

Testimony of

Mr. Steven Takeshita

October 15, 2003

Testimony of Detective Steven Takeshita (LAPD) before
the Senate Judiciary Committee
on the
"Indecent Exposure: Oversight of DOJ's Efforts to Protect Pornography's Victims"

Good afternoon honorable ladies and gentlemen of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I am Detective Steven Takeshita and I am the Officer-In-Charge of the Pornography Unit at the Organized Crime and Vice Division of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Before I begin, I would like to thank the Honorable Committee for their invitation to provide, which I hope, will be useful testimony about the pornography industry. I am a twenty-five year veteran of the department and I have been investigating the distribution of obscenity for the past eighteen years. I have developed my expertise over the years by working with more experienced officers and by obtaining first hand experience as the undercover operative in a joint investigation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) into the nationwide distribution of obscenity.

In the 1950's, the Los Angeles Police Department formed the Pornography Unit when it became aware that the pornography industry was developing its base in the Los Angeles area. The duties of the unit were to monitor the distribution of pornographic material and to prosecute the illegal distribution of obscenity as it affected the quality of life to the citizens of Los Angeles.

During this time period the adult industry was taking advantage of the resources available in the Los Angeles area for their productions. The hopeful actors and actresses and the support personnel were all willing to participate in the industry to meet their basic financial obligations. Because of the wide variety of scenic locations and great weather both the general and adult film industries favored the Los Angeles area. They could film a mountain, desert or beach scene, all in one day, an ideal environment for filming.

The industry has progressed from the "TJ Bibles" (sexually explicit pocketbooks bought in Tijuana) and 8mm films to the DVD and Internet. The Internet has been referred to as the Wild West of the 90's. This Wild West of the 90's has progressed to the point where the average distributor on the Internet, thinks that they are immune from prosecution because of the Internet. The Internet is just a vehicle for distribution. For example, if I were telephoning a minor to entice the minor for sexual activity there would not be a difference than if I chatted on line for the sexual activity with the same minor. It is just a vehicle for the illegal activity.

This vehicle has posed new investigative methods. No longer do we respond to an advertisement in the local adult periodical to find the distributor in our backyard. Now our response maybe directed to a city across the nation or even to a foreign country. Since our investigations deal directly with a person's First Amendment Rights, all of our investigative evidence is acquired with either a Search Warrant or a consent search. No longer can we establish agency liaisons only within our own county, but now we need to network with agencies across the nation and sometimes worldwide. These liaisons are critical for our surveillances and Search Warrant endorsements.

The Los Angeles area is no longer the base of distribution for 90% of the adult product within our nation, as it was in the earlier years. The increased use of the Internet has made the distribution of obscenity a

national problem. The extreme adult product distributed now days was self-banned by the adult industry at large only ten years ago. The recent lax in federal and local prosecution of obscenity has brought forth the courage in the adult industry to produce this extreme sexually explicit product. The adult industry must produce different types of products to encourage the consumer to continue in the purchasing of their product. The tight competition for the consumer dollar has encouraged the major adult industry producers to venture to the edge of the envelope with the distribution of some of the most extreme sexual product.

We have the laws in place to protect the abuse the women endure during the filming of these extreme sexual videos. We have the laws in place to protect the exposure of this type of product to our children. We have the laws in place to create a better quality of life for our citizens. We need the assistance of the federal government to prosecute the violators of the statues that Congress have enacted to put the welfare of our communities as one of our priorities.

Most recently, the Western District of Pennsylvania, United States Attorney Mary Beth Buchanan and her staff, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) of the United States Department of Justice and the United States Postal Inspection Service have investigated and also provided assistance to our investigations into the distribution of obscenity. These entities have been very supportive and taken the lead into investigating the distribution of obscenity.

What we need to do today is for all law enforcement agencies to prosecute aggressively any violator of the distribution of obscenity within their investigative jurisdiction to the maximum penalty.

The First Amendment is listed first, because our Forefathers felt its importance. The adult industry tries to hide behind the First Amendment in the distribution of their product. The Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment does not protect obscenity.

Thank you honorable ladies and gentlemen of the Senate Judiciary Committee for providing me this opportunity to testify before you.