



Established 1962

PATRICK A. TRUEMAN, J.D. | Board Member
President

DAWN E. HAWKINS
Chief Executive Officer

BENJAMIN W. BULL, J.D.
Sr. Vice President and General Counsel

LISA L. THOMPSON
Vice President and Director of the Research Institute

HALEY C. McNAMARA
Vice President and Director, International Centre on Sexual Exploitation

ELEANOR KENNELLY GAETAN, PH.D.
Vice President and Director of Public Policy

JAKE ROBERSON
Vice President and Director of Communications

MARK CROZÉT
Vice President and Director of Development

BOARD MEMBERS

RON DEHAAS | Chairman
Founder & CEO, Covenant Eyes

DAN O'BRYANT, J.D. | Vice Chairman
Former Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University

RHONDA GRAFF | Secretary
Former Aerospace Program Manager/Industrial Engineer

KEN SUKHIA, J.D. | Treasurer
Trial and Appellate Lawyer, Sukhia Law Group, PLC

HADLEY ARKES, PH.D.
Ney Professor of Jurisprudence, Emeritus,
Amherst College

BETH COONS
Chairman, Farnsworth Companies

JOHN FOUBERT, PH.D.
Dean, College of Education, Union University

ROBERT GEORGE, PH.D.
McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence,
Princeton University

DONALD L. HILTON, M.D.
Neurosurgeon, University of Texas - San Antonio

DONNA M. HUGHES, PH.D.
Professor, Carlson Endowed Chair, University of Rhode Island

AMBASSADOR SWANEE HUNT
Chair and Founder, Hunt Alternatives;
Eleanor Roosevelt Lecturer of Public Policy,
Harvard Kennedy School of Government

MARY ANNE LAYDEN, PH.D.
Director, Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology Program,
University of Pennsylvania

MOST REVEREND PAUL S. LOVERDE
Bishop, Diocese of Arlington, VA, Retired

SHERRY NILLES
National Regent, Catholic Daughters of the Americas

KINDSEY PENTECOST
President, ItWorks! International

MARGARET RUCKS
Managing Director, Rucks Family Foundation

ALAN SEARS, ESQ.
Former President and CEO, Alliance Defending Freedom

LINNEA W. SMITH, M.D.
Retired, Psychiatrist

MELEA STEPHENS, L.P.C., M.M.F.T.
Marriage and Family Therapist

CAROLYN WEST, PH.D.
Professor of Clinical Psychology
University of Washington

March 7, 2022

Ted Sarandos and Reed Hastings
Chief Executive Officers
Netflix
100 Winchester Circle
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Re: Netflix on the 2022 Dirty Dozen List

Dear Mr. Sarandos and Mr. Hastings,

We write to inform you that the National Center on Sexual Exploitation is placing Netflix on the 2022 Dirty Dozen List, a campaign that names 12 mainstream contributors to sexual exploitation and abuse. NCOSE —a non-partisan nonprofit in Washington DC dedicated to addressing the full spectrum of sexual exploitation—is deeply concerned about the harmful content Netflix chooses to produce and host.

We recognize the great influence Netflix has on shaping culture and we call on your company to consider the great social responsibility that comes with this power.

GLORIFYING OR GRAPHICALLY DEPICTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Netflix hosts and produces egregious content which glorifies sexual violence. A prime example of this is the film *365 Days* and its promised sequels. We trust you are aware that following the release of *365 days* in 2020, a petition was launched by influencer Mikayla Zazon that rightfully condemned this movie for condoning and romanticizing sexual assault and urged Netflix to remove it.¹ The petition garnered almost 100,000 signatures. Yet not only does Netflix continue to host the film to this day, you decided to take even further responsibility for its abhorrent messages by taking over the production of a Part 2 and 3, promised to be released as Netflix originals.

Other shows on Netflix attempt to justify graphic depictions of sexual violence by claiming they are raising awareness about the horrific nature of these crimes. One example of this is the Netflix original series *13 Reasons Why*, which was criticized by many of your viewers for its extremely graphic depictions of rape and sodomy:

- “it wasn't just rape, it was a graphic assault, something NOT made for television and i dont want to hear anyone from the 13rw team say ‘its for awareness!!!!’ because it's not!! it was graphic, traumatising and violent...”
- “the thing that REALLY bugs me is that this show would have to go through 100s of people to be approved after last seasons atrocities and yet there was obviously no ‘....hm... how about we dont add in that GRAPHIC, triggering, traumatising, sodomy scene.’”
- “13 Reasons Why is trash. It is completely possible to start important conversations about suicide, mental health and sexual assault without showing graphic rape and suicide scenes.”ⁱⁱ

Although the film creators of *13 Reasons Why* and other shows like it may have had good intentions, we believe that they are misguided in their approach. By depicting these issues so graphically, not only are your viewers traumatized, but survivors of sexual violence are likely to be re-traumatized as they're reminded of their suffering. Furthermore, these graphic depictions increase the likelihood that some consumers will view the content with a voyeuristic mentality. It would be easy for Netflix producers to communicate the harms of sexual violence without simultaneously profiting from a sexually objectifying and voyeuristic motif.

NORMALIZING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND INCEST

Netflix has faced widespread criticism numerous times for hosting or producing shows that sexualize minors or normalize child sexual exploitation. For example, a 2020 petition demanding that Netflix cancel the film *Cuties* garnered over 400,000 signatures.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2018, NCOSE and 54 other anti-trafficking organizations and advocates sent a letter to Netflix urging them to halt production on the show *Baby* which depicted the real-life story of sex trafficking victims as a trivialized and empowering venture.^{iv} Yet once again, Netflix callously ignored the public's well-placed concerns, and you continue to host these egregious shows.

Furthermore, we wish to express deep concern over the Netflix original *Big Mouth*. The show is made for adults, yet it is overflowing with animated sexually explicit content depicting children, leading some to argue that the show is “the beginning of normalizing pedophilia.”^v Some of the subplots in *Big Mouth* also normalize incest and objectophilia, depicting children engaging in these acts. The character Andrew starts a sexual relationship with his cousin and offers to perform fellatio on his father. The character Maury suggests child-on-child sexual assault, saying, “Maybe we should pin him [a young boy] to the ground, jam it [Andrew's private part] in his mouth – just sheer f—king degradation.” The character Jay develops feelings for his pillow and begins regularly “having sex” with it. Although the show is made for adults, many children are watching it as well.^{vi} *Big Mouth* therefore deserves to be condemned both for how it packages sexually explicit content depicting children for the entertainment of adults, and for how it encourages children to engage in harmful sexual activity.

NORMALIZING PROSTITUTION AND DISRESPECTING SURVIVORS

Another problematic show is the 2021 Netflix original *Crime Scene: The Times Square Killer*. This is a documentary series about the criminal Richard Cottingham who confessed to having raped, mutilated, and murdered over 100 women.^{vii} In particular, Cottingham targeted prostituted women. While exploring this tragedy, Netflix normalizes the commercial sex industry and disrespects the victimized prostituted women by referring to them as “sex workers.” This choice of language contributes to the harmful narrative that prostitution is just a “normal job” – rather than sexual exploitation and an expression of gender-based violence – and that the sexual and physical violence prostituted women regularly endure at the hands of people like Cottingham is nothing but an “occupational hazard.”

Then there is the 2021 Netflix original *Madame Claude*, a biographical film about an infamous female pimp and the women she exploits. While the film communicates some truths about the violence prostituted women endure, particularly at the hands of sex buyers, it does so in a highly voyeuristic and objectifying fashion which is exploitative of the actresses and disrespectful towards the victims and survivors represented. One critic explains, “There’s a strong element of the male gaze throughout *Madame Claude*... Women are always portrayed in voyeuristic terms, their bodies magnified and put on display... In fact, it’s worth asking if the film ends up conforming to a male gaze even as it seeks to show how women are affected by the sexualization of their bodies and professions.”^{viii}

GRATUITOUS SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONTENT

Sociologists and journalists have observed a trend of increasingly graphic and frequent sexual content on Netflix. For example, sociologist Jennifer Gunsallus states, “It was always quite sexy but it does feel like there is a lot more sex now — just look at the names of shows... Netflix is blunt with using sex as a way of getting people’s attention.”^x The Sunday Times recently published an article titled *Netflix is Now Sexflix* which went into detail about just how prominent this problem is.^x

Researchers at NCOSE selected a sample of twelve popular Netflix shows and tallied the instances of sex acts and/or nudity; the total was in the thousands. By continuing to increase the amount and intensity of sexually explicit content on your platform, Netflix is fueling a culture of excessive sexual objectification and voyeurism, and increasing the risk that children will be exposed to this harmful content if their families have not implemented your parental controls. Netflix is also contributing to a culture of toxic sexual pressure and exploitation in the media industry, by requiring that actors do nude scenes in your productions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We are very grateful for improvements Netflix has made in the past in response to our requests, such as updating your parental controls. We now urge you to extend the same care and social responsibility to the type of content you host and produce. We request that Netflix halt the production of *365 Days* sequels and stop hosting and producing content which normalizes and fuels sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual objectification.

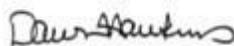
The world is waking up to the collective responsibility we all have in ensuring a world truly free from the harms of all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation, including corporations. Many companies and platforms are working to eliminate policies that have enabled sexual exploitation in their business practices, and increased attention is now on tech companies in particular to step up and choose to place people over profits. This is Netflix’s invitation to do likewise, and in so doing to assume a leadership position within the streaming sector.

We hope Netflix will rise to this challenge and meet with us to discuss ways by which it can become a corporate leader in the fight for a world free from sexual exploitation. Please contact us at public@ncose.com or at 202.393.7245.

Respectfully,



Patrick Trueman, Esq.
President



Dawn Hawkins
CEO