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February 18, 2021

Reed Hastings
CEO, Netflix
100 Winchester Circle
Los Gatos, CA 95032

RE: Netflix named to the 2021 Dirty Dozen List

Dear Mr. Hastings:

We would like to express our gratitude for the significant improvements Netflix has made in the past year to increase the safety of your users. As you know, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation named Netflix to our annual Dirty Dozen List in 2020 for producing graphic sexual content, insufficient parental controls, and deceptive app ratings on app stores. The improvements to your parental controls to now include setting pin-features to access specific profiles and modifying your rating on app stores gives much more power to adults about what content is appropriate for the youth in their life to consume. This is a necessary tool we wish didn't take so long to implement. You have set an example we hope other platforms will emulate.

Unfortunately, Netflix will remain on the 2021 Dirty Dozen List, which names 12 mainstream contributors to sexual exploitation and abuse. The 2021 Dirty Dozen List will be revealed February 23.

While improved parental controls and modified app rating have made your platform safer for children and families, there is still an abundance of content hosted and produced by Netflix that is harmful to minors and that normalizes sexual violence and the commercial sexual exploitation industry.

We ask that Netflix make the following changes:

1. Remove content that sexualizes minorsⁱ or glorifies sexual violence.
2. Stop producing and promoting sexually explicit material.

Remove content that sexualizes minors or glorifies sexual violence.

Besides the unnecessary inserting of graphic sex scenes into mainstream entertainment, Netflix has increasingly allowed harmful depictions of child sexuality or sexual exploitation.

This past year, the film *Cuties* garnered major attention from viewers and media. *Cuties* is just one of thousands of films Netflix hosts, though it is a thorough representation of the sexualization of minors that happens on your platform.

While the film and its director had the intention to portray real and lived experiences of young girls coming to terms with sexuality in a hypersexualized culture, in the pursuit of these themes, the content itself fed into a vicious cycle of the [hypersexualization of minors.](#)ⁱⁱ The film cover that Netflix employees chose was inappropriate, depicting young girls dressed in an adultified and sexualized manner, while the content of the film employed minors to take part in scripted sexual exploitation. The portrayal by a minor of the sexualization of minors is just that—the sexualization of a minor.

However simple this logic may seem, in order to create a world free from sexual exploitation, corporations including Netflix have the responsibility to stop monetizing abuse and exploitation. There are ways to show how our society negatively impacts minors without adding to the problem itself. The exploitation of young actors could likely affect them for a lifetime.

Stop producing and promoting sexually explicit material.

In the day and age of the #MeToo movement, Netflix falls far behind in its actions to support a cultural shift towards respect and dignity. Netflix original programming portrays gratuitous nudity, graphic sexual acts, and even graphic depictions of sexual assault. By doing so, you contribute to a culture of toxic sexual pressure in the media industry by producing content that requires actors to do nude scenes.

Most of Netflix's most popular and most heavily-advertised original shows are rated TV-MA (mature audiences only) frequently containing graphic sex scenes, nudity, and violence. Researchers at NCOSE recently looked into ten of the top original Netflix titles and found that nine out of ten featured graphic on-screen sex scenes.

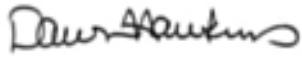
Netflix adds to the industry pressure for young actors to accept parts requiring nudity, until they have enough industry capital to negotiate their own contracts. With the imbalance of power Hollywood producers can exercise over actors, it is a thin and porous line between script-required nudity and the “requirement” to grant “sexual favors” on the producer’s casting couch. No person should be required to remove their clothes in order to get a job. Given the highly competitive nature of the media industry, and the fact that many young actors have minimal economic security, the choice to “turn down” a job can end an actor’s career before it even began.

This kind of content also has an effect on your audience. By depicting these issues so graphically it both increases the likelihood that a victim of past assault will be negatively triggered by the content, and it decreases the likelihood that viewers will thoughtfully analyze the harms of sexual exploitation. It would be easy for Netflix to portray the harms of sexual violence or lack of sexual consent without simultaneously “profiting” from a sexually objectifying and voyeuristic motif.

As the creators and guardians of Netflix you are responsible for its culture and for the impact it has on culture writ-large. You are responsible for setting the tone of its environment, for regulating that environment, and doing your utmost to ensure that it is not a forum for wide-scale sexually explicit content. In this regard, we believe you could still take a few more steps that would mitigate against the use of your platform in ways that foster and perpetuate sexual harms and puts the most vulnerable populations at even greater risk.

Netflix's mission to "entertain the world" is one that we truly support. Again, thank you for making real changes that make that mission more of a reality and taking steps to free your users from accessing entertainment without the harms of exploitation and abuse. We hope you continue this trend and implement some of our suggestions. As always, we welcome working with you and assisting you in promoting a culture of dignity on your platform.

Respectfully,



Patrick Trueman, Esq.

Dawn Hawkins

President & CEO

Senior Vice President & Executive Director

ⁱ "Netflix Must Stop Providing Platform to Film That Has Sexually Exploited Children," National Center on Sexual Exploitation press statement (August 21, 2020): <https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/statement-netflix-must-stop-providing-platform-to-film-that-has-sexually-exploited-children/>

ⁱⁱ "Netflix Promotes Sexualization of Children, Racist Stereotypes with New Film 'Cuties'" National Center on Sexual Exploitation blog (August 21, 2020): <https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/netflix-promotes-sexualization-of-children-racist-stereotypes-with-new-film-cuties/>