PS1 for 2/9/89 # Ted Bundy Convicts Pornography

The serial killer Theodore Bundy, the country's most notorious murderer, was finally executed after a decade on death row. A handsome 42-year-old former law student, he confessed to the sadistic sexual mutilations and slaying of 23 young women.

The real Ted Bundy story was given to California psychologist Dr. James Dobson, who taped an interview with Bundy in his Florida prison after it became clear that his lawyers could not get any more stays of execution. That interview is a powerful indictment of the horrendous evil of pornography.

Bundy related that he had grown up in "a wonderful home with two dedicated and loving parents, as one of five brothers and sisters, where we regularly attended church, two Christian parents who did not drink, they did not smoke, there was no gambling, no physical abuse, no fighting in the home."

But, Bundy said, as a boy of 12 or 13, he encountered "the pornography that people called soft core." He told how, with other boys, he began to seek out the more graphic, explicit and violent pornography. He told how the pornography that combines violence and sex "brings out the hatred that is just, just too terrible to describe."

Bundy said he was not blaming pornography for causing him to commit the murders; he took full responsibility for all the things he did. The important factor, he said, is "how this kind of literature contributed and helped mold and shape the kinds of violent behavior… fuels this kind of thought process… is instrumental [in] crystalizing" thoughts and desires.

Bundy explained that this didn't happen overnight. "Once you become addicted to it – and I look at this as a kind of addiction like other kinds of addiction – I would keep looking for more potent, more explicit, and more graphic kinds of materials."

He told how, in the first years when his desires for violent sex were starting to consume him, he was restrained by the very strong inhibitions against criminal behavior that had been conditioned into him in home, school, church, and neighborhood. He clearly knew that his violent behavior was wrong but, he explained, the psychological barriers against actually doing something wrong were "being tested constantly, assailed through the kind of fantasy life that was fueled largely by pornography."

Bundy refused to say that pornography "pushed" him into criminal acts; he did not duck responsibility for his crimes. But he said that "violent types of media, violent types of pornography [were] indispensable in the chain of events that led to the behavior… the assaults, the murders."

He described his "compulsion… a building up of this destructive energy" which worse down his inhibitions until he had a "brutal urge." Then, he said, "what alcohol did in conjunction with exposure to pornography is that alcohol reduced my inhibitions at the same time the fantasy life that was fueled by pornography eroded them further."

In one of the most revealing passages, Bundy said: “I was essentially a normal person. I had good friends. I led a normal life, except for this one small but very potent and very destructive segment of it that I kept very secret and close to myself and didn’t let anyone know about. And part of the shock and horro to my dear friends and family years ago when I was first arrested was there was no clue. They looked at me and they looked at the All-American boy.”

“People need to recognize,” Bundy said, “those of us who are or who have been so much influenced by violence in the media, in particular pornographic violence, are not some kind of inherent monsters. We are your sons and we are your husbands and we grew up in regular families. And pornography can reach out and snatch a kid out of any house today. It snatched me out of my home 20, 30 years ago.”

Bundy said, “I have lived in prison for a long time now, and I’ve met a lot of men who were motivated to violence just like me. And without exception, every one of them was deeply involved in pornography – without question, without exception, deeply influenced and consumed by an addiction.”

Bundy warned, “There are loose in the towns and communities people like me today whose dangerous impulses are being fueled day in, day out by violence in the media in various forms, particularly sexual violence... And what scares me, when I see what’s on cable TV, some of the movies and some of the violence in the movies that comes into homes today, the stuff that they wouldn’t show in X-rated adult theaters 30 years ago… The most graphic violence on the screen… gets to children who are unattended or unaware that they may be a Ted Bundy who has that vulnerability, that predisposition to be influenced by that kind of behavior.”

“There are forces loose in this country, particularly again this kind of violent pornography,” Bundy said. “On the one hand well-meaning decent people will condemn the behavior of a Ted Bundy while they’re walking past a magazine rack full of the very kind of things that send kids down the road to be a Ted Bundy.”

Bundy’s final warning was: “I’ll tell you there are lots of other kids playing in streets around the country today who are going to be dead tomorrow, and the next day and the next month, because other young people are reading the kinds of things and seeing the kinds of things that are available when the media took over.”