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**Keynote speech**

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**Audio Version of this speech.**

***Introduction:** Andrea Dworkin is the coauthor of the Minneapolis and the Indianapolis Ordinances that define pornography as a civil rights violation against women. She has been the focus of much media attention because of this issue and has appeared on national television including Donahue, The MacNeil-Lehrer Report, the CBS Evening News, and Nightwatch, as well as many, many local stations across the country. Dworkin is the author of Pornography: Men Possessing Women as well as three other books: Woman Hating, Right-wing Women, and Our Blood. A featured speaker at universities across the country and in many public forums, we welcome her to Duke University. Andrea ...[Applause]*

Thank you, thank you very much. Unfortunately, also featured in Penthouse, Hustler, and Playboy. I want to tell you first something about the range of pornography that exists in this country. What is being made right now. What is being made; what is being shown; what is being bought.

The first thing is that there are millions upon millions upon millions of pictures every year of women shown with our legs spread and our legs splayed; shown as what is called "beaver, pussy, bunny"--those are *our* genitals. The genitals are trussed up. Sometimes they are glued open. Sometimes they're tied from behind, so that they stand up. They are made up so that ... they jump out at you from the page; it is almost as if they're 3-D. This is what's supposed to be women's *natural* sexuality.

In our class--the class I taught with Catharine MacKinnon on pornography at the University of Minnesota Law School--one of our students came up with an idea. She thought it would be very interesting to have a "Porn Freeze." Just simply, "Okay, you guys, you've got millions and millions and millions and millions and millions and millions of pictures of women with legs open. Let's set a date and from that point on you don't make any more." Well, we knew that this violated the basic constitutional protections of citizens of this country.

Then somebody had the audacity to suggest a build down--*one picture a year torn up*. We also knew that that violated the basic constitutional protections of our country.

Understand the magnitude of what we are talking about. The essential problem in here is: why? I can't answer that question--but why? Why isn't a million enough? Why aren't 2 million enough? Why aren't 5 million enough? Why aren't 10 million enough? Why are there never enough pictures of women with our legs spread and our genitals exposed?

There are also every year in this country millions upon millions upon millions of pictures made of women in postures of submission and access. And the access is to our vaginas, to our

anus, and to our throats. And what the pictures show is a willingness to be penetrated by that anomalous viewer, an invitation to all male citizens to penetrate. Lesbian scenes in pornography are very much a part of this display of women's bodies, so that whenever you see scenes of lesbians, the fact of the matter is what you are being shown are two women engaging in foreplay in such a way that parts of their body are available to a male for penetration.

The pornography that's being made in this country right now is primarily--as pornography has always classically been--about forced sex. It's about rape. It's about pain. It's about humiliation.

There are two scenarios on which virtually all pornography is based. And that is in one, there is a woman who is going through the course of her life doing something or other; it helps if she is a little bit upscale, because there is a hell of a lot more pleasure in bringing her down. And somewhere in the course of her life somebody grabs her. A man grabs her and he rapes her and maybe some other men come along and they rape her and maybe some women help out raping her and they tie her up and they hurt her and they put things up her vagina. And somewhere in the course of this, she discovers that she is having a wonderful time and she starts asking to be hurt more and to be brutalized more.

And in the second scenario, she already knows that she likes being hurt. And so the whole first part is just skipped and we start out with a woman who is saying "Hurt me, do this to me, I like it" with a big smile on her face.

A lot of pornography, film pornography, photographic pornography, is real rapes. Women are really being forced into sex that they don't want to have. And in addition, rapes that are filmed--women not in pornography, women in real life who are raped and the rapes are filmed--those films are also on the pornography market, now, in this country.

Pornography being made now uses women to be penetrated by animals and by objects. The animals are most often dogs, snakelike things, snakes, eels. The objects are dildos, sometimes spiked, but also knives--common household objects: knives, telephones, so-called pistol hairdryers.

In the pornography being made now in this country, women are urinated on and defecated on. Women and girls are used interchangeably, so that women, adult women--that means legally over the age of whatever the legal age is--are dressed to look like five- or six-year-old girls, surrounded by toys, put in a child's bedroom, presented for anal penetration.

There is also a whole group of pornography magazines that show women--usually blond women, because blond is objectified to be childlike--with shaved pubes.

Pornography is a major vehicle for sexualizing racism in this country right now. Pornography presents racial hatred as sexual delight. And every injustice that people have historically suffered is used as a form of sexual pleasure for them--for the victims of the injustice! So that we have books about black women called *Plantation of Pain* in which slavery is an institution of sexual pleasure for the black women who are slaves. We have in pornography consistently the skin of black women being sexualized--so that it's treated as if it's a sexual organ; it's treated as if it's genitals--and all of the sexual hatred, all of the humiliation, all of the pain is directed against the skin of the black woman.

The pornography that uses Asian women that is being sold in this country right now is the most brutal pornography on the market. It begins with women hanging from trees, hanging in doorways, being strung up in all sorts of ways. It comes from an international trade in Asian women. The brothels in this country are filled with Asian women who have been sold into them. They don't exist as recognizable human beings in the pornography. They have never in their lives existed as anything other than commodities to be sold to create this kind of sexual pleasure.

Pornography is also a major vehicle of anti-Semitism. And there is a lot of concentration camp pornography. "I was a Gestapo sex slave." It says: "I woke up one morning and I walked to Auschwitz and I knocked on the door and I asked please could I come in. And Herr Himmler, who was busy with somebody else, made some room for me on the table, and he said, 'Little Jewish girl, now I'm going to do this and this and this and this to you.' " And all the atrocities that happened at Auschwitz and in other camps are then presented as the will, the desire, and the pleasure of the Jewish woman.

The pornography that is being created right now presents the humiliation of woman as sexual pleasure for women.

It uses disabilities of women as a sexual turn-on; women without legs, as a sexual fetish. The maiming of women is frequently the way women with disabilities are presented. It ties in with the pornography that is being created and enjoyed in this country right now in which women are simply tortured. Torture: that thing that we recognize when it happens to real people--men in prisons--happens to women in the United States to create entertainment.

Pornography that is being created and enjoyed right now also includes murder. Snuff films *are* being made. Snuff films *were* being made. They do exist. They do end with the disemboweling of a woman, and a man having an orgasm over her disembowelment.

Now that is just what is in the pornography. What is the range of abuse associated with the pornography?--because, see, what is in the pornography isn't enough. We don't have a case if we say what is in the pornography, because "So what?"--that is the posture of this country on the reality of what I have just described. So now, separate from what is in the pornography, what is the abuse? Well, first of all, it should be obvious, but apparently it isn't: all of the above is the abuse because it is happening to real women--the women in the pornography. This is really being done--dare I say it to *people*? no, not to people--to *women*. Scientifically of the same species!

The women in pornography: why are they there? Did a child say at the age of three, "Mommy, when I grow up what I want more than anything in the world is to be hung like a piece of meat by Bob Guccione in New York City!""? You have to believe that to look at these slides and say the women are there because they want to be.

Now we have learned a lot about who the women in pornography are. And that is because a lot of the women who ... have been in pornography and have escaped are part of the feminist anti-pornography movement. And a lot of the information comes from them. There have also been studies done. And the studies show that 70 to 75 percent of the women in the sex industry are incest victims; that they run away from home; that they get picked up by pimps; that they get used in pornography and prostitution; that the pornography is used to keep them in prostitution as well as to get them into it.

Another reason women are in pornography is that women are poor. Poverty is a real thing. The women in pornography for the most part are not women who said: "Will I be a neurosurgeon or will I be in snuff?" Those were not their choices; they are the poor and dispossessed of this society.

Women are also in pornography because women are raped. Women are raped by pimps getting them into prostitution and pornography. And women who are raped--increasingly, the rapes are being photographed. Rape crisis centers have given us this information over a period of the last eight years. The photographs of the rapes are on the commercial pornography market. They are protected speech. The position of the ACLU is that you can get the rapist for the rape but you cannot touch the photograph. Think of the woman's life.

Pornography is used against women in prostitution by clients. There's a tremendous amount of information that prostitution has become incredibly more brutal and dangerous for women who are in it, because johns come and they want to do what they see in the pornography.

Pornography is used as a textbook for rape by rapists. It is used in gang rape. It is used in marital rape--such that battered women's centers are seeing women who have been tied up by their husbands and raped by animals, raped by dogs: a kind of sadistic brutalization that comes directly out of the pornography.

There is, for instance, an increase in this country in the incidences of throat rape since the distribution of *Deep Throat*, but also throat rape is a major theme in pornography. Now, we are not talking about women having oral sex with men. We are talking about deep thrusting into the throat and women showing up in emergency rooms: some of them dead.

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Pornography is used in job harassment--especially women who are working in nontraditional fields but also working-class women: waitresses and so on. Their environments are made poison with the pornography, which frequently goes hand in hand with actual physical assault as a form of intimidation to get them off the job.

We are seeing pornography used as a form of harassment in education. Pornography is used to create compliance and terror in the home. I remind you that it is a fact that the home is the most dangerous place in this country for a woman--that a woman is more likely to be beaten in her home, raped in her home, or killed in her home than anyplace else. And it is more likely that the person who does those things to her is going to be somebody who lives in that home with her than anyone else.

Pornography is used to create fear and vulnerability on the streets of this country, so that there are neighborhoods that women who don't live there won't go into, and the women who do live in those neighborhoods--usually poor and working-class neighborhoods, frequently black neighborhoods--the quality of their lives is turned into a nightmare of sexual harassment and sexual threat by the men who come to their neighborhoods to get the pornography and to get the women that the pornography promises them.

Pornography is a central part in the serial murder phenomenon. We are pleased that the FBI has discovered it at last; they estimate that there are thousands of men roaming this country simply killing woman after woman after woman after woman. Those men take pictures of the women; those men read pornography. Ted Bundy has talked about the role of pornography in the reasons that he committed the murders that he did; the ways he stalked women; the ways

in which he thought about women. The pornography is found in the homes of the murderers. Pornography is associated with [Charles] Manson; it is associated with the Son of Sam killer; it is associated with Richard Speck.

The reality now for women in this country is that if you film any act of humiliation or torture and if the victim is a woman, the act is sex and the film is both entertainment and protected speech.

But the social question remains: Is pornography harmful? See, because all of that can be true, and there's still this social question, because we are talking about women. All of these things are being done to women. So we say, well, look at the picture, see the picture, see the woman, see her hanging from a meat hook. See, that is a woman: she is a human being, and she is hanging from a meat hook. See, that's the harm. And people say: "That's not harm--she's there because she wants to be." Well, it is harm, actually, even if she is there because she wants to be. Do you know that there are laws in this country that say that you can't consent to violence against you? These are the little nuances of civilization. But her picture isn't proof that pornography causes harm.

I will tell you what the proof is that the society accepts in a descending order of importance. The society says: "Show us that pornography impacts on men, and we will consider that perhaps pornography causes harm." And thus the experimental research that you heard about here earlier today becomes a crucial part of our poor, pathetic efforts to prove that something bad is happening here. Because experimental scientists take a bunch of college men who are normal--and that means that they're less hostile in fact than is normal; they are tested for it--and show them pornography and see if it has any effect on them. And if it has an effect on them, it has an effect. See, then, it is socially real. It means something. We have to perhaps consider doing something about it.

We are very lucky because there is an effect on 18- to 22-year-old boys--who haven't quite grown up yet and reached imperviousness to women's pain--that is measurable. And as a result we can point to a body of research and say: See, there's an effect. And we do because we have to.

There are social studies. In social studies you take a population of live people and you ask them what happened to them. And there are ways of doing it that the society recognizes as being objective. We have social studies that show that about 10 percent of women in the population have at one time or another been forced or had pressure put on them to do acts that they did not want to do because of their husband's or lover's use of pornography, including anal intercourse, branding--I mean acts like that.

We have social studies evidence about the use of pornography in medical schools to desensitize future doctors to what is called sex but to what is the abuse of women, because they encounter it a lot. And they're not supposed to be judgmental. And the reason that medical schools use pornography to desensitize them is that it works.

We have--and now we are getting lower on the scale of important evidence--clinical evidence. That means people who are psychologists or therapists who talk to victims. Now, it is because of their proximity with the people who have been hurt that their evidence isn't worth as much. Nevertheless, in Minneapolis--which has a whole lot of therapists per capita--they came out to talk about the use of pornography against victims of sexual abuse and the use of pornography

by sex offenders and in fact asked the city council: why hasn't anyone ever asked us this before? It was pervasive; pornography was found as a causal agent in all kinds of sex abuse--admittedly so by offenders who said that they used pornography to determine what their crimes were going to be.

Now, at the very bottom of the proof are the women to whom it happens. The reason that the feminist movement is never quite in sync with this society is that that for us is the top of the proof, not the bottom of the proof. Nevertheless, the testimony of women, the women who have been victimized, is staggering. And what it shows is that in all the situations where women experience battery, rape, incest, being forced into prostitution, in the testimony of the women to whom it's happened--there are massive numbers of them, and the pornography was right at the center of what happened to them, and they have never been able to tell anyone because they've been ridiculed to death. Remember what it was like to get people to try to understand that rape was a real thing that wasn't fun. Well, it's very hard again to get people to understand it. But try being a woman who has been consistently abused over a period of time because of the pornography that her husband uses, and try to get anybody to believe you.

Another piece of proof is that some armies use pornography to increase aggression in their troops. The British Army used it in the Falklands. They used it because it works. I call this empirical evidence. And they use it in Ireland. In Ireland, Irish women report that they are taken off the streets in the last couple of years by the British occupying army and urinated on and then let go. Other acts like that--forms of harassment that they have never experienced before. In Ireland and in other places, when people do these things to people, they have political reasons. In this country, it's fun.

Pornography is an entertainment industry: 8 billion dollars a year worth. Three to four times the number of McDonald's restaurants--that's how many adult bookstores there are in this country. Now, political people on the left are supposed to recognize money as having some political importance. Theoretically, when a small group of profiteers is making a fortune off of the exploitation of a whole lot of powerless people, that's supposed to be a political issue. So why isn't it a political issue even in those terms when we are talking about a trade in women?

There are two reasons for that: the first reason is that this trade in women is supposed to be an expression of *our* natures. This isn't an issue of a bunch of pimps making money off of our exploitation; this is us realizing our dreams.

The second reason is that if you are going to talk about money and its impact on the subordination of women, you are also going to have to talk about sex as exploitation. And if there is one thing political people in this country don't want to do, it's to talk about that. Because the way in which women are oppressed has to do with the nexus of sex and money and the ways in which our bodies are bartered and sold. We are controlled through money and through sex, and the subordination of women is achieved through money and through sex.

Now, people have said since the writing of the Minneapolis law, suddenly, that they don't know what *subordination* means. They just for the life of them can't figure out what that word means. And that's a real, you know, big word suddenly. The direct translation is: putting down. It's not good statutory language, but that's what it means. What it consists of as a dynamic, I think, is, basically, it has four parts. The first part is that there is a hierarchy. Somebody is on top and somebody is on the bottom. For women this is a very intimate reality.

We know who is on top and who is on the bottom. We don't need to be political science majors to understand what hierarchy is, because it is a visceral, intimate, sexual reality: it is both private and public.

The second element of subordination is objectification, and that is when you take a person and you make them less than human. You turn them into a thing. And that *hurts* them. That's not alright! That robs them of a human status both in private and in public.

The third element of subordination is submission, because if you take somebody and you put them at the bottom of a hierarchy and you turn them into an object, you better believe that their survival depends on taking orders. And oppressed people are known not only for complying but anticipating orders, because to the extent that you anticipate what is going to be demanded of you, you are safer. The smarter you are in knowing what the person on top wants, the better chance you have of surviving if you don't have any real power.

The fourth element of subordination is violence. That means the overt violence. You know: I punch you; I hit you; I stick something up an orifice of yours. That's violence. When you have a society in which violence against a class of people is *normal*, then you already have hierarchy and objectification and submission in place.

Now, the thing that makes women's oppression distinctive--because we can isolate all these elements in relation, for instance, to racism, to racist pogroms, to racist social organizations; they are very much the elements of racist subordination in a racist society--but what is unique to the situation of women is that the vehicle of subordination is sex. That is what drives everybody crazy, and that is what everybody is freaked out about.

And what we're saying is that pornography in particular sexualizes these elements of subordination: it makes them into sexual things for whole vast numbers of men who are the dominant class. It takes hierarchy and it turns it into a sexual pleasure. It turns it into part of people's sexual desire. That means, then, that the imposing of hierarchy becomes in and of itself an act that is full of sexual meaning. It's sexually dynamic; people want to do it. They want to do it because it gives them sexual pleasure. And pornography is what makes it sexual. It is the material means of making it sexual. Pornography in its total impact sexualizes inequality. What that means is that the inequality of women becomes sexually necessary. It becomes essential to sexual desire and to how sexual pleasure is actually experienced by vast numbers of people. Pornography functions in this society as a private terrorism. That is one way it functions in people's homes, where a man's home is his castle. His castle.

Now, the function of obscenity law--and I want you to think about how smart obscenity law has been in serving to keep women suppressed from seeking our rights--a function of obscenity law is to keep pornography private, to keep it out of the public domain so that women and children can't see it. So that we don't see where all the nerves of male sexual supremacy come together. So that we don't see what men think of us and what they in fact want to do to us. So that what they do do to us we experience as being entirely private, entirely personal. No matter how many other women on the block are experiencing marital rape, we don't know that we are not responsible for it. And obscenity law, as a right-wing strategy to keep women unequal in society, is very smart. It has kept pornography from us. That's what it is intended to do.

Now, in our society, pornography has also become a form of public terrorism. We walk down the street and we avert our eyes: there are stores we do not go into. The stores that we do go into, we know we are second-class citizens.

The right warned the left not to make pornography public. The right is very smart about power. The right said, "You don't show that stuff to women and children. You don't let them see that."

Obscenity law only impacts on pornography at the point when it becomes public. Obscenity laws are criminal laws. That means the police deal with whatever the state is going to say is obscene. That means it has to be public before the police can deal with it. You can use it in your own home against your own wife. You can use it against prostitutes. You can do whatever the hell you want with it as long as you don't make the mistake that the left made in making pornography public. Because what happened is that we saw it. And we started understanding something about how all those acts of sexual abuse came together. About what their meaning was. About how they're not accidents. How they're not just personal aberrations; they are political; they are part of a plan.

The boys on the left counted on the saturation of society with pornography to create a sufficient degree of public terrorism that we would be afraid to do anything about what they're doing to us. The public saturation of the society with pornography is designed to create social subordination and social silence of women on the sexual-political issues of sexual oppression.

The so-called speech of women in pornography is silence--and splayed legs are silence. Being beaver and pussy and bunny and pets and cunts--that is an operational definition of silence. "Hurt me, and give it to me harder, and hurt me more " is silence. And those who think that it is speech have never heard a woman's voice, not once, not ever.

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And even the screams of the women tortured are silence--and men pay and they watch and have a good time. But no one hears a human scream. That is what it means to be born female. No one hears a human scream.

Now, I will tell you what censorship is. Censorship is when one half of humanity is censored out of self-determined speech: the political process, the arts, the sciences, philosophy, theology, the state legislature, you name it. And laws are understood and applied to further the exploitation of those people who have been silenced. That silence is guarded and guaranteed by force, and it is state policy.

Some people say, "Well, it may be true that women aren't in all those places, but we can't draw any conclusions from that about women not having rights of speech, because we have something called the first amendment."

The first amendment was written by a bunch of men. White men, some of whom owned slaves, many more of whom owned women; and it is first, it is fundamental in this system that excluded women and black people for so long and still. It is first because there were no two things more connected when the first amendment was written than literacy and property. People who owned property were the literate people in this country, and it was their rights that were being protected. The first amendment was never used to challenge slavery. There were laws throughout the slave-owning South against teaching slaves to read and write. That was state policy. Nobody ever tried to use it. "Okay," you say, "of course not."

Segregation--the first amendment was never used to challenge segregation. Segregation was about reading and writing, literacy, speaking, freedom of association, even freedom of religion: right to have access to churches.

The first amendment protects the interests of those who have power. People in this society who have power have speech. Speech costs money....

And the first amendment doesn't entitle anyone to access to freedom of speech. Not anyone. You don't go to the government and say: "I have first amendment rights to speech but I'm poor. Would you give me some money so I could exercise them?" The government will tell you to drop dead. Nobody gives you money. The first amendment does not say that you have an affirmative right to learn to read and write--so that huge numbers of people in this country can be kept illiterate. Doesn't violate their first amendment rights at all, not as the first amendment is understood. Certainly not as it is understood by the people who defend pornographers.

The politics of the first amendment has been that them that's got shall get. And the people who don't have money to buy speech can drop dead and do and do. The first amendment is not an equality law. And there is no body of legal reality in this country that says that people have rights of access.

The way the first amendment is being used is to empower pimps. Pornographers are pimps: they sell women.

And what we are being sold is that pimps are symbols of freedom and that we protect our freedom when we protect the freedom of a pimp.

There is a civil liberties arithmetic of rights which gives me a dizzying case of math anxiety from which I may not ever recover.

[Applause]We are supposed to believe that the more speech that *they* have, the more speech *we* have. But their speech is our subservience. Their speech is our inequality. Their speech is our exploitation and our pain and our injury. And in fact, our bodies are their language. We are their words. We are their sentences. They can't exercise their rights of speech unless we don't have rights at all.

Now, why pornography is a civil rights issue is that pornography is absolutely antagonistic to the equality of women. That it sexualizes inequality and makes it necessary, sexually necessary, to people. That it turns women into subhuman creatures. That it is the systematic exploitation of a group of people because of a condition of birth. That it is the suppression of women through sexual exploitation and abuse, so that we have no means to achieve civil equality.

I say that the first amendment is fundamental to this system. It is. I want you to remember that civil rights law is not fundamental to this system. And I want you to remember that, in fact, it is 20 years old, and it is stuck onto this system of law with spit and a prayer, and anybody blows too hard and it is gone. We can't say, "Well, Madison wrote the first amendment. We stand on the brilliance of the founding fathers." It is not true. It's not true. We don't even know that they would think we have any right to equality at all.

I want to remind you the reason that sex discrimination is even a part of the Civil Rights Law of 1964 is a racist southern senator, when he saw that the legislation was going to pass, amended it to include sex discrimination as the greatest insult he could think of to the idea of civil rights and civil equality between blacks and whites. "What is that like?" he said; "It is like the idea that men and women are equal. Ha ha ha. Look, you fools." And the Senate was humiliated to be ridiculed in that way, but they passed the civil rights law with his amendment because they couldn't get rid of his amendment. And that is the only reason we have any standing at all in this system of law.

Now, last night I heard some discussion in which some feminists were talking about how laws never change anything. I want to say that that upset me a lot. I haven't thought of a nice way to say this, so I will just say it outright: Laws changed something here. Laws changed the American system of apartheid in this state. And I don't want to hear from feminists in North Carolina that laws cannot ever make a difference.

[Applause]

Now, the civil rights law that Catharine MacKinnon and I drafted is an amendment to the Minneapolis Human Rights Ordinance that is modeled on the 1964 federal civil rights statute. What it does are these things:

It defines pornography as a form of sex discrimination, as "the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women in pictures or words" that also includes one or more of a whole series of characteristics, many of which you saw here today. It ranges from women being dehumanized by being presented as objects, things, or commodities; through women being raped and showing pleasure in rape; through women being presented as humiliated and humiliation as an act of sex; through the dismemberment and maiming of women, the use of women as body parts, the torture of women.

It covers the actual pornography industry as it exists in this country. That is what the definition is. It is concrete. It is clear. It is specific.

It has four parts. That means there are four things that are actionable under this law. Now, let me tell you first: this is a civil law. It is not a criminal law. No police can make arrests. Not under this law. If somebody arrests you and they tell you it has to do with this law, they're lying. It doesn't have to do with this law, aside from the fact that this law isn't in operation anywhere right now. There is no possibility for police to make an arrest under this law. It is a civil action brought by a person who claims to have been hurt by pornography.

The injuries of pornography under the law are these:

The first one is trafficking, and what that means is that people who make, sell, exhibit, or distribute pornography are trafficking in discrimination against women. It rests on what is the most controversial part of all this: that pornography creates sexual abuse and sexual discrimination and as such it injures all women.

The second part of the law under which somebody can bring a suit is that any person who has been coerced into pornography can bring a suit and get the pornography off the goddamn market. It would no longer be protected speech. It would be part of the rape that happened to her, part of the damage that has been done to her. And she could also get money damages.

The third part of the law is called forcing pornography on a person. It says that if you force pornography on a person in their home, in their place of business, in their place of education, or in public, you are violating their civil rights. You can't do it. And they can sue you for doing it. They can't, under this part of the law, sue the pornographers; but they can sue an institution, for instance, that allows pornography to be forced on people as a part of its institutional life.

The fourth part of the law is assault or injury, physical injury, due to a specific piece of pornography. There are women who are raped by a man who holds up a picture and says: "Do this, bitch. Open your mouth this much, bitch Do it this way"; who reads the pornography to learn how to tie the knots. Anybody to whom that has happened can sue under this law and they can sue the pornographers, too.

I will tell you what is wrong with this law. What it does is that it puts the burden on the victim: that she has to sue, she has to pay for it, she has to bear the indignity of public exposure, and she in most cases has to sue organized crime.

I have been told that this law is protectionist. I would like to know how. There is a special standard of trivialization for anything that has to do with women's rights. We're not supposed to actually be able to change anything. We are allowed to say bad things are being done to us and we don't like them. We are allowed to deplore how bad those things are. We are allowed to feel pain. We are allowed to cry. We are allowed to feel angry. Goddammit, we are not allowed to change it!

Now, this law is a modest, meek, almost feminine effort. It is so polite. It says: "You boys, you make your pornography. We recognize your rights." It says, "You do what you want. The people you hurt are going to sue you after you hurt them." Now, that's not good enough, but it's something. It's something.

[Now, I've been hearing since I got down here some stuff about the Equal Rights Amendment hasn't even passed. Why are we messing around with this? This is an alliance with the right. I want to say that we've been accused of being allied with the right not because of this legislation but since the very beginning of feminist work against pornography-- the first demonstration in 1970; everything we've ever done including our demonstrations against *Snuff*; every thing, every time. We don't have any of the benefits of this alliance. We don't have money. We don't have power. We don't have any of it.

In New York State, where I live, a liberal state, the Equal Rights Amendment was voted down: we don't have a state Equal Rights Amendment.

The point that I want to make to you is that in a country where men buy 8 billion dollars a year worth of inequality and it's orgasmic, it's time for feminists to understand that there is a deep commitment to inequality in this country. The way that you change it is that you fight the institutions that are putting the pleasure into putting women down. People are constantly trying to sidetrack us and railroad us by suggesting that something else is more important. We are always concerned about the rights of all kinds of other people and so we always listen.

The reality is that if we don't fight the pornography industry and beat them, I want to tell you that our struggle for equality is a very big and very terrible joke. I also want to say that no country can protect torture as speech and flock to see it as entertainment and talk about civil

liberties to me. I do not agree to find the definition of my rights and my freedoms in any such arrangement of power. If there is a right to equality, pornography not only violates it; it actively destroys it by destroying women, by destroying our ability to function in a society that even recognizes us as human beings. Now, either we stand up and something moves to accommodate our full equality or we stand up and everything breaks by staying right where it is. Frankly, I am prepared for either eventuality. And the one thing that I know for certain is that either way everything stays the same unless we are the ones who stand up!

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

I will answer questions later at the panel. Thank you very much. Thank you very much and thank you for the honor that you've given me.

[Applause]

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