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The NCRJ Responds to New York Times Article, "The Price of a Stolen Childhood"

The article was published in the *New York Times Magazine* on January, 27th, 2013.

NCRJ President Michael R. Snedeker responds:

Dear *New York Times Magazine* Editor:

In "The Price of a Stolen Childhood" (NYT Mag, 1/24/2013), Emily Bazelon wrote about the appalling sexual abuse of two young girls and its use in widely distributed child pornography. The primary question raised by the article is whether people who downloaded this pornography should pay restitution to the now-adult victims. The National Center for Reason and Justice (www.ncrj.org) frequently hears from young men caught with child porn they downloaded from the Internet. Many claim to have done so inadvertently along with adult porn. Yes, they broke the law. But most have no money, have no previous criminal record, and have never molested a child. They will serve years in prison and will be labeled sex offenders forevermore.

Bazelon should have been more critical of the suggestion that deep-pocket defendants get shorter prison terms in exchange for paying restitution to child porn victims. It would be unfair to lock up poor men longer than richer men because they could not afford "restitution." A better solution would be to do real research into the damage these crimes actually work on victims—victims not yet on the merry-go-round of questionable therapy and big-bucks restitution—and then adjust the punishment accordingly and equitably. As Bazelon points out, that research does not yet exist.

What we do know is that obsessive attention paid to victims can paradoxically make their feelings of trauma worse, or even cause them in the first place. Joyanna Silberg, the therapist of one young woman in the story, is notorious for advocating the debunked myth of satanic ritual child abuse and promoting the idea that many victims didn't remember the crimes because they "dissociated" while being abused. Let us not give such pseudoscientific, dangerous therapists another gravy train.

Yours,

Mike Snedeker

President

National Center for Reason and Justice

Posted by [rbchatelle](#) on Sunday, January 27th, 2013 @ 6:56PM

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