist, and have existed for some time, that support these types of relationships. For example, the North American Man/Boy Love Association (“NAMBLA”) has been in existence since 1978. The goal of NAMBLA is to stop the “extreme oppression of men and boys in mutually consensual relationships…” NAMBLA also believes in the “empowerment of youth in all areas, not just the sexual.” This group believes that juveniles should be given more political, economic, social, and sexual opportunities and freedom. NAMBLA supporters believe that juveniles should be allowed to consent to relationships with people they choose to love, and that there should not be any laws that oppress or “deny men and boys the full enjoyment of their bodies and control over their own lives.” The website also lists examples of movies and television shows, books, art, and poetry (both fiction and non-fiction) that have stories related to, and supporting, relationships between minors and adults (specifically boys and men). Another link on the website takes the viewer to a list of articles that have been published that are recommended readings. When viewing this website and the articles that are listed on the site, it is apparent that there is some support for the legalization of consensual romantic and sexual relationships between adults and minors, even among the scientific/academic community.

115 Introduction to NAMBLA, supra note 9.
116 Id.
117 Id.
118 Id.
119 Id. While beyond the scope of this paper, one problem with NAMBLA’s stance seems to be the amount of scientific evidence that questions whether juveniles are capable of full consent when taking into account the development of their brains. Also, allowing a minor to consent to a sexual relationship at any age could also the negative effect of treating juveniles the same as adults in all aspects of life.
120 NAMBLA, Selected References, http://www.nambla.org/readings.htm (last visited Dec. 1, 2010). Many of the articles listed on the page are about studies done that concluded children are not harmed, and are in some cases actually benefitted, from sexual contact with adults. Id.
In his widely accepted research on sexuality, Dr. Alfred Kinsey, author of Sexual Behavior in the Human Male\textsuperscript{121} and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female,\textsuperscript{122} collected data from adult men who had engaged in sexual acts with as many as 300 children ranging in age from two months to fifteen years.\textsuperscript{123} That research led Kinsey to the conclusion that children engage in sexual activity by age six.\textsuperscript{124} Kinsey also said that children are born sexual and that with their consent sexual activity between adults and children was normal and healthy.\textsuperscript{125} These aren’t outdated ideas; as recently as 2002 Judith Levine published Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protection Children from Sex\textsuperscript{126} in which she claimed children are being kept from having sex with adults and other children.\textsuperscript{127} Levine states “[s]ex is not harmful to children. It is a vehicle to self-knowledge, love, healing, creativity, adventure, and intense feelings of aliveness. There are many ways even the smallest children can partake of it.”\textsuperscript{128} The more that these types of relationships are glamorized on television, the more desensitized society will become to these ideas.

V. CONCLUSION

Section II of this paper discussed how the media is giving pedophiles materials that they can watch privately to fulfill their desires, replacing illegal child pornography. Child pornography is a form of child abuse that presents unique dangers to the victims. This section discussed part of the history of American court’s treatment of child pornography. This section demonstrated how the line between prime time television and pornography is becoming

\textsuperscript{121} Alfred Kinsey, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (1948).
\textsuperscript{122} Alfred Kinsey, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (1953).
\textsuperscript{123} Brannon Howe, Grave Influence: 21 Radicals and Their Worldviews That Rule America from the Grave 175-76 (2009) [hereinafter Grave Influence].
\textsuperscript{124} Id. at 175.
\textsuperscript{125} Id. at 176 (footnote omitted).
\textsuperscript{126} Judith Levine, Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex (2002).
\textsuperscript{127} Grave Influence, supra note 123, at 177.
\textsuperscript{128} Id. at 178
increasingly blurry. It is disturbing to think that the same types of images that a pedophile uses to satisfy their perverted desires are the same images that are shown during the largest watched time slot on television.

Section III of this paper discussed how pedophiles use child pornography to victimize children, and how different television shows and movies are making it possible for pedophiles to move away from using illegal child pornography. Pedophiles use child pornography to desensitize children to sexual acts and to give the child something to mimic. This section discussed how the provocative scenes in movies like Little Miss Sunshine and television shows like Glee can be used by pedophiles to seduce children.

Section IV of this paper briefly questioned whether the increasing number of shows and movies that sexualize children has the possibility of resulting in a greater acceptance of this type of behavior. The media has historically desensitized society to many controversial topics. Multiple groups are fighting for recognition and support for relationships between minors and adults. Physical relationships between adults and minors are present in different shows and movies, including shows that are on “family friendly” stations like ABC Family. The media has historically addressed topics that are considered taboo, such as showing a married couple sharing a bed, until that taboo is broken down. Research has shown that media plays an important role in adolescent sexual socialization. This role may lead to a greater acceptance of minors acting sexually, and an eventual desensitization and acceptance of sexual relationships between adults and minors.

129 O’BRIEN, supra note 5, at 649.
130 DAVIDSON, supra note 6, at 4.
131 MISS SUNSHINE, supra note 1.
132 Glee, supra note 4.
133 See supra note 9 and accompanying text.
134 Specifically the show Liars, supra note 2.
135 Kinnick, supra note 11, at 20.
Sex sells, but at what cost? Society needs to ask if the cost is too high. Having a show or movie that depicts minors acting sexually may attract high ratings and high profits, but producers and viewers alike need to think about how this shows and movies may also attract pedophiles. Children need to be protected, and one way to protect children is to make it as difficult as possible for pedophiles to victimize them. Victimization of children was made more difficult for pedophiles when child pornography was denied First Amendment protection, and even more difficult when courts held that nudity or sexual acts were not required for a piece of material to be considered the same as child pornography. However, these protections are being slowly decreased as the media shows minors acting in a sexual manner and glamorizes relationships between adults and minors. Recognizing the fact that pedophiles use child pornography as a tool to seduce and desensitize children, as well as the fact that minors are affected by things they see on television, especially the sexual content, society needs to decide what needs to be done to protect the children.

136 See supra text accompanying note 28.
137 See supra text accompanying note 25
138 See supra text accompanying notes 32-36.