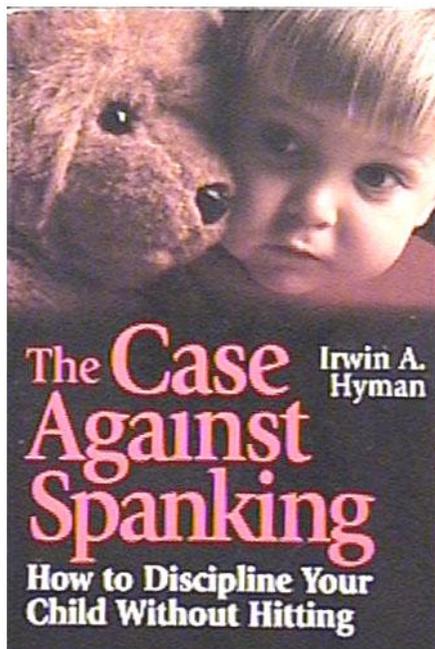


The Case Against Spanking
Irwin Hyman



My first meeting with Irwin Hyman was very disappointing. It was while I was a guest on the Montel Williams television show that Mr. Hyman's disdain with my opinion became most evident. Hyman had plenty of time to proclaim his anti-spanking rhetoric to the viewing audience. When I got my turn to quote statistics that indicate the elimination of spanking is causing problems with our youth, I was rudely interrupted and drowned out by a man who was obviously upset that I would question his theory. Hyman was quick to question the results of my "research," attempting to convince the audience that I was just a "policeman." He continued his assault on my credentials after the show was over, making loud comments in the lobby like "Where did that man say he got his doctorate?" Much like Straus, Irwin Hyman doesn't like anyone saying that spanking has any positive effects on children. In fact, he despises it.

It was the constant references to research done by Irwin Hyman by the NSA that prompted me to look for some of his material in the bookstore. In order to report on what the non-spanking bunch represents, I have to read their material. So I purchased Hyman's most controversial book, *The Case Against Spanking*. Reading Hyman's book did more to raise my blood pressure than any of the other non-spanking rhetoric I had read so far. Hyman is the director of the National Center of the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives. In much the same manner, I could call my police department the National Center of the Study of Spanking as a Positive Form of Discipline. In fact, I like the sound of that title.

On the front cover of the book, there is a picture of an adorable little boy hugging his teddy bear. This of course, conveys the thought that to strike this small, cute, cuddly little creature would be barbaric. Hyman certainly wouldn't want a picture of a thirteen-year-old kid with a sneer on his face, spitting at his mother while he makes obscene sign language with his hand. On the back of his book, he is referred to as "an expert in the field of home and school discipline." If you look on the back of my first book, *No Fear*, you will see that I am referred to as "an authority on

juvenile offenders and corporal punishment.” Since Hyman’s viewpoint on spanking is totally opposite to my viewpoint, it can only mean one thing. One of us is dead wrong!

I have always contended that a lot of what is proclaimed by the NSA is simply made up. There are many lies on the Internet and in books written by the anti-spanking bunch that, unless you are aware of the actual facts, are very believable. I would encourage those of you who are skeptical of some of the statistics and claims made by either the NSA or myself to check it out.

Much of the information published by the NSA is designed to scare parents into eliminating spanking from their discipline plan. You can place Hyman right up there at the top when it comes to scare tactics and false claims. Take for instance his statement in chapter two titled *Abuse or Discipline*. Hyman makes a claim that can very easily be disproved with a little research. He states,

In Sweden where corporal punishment was banned in 1979, assessments made in 1981 and 1988 indicated dramatic reductions in the use of physical punishment, parental commitment to its use, and numbers of cases of child abuse.

Irwin Hyman repeated this misinformation to Montel Williams when we were both guests of the show. Since I was prepared with information that unequivocally contradicted what Hyman was telling the viewing audience, I was anxious for my turn to state the cold, hard facts that eliminating spanking actually increases the rate of child abuse. Unfortunately, when it was my turn to talk to Montel and the audience, Hyman’s constant interruptions and rude behavior made it impossible to get my point across. It was an opportunity that I was sorry to have missed.

But I get my chance right here. In the April 13 1998 issue of the U.S. News and World Report is an article titled “When to Spank.” The article states, “Sweden, often cited as a test case, hasn’t borne out the spanking prohibitionists’ fears either. After Sweden outlawed spanking by parents in 1979, reports of serious child abuse actually increased by more than 400 percent over 10 years.” Here is a statistic that most anti-spanking promoters would like to ignore. It is evident that Hyman not only ignores it, he has decided to state something completely different.

And then there are the studies that I am sure Hyman has read that indicate child abuse increases when corporal punishment is reduced. John S. Lyons of the University of Northwestern Medical School released a study titled *Where is Evidence That Non-Abusive Corporal Punishment Increases Aggression?* The study specifically addresses whether the Swedish law against spanking has had any positive results. Wonders of all wonders, the complete opposite is true. According to this study (available on the Internet at <http://people.biola.edu/faculty/paulp/sweden.html>), the criminalization of spanking children in Sweden has not only INCREASED the rate of SERIOUS child abuse by over 400 percent, the kids are also becoming more aggressive. The report reads “The most relevant studies we have obtained from Sweden are police-record trends in physical abuse of children under 7 years of age (Wittrock, 1992, 1995). These records showed a 489% increase in the child abuse rate from 1981 to 1994. The same police records also indicated a 672% increase in assaults by minors against minors (under 15 in Sweden) from 1981 to 1994.”

Does this study indicate that perhaps children who are never spanked become more aggressive? It would certainly appear that way. This same publication quotes an unpublished field study conducted by Professor Adrienne Haeuser, the co-founder of EPOCH-USA, an

organization advocating the banning of all corporal punishment in the United States. Mind you, this person who is trying to outlaw spanking actually reports that during her trips to Sweden in 1981 and 1988, she “observed toddlers and young children often hitting their parents.” It’s no wonder that her findings are “unpublished.” The entire non-spanking bunch is trying desperately to cover up these facts.

Hyman spews forth a lot of theory in his book. He even implies that World War II was caused by spanking children (more on this later). Again, we are made to believe that children are born good, and what we do as parents destroys them. It is apparent that Hyman is a humanist. He writes,

While some would say that children are inherently bad, and that adults have a natural urge to hit children, it is just not true. Attitudes of punitiveness toward children are developed in our own childhoods. These attitudes are shaped by our parents’ practices, by our religious beliefs, by national identity, and even by the region in which we live. Despite the powerful effects of modeling, there is convincing research evidence that teachers and parents can break old habits.

If we relied in other areas of life on the kinds of nonsensical assumptions used to support corporal punishment, we would still be using leeches to cure diseases and burning witches at the stake.

Hyman believes that children are inherently good. We have shown in previous chapters how the NSA does not believe in the sinful nature of man. It is impossible to effectively debate this man on the subject of sin if he doesn’t believe the Bible. You may as well argue with a wall. Hyman also refers to any research that shows that corporal punishment is a necessary element in child rearing as “nonsensical assumptions.” The conclusions I have reached during my nineteen years on the police department are not “nonsensical assumptions.” Juvenile crime is on the increase even though parents are spanking their children less. The crime of domestic violence, child attacking parent, has increased by almost 350 percent in the last twenty years. In my city, less than two percent of those children arrested for physically assaulting their parents were raised with any form of corporal punishment. Is this a “nonsensical assumption?” Webster’s Thesaurus lists the term “theory” as synonymous with “a doctrine, guess, presupposition, assumption, or speculation.” I would contend that Hyman’s “theory” that spanking children makes them antisocial and violent is a simple “assumption.” And he is wrong.

Hyman must have been a fan of the Mork and Mindy television show. The reason I mention this is because he has titled chapter one *An Alien Point of View*. He then asks his readers if they remember the popular sitcom Mork and Mindy. I’m not sure why Hyman then concocts a fictionalized episode of a fictionalized character. If Mork never spoke about disciplining kids, I would have no trouble finding a television show that does discuss it in a negative manner. Whatever his reason, the following is a portion of this fictionalized program as written by Hyman. He writes,

In this sitcom, Mork is an alien who reports back to his superiors each week about the human condition. To my knowledge, he never spoke about disciplining kids. If he did, or in fact if any alien anthropologist were to describe the ritual we call

spanking, it might sound something like this:

MORK: Nan-noo nan-noo, Mork calling Orson, come in Orson.

ORSON: Yes, Mork, what new and striking information do you have to report about the earthlings?

MORK: Well, after being here several months, I realize that I have been behind in noticing a peculiar child rearing ritual that was smack right in front of me. It's a really strange ritual that many American earthlings perform with their children. They actually hit their own offspring. Not only that, they let strangers, called teachers, hit them with wooden paddles. The ritual includes verbalizations by the spankers like "this will hurt me more than you," "I am doing this for your own good," "when you grow up you will thank me for hitting you," and "I am hitting you because I love you."

These statements are filled with concepts that earth people might call paradoxes, oxymorons, or hypocrisy. I have often watched public spanking rituals at the institutions where parents purchase food, called supermarkets.

Hyman then explains through Mork how frustrating it is for a parent to shop with their children constantly grabbing merchandise and whining about things they want. He refers to this as the "first part of the ritual." The second part of the "ritual" is the checkout line.

After having endured the first part of the ritual without gain, the children are frustrated and angry. Here is a typical scenario:

Kid: "I want that."

Parent: "No, Jimmy, you can't have it."

Kid: "I want it."

Parent: "I said, you can't have it. I will give you some of that kind of candy when we get home. We have plenty at home."

Kid: (Starts to scream and cry.) "No. I want it now!"

At this point, the parents begin to look around to see who is staring at them and feel an increasing need to do something to save face.

Parent: I said no. When I say no, I mean it. Now stop screaming."

Kid: "Whah! Whah! Whah!"

Parent: "OK! You asked for it."

MORK: Then the parent smacks the kid on the wrist, hand, or behind. This appears to be the signal for the child to cry harder. I really don't understand this part. The parent tells the kid to stop crying and screaming or the kid will get hit again. But that seems to make the child cry even more!

ORSON: I think I understand. This whole ritual is a matter of control. Managers and kids are in control of the parents. They make the parents buy things that the parents don't really want. So the kids know they will get spanked, but they also know they will get what they want. But sometimes they must just want to get spanked. It all seems very strange and messy, as confusing as what you have been telling me about human love.

MORK: You are right, oh wise one. For instance, the other day I asked Mindy

about it. I said, "What a strange thing to do! You earthlings tell your offspring that you love them and then you inflict pain on them. Then you tell them that the reason you cause them pain is because you love them so much. You call this punishment, but you also punish criminals, deviants, and others who break the law. Sometimes policemen hit them. Does that mean that policemen also love criminals? Some criminals inflict pain on their victims. Do the criminals love their victims too? This is all very difficult to understand."

Can you imagine Hyman equating the spanking of a child for misbehavior with a policeman hitting a criminal? Or comparing the loving discipline of a child with a criminal beating up his victim? It is easy to recognize this method of deceit when you see it over and over again in NSA literature. Hyman is trying to convince his readers that if a criminal beating up an eighty year old lady and taking her purse is wrong, then spanking a child must be wrong also. It really is a stretch, but do you realize how many people reading this garbage will stop and consider this analogy?

Hyman continues with this fictionalized Mork and Mindy episode. Now he tries to convince his readers that spanking caused sexual perversion in children. He writes,

ORSON: Does any of this have to do with training kids for adult lovemaking?

MORK: This part is really weird. I found out that the nerves of the behind, the place on children's bodies that gets spanked most, are also hooked up with the nerves that go to the sexual organs. Parents give kids a pain in the behind by spanking them and then say that they love them at the same time. I think some kind of bonding takes place. From what I have read, some kids seem to get a sexual reaction when they are spanked hard. When these kids grow up they love to get punished as part of their sexual rituals. They call it bondage.

ORSON: You mean bonding and bondage are the same?

MORK: I am not sure. But this is the only way I can explain why some people need to get spanked in order to make love. Well, I will try to find out more about that ritual for my next report. Nan-noo nan-noo. Mork, signing off.

Whew! This claim really pushes a theory to the limit, considering the fact that there is absolutely no reliable research that proves spanking children causes them to grow up as sadists or masochists. Yet Hyman implies this in his "fictionalized" Mork conversation. This entire "Mork from Ork" conversation is fabricated by Hyman to promote his theory that spanking harms children.

Like most good liberals, Hyman believes that he and other non-spanking advocates should be allowed to interfere with the discipline of other people's children, especially if they are trying to stop a spanking. However, Hyman believes that those who believe in spanking should mind their own business when it comes to giving advice. First, let's take a look at what Hyman's attitude is concerning the average citizen interfering with a parent disciplining a child in a public place.

Hyman advocates that the non-spanking advocate become involved with a parent disciplining their child if they feel the parent is stepping over the line. Unfortunately, the line

drawn by the NSA is more than likely in a completely different location than the line drawn by the spanking parent. In this next segment, designed to encourage readers to interfere when they observe a parent spanking their child in public, Hyman refers to this disciplinary action as “public parental temper tantrums.” The disobedience of the child is not mentioned, just the “tantrum” of the reacting parent. He writes,

Despite mandatory reporting laws, most of us have on at least one occasion observed a public spanking capable of leaving bruises, and we did nothing. If we spend much time in malls, supermarkets, or traveling, it is not unlikely that we will witness such an event. Tired, cranky, or restless toddlers in tow by tired, cranky, restless parents are at risk of public spankings. Yet rarely do we say something to the parent, let alone report the incident.

I have often been appalled by public parental temper tantrums, but like most of us, I have been reluctant to intervene. However, a social worker in Texas told me about her technique. When she sees a frustrated, angry parent slapping a child around, she approaches the parent and says, “You must really be frustrated, it is so hard to make children behave in public. I really know how you feel. Is there anything I can do for you?” This approach helps the angry parent to recognize that others are sympathetic to the difficulties of managing children in public while trying to shop or accomplish other chores. The parent is not accused of abuse or given other messages about being inadequate. You might want to try this technique or some variation and see what happens.

These busybodies would get a real surprise if they tried pulling this counseling session on me in the mall. Besides being told to take a long walk off a short pier, they would get a lecture on the current status of juvenile defiance in our country and plenty of statistics to back up my claim. By the time I was done with them, they would be taking a few steps backward and would be looking for the nearest exit.

First of all, mandatory reporting laws do not apply to everyone. There are fifty states in this country, each state drafting their own child abuse laws and reporting requirements. Many states mandate that schoolteachers and school bus drivers report child abuse. Unfortunately, very few people know what constitutes child abuse! I recall a case when a schoolteacher contacted Children’s Services to report that one of his students had been “hit” by her father. When investigated, there were no marks or bruises, so the incident did not fall under the category of child abuse. Yet this incident is recorded as a “reported case” of child abuse. Hyman addresses this “reporting” of child abuse on the next page.

Child abuse is widely recognized and publicized in our country. Probably every day at least one newspaper in this country reports a particularly brutal case of child abuse, often ending in death for the child. National child protection and advocacy groups periodically issue reports about our horrendous rates of abuse. We really don’t know the exact rates of child abuse, but we do know they are too high. For instance, the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect figures from 1993 were 200,000 reported cases of abuse. But in 1995, a study done by the Gallup

Organization estimates the actual incidence to be around 3 million.

I can't say for sure that Hyman is deliberately attempting to deceive his readers here, or if he is ignorant of the true facts. In my detective bureau, I receive every child abuse report that occurs in my city. This report is forwarded to me by the County Department of Children's Services. I receive the initial report within days of the county receiving the information. Some of these reports are received from teachers, some from neighbors, and some from anonymous sources. Each one of these reports is counted as a "reported case of abuse." Several days later, I receive another report from the county that indicated whether the "reported case" of abuse is "substantiated" or "unsubstantiated." In other words, was the report factual or false?

To imply that the "reported cases" of abuse are an indication of the real problem in this country is downright deceit. Here are some cold, hard facts from my city. In 1998, only two percent of "reported cases" of abuse were "substantiated" as actual abuse by the authorities. In 1999, only three percent of the "reported cases" of abuse were "substantiated" as actual cases of abuse. If this formula is used in the figures given by Hyman, then the actual substantiated cases of child abuse in 1993 would be around 5000, far less than the 3 million figure given by Hyman. Certainly no one condones even one case of child abuse in this country, but the NSA attempts to make the problem appear much more serious than it actually is.

While Hyman advocates strangers interfering with a parent spanking a child in a public place, he makes a 180-degree turnabout when the parent is a non-spanking parent and someone tries to convince them that spanking is a viable form of discipline. Hyman is especially hard on the grandparents of misbehaving children who are suggesting that the out-of-control youngster might need a slap on the bucket. In these types of situations, Hyman suggests that the grandparents mind their own business. He believes that he knows more than the moms and dads of the moms and dads.

I often receive calls from grandparents who are upset with their now adult children, who are raising children of their own. Most of these grandparents raised their children using loving discipline, including the use of corporal punishment. They tell me that their kids, now parents themselves, have been "brainwashed" by modern psychology into believing that spanking harms children. Now the adult child is experiencing defiance problems with their youngsters and don't know how to handle it. Since grandparents who believe in spanking are a threat to Hyman's theory, he takes a few shots at them in his book. He writes,

In my practice I have helped many parents who survived very punitive and often abusive homes and are trying to raise their own children differently. When these parents have children with problems, their own parents often encourage spanking as the main solution to the problem. Punitive grandparents are sometimes part of the situation that brings clients to me.

The most frustrating aspect of dealing with grandparents who were abusive as parents is that they invariably deny the abuse they inflicted on their own children. They claim that they used "normal" spanking. Meanwhile, their own grown children, who are now trying to discover nonpunitive ways of dealing with behavior problems, only want their parents to apologize and admit they were wrong. That type of confession is rarely forthcoming and therefore it is not possible to have clear

boundary lines between grandparents, parents, and grandchildren in regard to discipline.

These grandparents are often very disturbed when their grown children seek help outside the family. They frequently try to discourage or sabotage the parental alliance with a psychologist by undermining credence in psychology and psychologists, thereby further trying to confuse boundaries.

Let's examine this entire scenario. According to Hyman he has helped "many parents" who were abused as children and who are now trying to raise their children differently. But Hyman claims that people who are spanked as children grow up to be violent. These parents, all spanked and some even abused, are passive people who don't want to spank their kids. What broke the chain in this case? Obviously, these "abused" children grew up without being aggressive, which would contradict Hyman's own theory. In addition to growing up "normal," they have fallen for the misinformation being disseminated by the peddlers of permissiveness.

It is obvious that these grandparents want to help their children when they notice that the young parents are having "problems" with the grandchildren. It is obvious that the grandchildren aren't being spanked, or grandma and grandpa wouldn't be suggesting it. The type of discipline mom and dad are using isn't working.

Hyman goes on to say that he gets frustrated by grandparents who won't admit they were abusive. Both my mom and dad spanked me when I was a child. Neither of them believe that they were abusive. I don't believe they were abusive. Both used "normal" spanking when I defied their authority. I would guess that neither would "apologize" and "admit they were wrong" when the type of discipline they chose resulted in a well behaved, considerate, respectful human being, namely, me.

Hyman is obviously upset that anyone would question modern day psychology. Imagine the gall of anyone that would question the "theories" of the psychologist! Imagine the nerve of any person to argue that eliminating spanking causes a child to misbehave without fear of consequences! Imagine someone "undermining" the "credence" of any self-proclaimed "expert" whose theories are falling apart at the seams. You will notice that a concerned grandparent trying to give advice is considered "sabotage," yet when a non-spanking advocate tries to give a parent advice, it "helps the angry parent to recognize." I would consider this a double standard and hypocrisy at it's best.

I would encourage grandparents to continue the assault on "psychologists" and modern day gobble-de-goop. It's the senior generation in this county that recognizes best the failure of the permissive child-rearing techniques being advocated by the NSA. It is the grandparent who has conducted his or her own "research." They raised their children with spanking, and they turned out well behaved and respectful. Their children decided to raise the grandchildren without punitive discipline and eliminated spanking from their discipline plan. Now they are experiencing "problems." Grandma and grandpa have correctly concluded that the elimination of corporal punishment in child rearing results in a child with no fear of authority. It's no wonder Hyman is grandparent bashing. Their wisdom threatens his business.

Hyman's theory that children who are spanked grow up to be aggressive and anti-social is described in detail in the section titled *Why Kids Become Aggressive*. He writes,

Throughout history, sages have offered many theories about why humans behave the way they do. Until recent times it was believed that most behavior was caused by supernatural forces to heredity. These approaches were used to explain misbehavior in children and aggression in adults.

I'm almost sure that Hyman's reference here to "supernatural forces" is what the Christian would refer to as "sin." He continues.

In contemporary times scientists have developed a number of theories to account for aggressive behavior between children and by adults toward children. Many of these theories may be used to describe attitudes and behaviors of parents toward children who misbehave. In almost thirty years of experience I have come to believe that modeling theory can best explain the way parents react to misbehavior in their children. Modeling theory is really quite simple to understand. It is based on the belief that almost all behavior is learned by watching others.

In other words, we are born neutral, and the input we receive as children determines how we act when we grow up. Hyman is a humanist.

Hyman makes an attempt to attribute World War II to the spanking of children. In the section *Parenting, Modeling, and National Character*, Hyman tries to make the connection.

Studies of national character offer insight into why we hit children. For instance, Germany is often thought of as an extremely aggressive country. However, Britain, with a long history of school floggings, has engaged in more wars than any modern nation. These countries both went through long periods during which children were taught reflexive obedience, order, and conformity through the use of corporal punishment. Unfortunately, we have no comparable studies that include the United States. But based on what I know, we would not fare well in comparison to many other countries in terms of hitting children.

Let me challenge Hyman's theory that countries that spank their children are aggressive as a nation, and that the United States does not "fare well" in Hyman's eyes when it comes to positive parenting. Can you recall the last time the USA started a war? We have defended many weaker nations who have been attacked by aggressive nations, from World War I to the Gulf War, but I do not recall our nation of spanked children growing up to be an army of ruthless invaders. Hyman refers to a psychoanalyst, Alice Miller, who wrote a book in Germany. He writes,

In discussing Hitler, Miller explains how a child who was once persecuted becomes a persecutor. Hitler had a tyrannical, cold, cruel, and distant father, who constantly spanked him and emotionally denigrated him. When Hitler grew up, he had learned from his family how to be a dictator. Unfortunately, he inflicted his cruelty on the world.

This type of irresponsible writing angers me. One of the most common methods used by the NSA to convince parents that they should never spank their children is to scare them into believing the child will be irreparably harmed. The suggestions that spanked children grow up to be sexual perverts, mass murderers, and other forms of anti-social individuals is something that the NSA will have to answer to in a coming day. If you really think about it, this totally irresponsible form of reporting doesn't even make sense. If Hyman is correct, then why was John F. Kennedy such a loved president whose decisions were always in the best interest of the American people? Rose Kennedy raised all of her children with the "rod and reproof." Let's use J. C. Penney as an example. His parents used corporal punishment during his upbringing, yet J. C. Penney turned out to be one of the most humble, honest men that we have come to know. Miller's theory, again raised by Hyman, is a joke.

For you educators out there, you might be interested to know that Hyman also blames the school systems in this country for the misbehavior of many of your students. And Hyman's reason for your student's misbehavior? It's because you try to maintain order and control! Hyman goes into detail in the section titled *Even Schools Can Contribute to Misbehavior*.

When schools violate individual rights, overstress conformity and obedience, and discourage creativity and dissent, they can foster rebellion among some segments of the student population. Schools governed by ineffective or authoritarian principals are most likely to have high rates of misbehavior, disruption, and violence. Overly punitive, rigid teachers can cause problems, especially when the curriculum is too hard or too easy for individual students or when homework demands or dull work become excessive. Misbehavior plagued schools may implement ineffective and inane rules, emphasize competition over cooperation, and inappropriately violate student's rights.

This should make the teachers in this country feel good. Did you catch the reason students are swearing at, defying, and physically assaulting their teachers? It is the teacher's fault! Let's not blame the kids now. I personally know teachers that have been attacked by students. These teachers are intelligent capable people whose compassion for children was the deciding factor in them choosing their profession. All of these teachers could be making more money somewhere else, but they chose to teach school. Unfortunately, most are liberal, and approach misbehaving students from a passive standpoint. Even when many students are treated with kindness, they still show contempt and defiance for authority. Most teachers I know blame the parents for the child's attitude. According to Hyman, the teachers are way off base.

Often teachers unwittingly create problems by not communicating adequately with parents. They may believe that parents either don't discipline adequately or don't care enough. Blaming parents does not solve the problem. Further, some teachers with considerable discipline problems are often their own worst enemies because of their refusal to examine how their own classroom behavior causes discipline problems. Further, emotional maltreatment by educators is a major cause of student anger, alienation, and rebellion.

There you have it. You teachers are the problem, not the out of control, defiant students. I am amused by this amazing insight by Hyman. But he goes one step further in addressing the problem of the teacher and the incorrigible student. He suggests that if a parent discovers that their child is being “maltreated” by a teacher, the parent should have the teacher arrested! Unfortunately, what Hyman considers maltreatment seems to be acceptable discipline. In the following excerpt from his book, Hyman outlines the procedure the parent should follow to bring this out-of-control teacher, this threat to society, to justice.

In my book *Reading, Writing and the Hickory Stick* and in many documents from the NCSCPA, I spell out in greater detail what can be done if your child is a victim of either physical or emotional abuse in schools. You can use those resources if what I describe here doesn’t work.

The usual response of young children who have been maltreated in school is withdrawal and crying; older children are more likely to react with anger and plans for escape or revenge.

For instance, a 1st-grader with a generally cheerful disposition began to cry easily, complain about going to school, and seemed depressed. It wasn’t until several months later that the parents discovered that the child was terrified of an unusually stern, punitive, and demanding teacher. The child had been scolded several times for innocuous misbehaviors such as whispering to a classmate. On one particular occasion she hadn’t heard or understood the teacher’s instructions for an assignment and was afraid to ask the teacher. Also she had heard other children being paddled.

Let’s examine this problem described by Hyman. Unless you are one of those who believe that punitive discipline is wrong, you have to agree that nothing that Hyman has described here warrants any type of complaint by the parent. First, the child was scolded for talking in class. Does anyone have a problem with this? I don’t. The child can’t learn if she is discussing Barbie dolls with the girl at the desk next to her’s. Second, it is not the teacher’s fault if the girl wasn’t listening to the teacher’s instructions for an assignment. Perhaps the girl was whispering to her friend while the teacher was instructing the class. I can’t imagine why else the girl would be “afraid” to ask the teacher about the assignment. Third, When I was in school, I personally observed other students being disciplined when they misbehaved, and I rather enjoyed it. I behaved myself and never feared being punished by a teacher or principal. I also learned by watching others being disciplined to make sure I did not conduct myself in a manner which would result in myself being hauled down to the discipline office to be confronted by Mr. Rhodes, the former Marine who scared everyone in the school.

So Hyman’s description here of the “maltreatment” being experienced by the crying, depressed girl is nothing of the sort. But Hyman is convinced that this type of treatment in our schools is wrong, and should be dealt by the parent. For you teachers reading this, the following will probably make your blood boil. Hyman writes,

If you discover the possibility of maltreatment of your child, you need to act quickly, rationally, and with clear goals, Even if you only hear about your child’s classmates being abused in school, you should investigate. We know that witnessing

abuse may be just as harmful as being a direct recipient. If one child is victimized, it is likely that others have been and will be affected, possibly your own child. There are too many schools in which educators, especially coaches, have long histories of physical and psychological maltreatment of students. Frequently, authorities are aware of the problem but refuse to act.

If you suspect your child has been maltreated, you should identify the maltreatment by writing out a careful description based on your observations of the child. It may be sufficient to obtain an apology from the offender, with assurance that the abuse will not recur. However, you should also consider whether the situation is serious enough to warrant filing an assault or harassment complaint with the police and obtaining a warrant for the teacher's arrest, filing child abuse charges, or obtaining an attorney and going to court. If you take any direct action the school may agree and discipline the offending educator. It is more likely that they will stonewall, deny, lie, and delay. If you take action against the teacher or school, it will generally not be easy to buck the establishment. You must be prepared to persist.

This type of irresponsible writing is causing problems between school teachers and parents all across this great country. Parents are reading these kinds of publications and believing that if a teacher scolds their child, the "maltreatment" is causing great trauma to their tender offspring. Reading books like *The Case Against Spanking* by Irwin Hyman, parents are modifying their approach to misbehavior and dealing with defiance by their children with non-punitive "positive parenting" techniques. As a result, any type of discipline by a teacher results in a lawsuit by the parent. We are experiencing the same type of parental resistance in the area of law enforcement. Children are not taught that there will always be an authority to which they must answer. They are not taught to fear their parent's authority, so they fear no authority, not their teachers, not the police, and not God. Too many parents have listened to the rhetoric of people like Hyman. Too many people have been brainwashed into believing that children should not be forced to comply with the reasonable control of their parents. And now teachers and police officers are paying the price.

So what happens after positive parenting proves to have dangerous results? What does Hyman suggest the parent do when the child becomes aggressive? This problem, which is becoming more common with kids who are not afraid of their parents, is addressed by Hyman in the section titled *But Suppose My Child Attacks Me or Refuses Time-Out*. He writes about a toddler named Julie, who has begun the habit of biting her mother if she doesn't get what she wants.

There may be times when your frustrated and angry child may bite, hit, or kick you, or at least try. I do not believe counteraggression by the parent is very helpful. Counteraggression makes things worse in the long run. Rather than hitting children, I train parents and teachers in techniques of therapeutic physical restraint.

Julie starts to grab your arm to bite you. If she does manage to bite, instead of pulling back - which may result in Julie coming away like a shark who has just ravaged a victim - push toward her and hold her nose so she can't breathe. This will cause her to let go. However, your first and best strategy would be to distract her by

offering her a toy or starting to do something she likes. But even though distraction is often a successful ploy with toddlers, let's say it doesn't work in this case. You say, "If you don't stop you will have to sit in time-out for thirty seconds."

I thought that the rule of thumb for time-outs was one minute for each year of age of the youngster. Evidently, this rule doesn't apply if the toddler has his teeth sunk into your arm and won't let go. This would be difficult to do if the parent is required to sit in the time-out along with the child, since Hyman has indicated that offering the kid a toy "doesn't work in this case." I am assuming the teeth are still sunk in the arm, and the parent is still trying to work a deal with the mini-terrorist. Hyman continues.

You could sit her in a chair for thirty seconds. But let's say she refuses that option and continues to bite. You now have two choices: hold her in time-out, or hold her in one place. In this instance, you decide she's too young to hold in time-out, and so you choose the latter. You say, "If you don't stop I am going to hold you in one place for one minute."

Whoa! This consequence sure instills terror into my heart! At this point I would have gotten pretty upset that the child had not relinquished control of my arm with her teeth. If I wasn't bleeding yet, a good sized bruise would have begun forming. Why is this child attacking the parent anyway? It's because the child has no fear of consequences for wrongdoing. And Hyman's next suggestion won't change that. He continues.

Julie continues with the attack. Do not let her bite you. If she does not desist, gently put her on the floor, face down, and hover over her on hands and knees without putting your weight on her. Despite her efforts, she can't escape from this circle of arms and legs. You say calmly, "Julie, biting hurts. I will not let you bite me or anyone else. I will let you up, but you can not bite me. If you try again, I will hold you in one place again."

If a child gets this kind of response every time, I have found the behavior generally stops in a few months at most. If it doesn't, there may be serious problems that require professional attention.

There you have it. If you can survive "several months" of biting attacks by your youngster, you have it made. I'm not sure how many skin grafts you will need during that period, but the "hovering" technique should solve the biting problem if you wear a long sleeve coat while on your hands and knees, confining your child in the "circle of arms and legs." I'm not sure that this technique works if the child is a few years older and is wielding a knife, but if you survive that kind of attack, you may want to seek out "professional attention." People like Hyman are the professionals he is talking about. Unfortunately, by that time it may be too late.

Hyman does mention older children who defy the parent's authority. He writes in the next paragraph,

Older children may sometimes refuse time-out. What should you do? My advice

is to put them in a room. If they are really angry, they may scream, cry, kick the door, and possibly break things in the room. If the latter is the case, don't put them anywhere they can break things. This may necessitate holding the child in a time-out chair for the prescribed time.

Is all this really necessary? Millions of parents have delivered a stinging smack to the buttocks of a willful toddler, which has not only sent a clear message to the defiant youngster, it didn't take months for the child to figure out what behavior was acceptable and what behavior was not acceptable. Biting mom in anger has never been acceptable. To play games like Hyman suggests will result in months and even years of unsuccessful discipline. When the child reaches teenage years, mom won't be able to "hold the child in a time-out" any longer. Dealing with an older child who has no fear of authority, mom will be lucky if she doesn't end up in the hospital.

Does Hyman attack the Bible in *The Case Against Spanking*? He not only attacks the Bible, he devotes one entire section of his book to his attack! I've tried to point out how almost all of the anti-spanking crowd feel the Bible is a formidable obstacle to overcome since the Bible clearly advocates the use of corporal punishment in child rearing. If you have carefully read the chapter in this book that explains the Biblical approach to discipline, then you will understand how the following excerpts from Hyman's book are the writings of a man totally without understanding of scripture. He writes in the section titled *The Religious Roots of Our Punitiveness*,

The majority of Americans would sooner give up three squares a day than their right to spank their children. Many derive their faith in the effectiveness of whacking kids from a source that transcends all others - the Bible. Fundamentalists and others who act from a literal interpretation of the Bible believe that if you don't hit errant children, you are denying God's command.

By now it is clear that I believe that the source of our punitiveness is a cluster of beliefs nurtured and preserved through the centuries by the religious right. The religious and political right's ideology is the contemporary version of the Puritan obsession with punishment. The justification for inflicting pain on children lies deeply embedded in religion and tradition, as do the rationales for the wife beating and brutal penalties for sailors and prisoners who resist authority.

You will notice that Hyman uses terms like "whack" or "hit" when he is describing spanking. This is to convey a negative thought instead of a more positive thought that would be associated with the term spanking. Granted, a spanking always consists of a hit or a whack. But a hit or a whack is not always a spanking. Both words can be used to describe something besides a loving form of discipline. Hyman uses other words in order to convey another thought.

Hyman should study more closely what the "religious right" believes. Nowhere in the Bible is there any type of justification for a man beating his wife. The Bible not only documents the accomplishments of man, it also vividly points out the failures of many of the godly men whose lives are now examined by Bible scholars. Even wise men like King Solomon made human mistakes, but those mistakes are never condoned by God. They are documented so that we might learn. Here again, the NSA is attempting to depict the Bible as an ancient document,

one that is out of touch with today's culture. Another NSA, the Rev. Thomas E. Sagendorf, who knows less about the Bible than he does about corporal punishment, states that God's word is used "to justify slavery, suppression of women, polygamy, incest and infanticide." Any examples of slavery, polygamy, and other undesirable actions in the Bible are given so that we might learn a lesson by the example given. Never is this type of action "justified." Both Hyman and Sagendorf simply are unaware of how to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Hyman continues with his attack on the Biblical approach to child rearing.

Fundamentalists are among the most outspoken defenders of physical punishment, but they write and say what many others believe and practice. The problem of the religious roots of support for hitting kids is exacerbated by the theologians who go far afield in searching for rationales for corporal punishment. Not surprisingly, many found their rationale in the Old Testament. For instance, the most popular punishment texts include Proverbs 13:24, "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently"; Proverbs 23:13-14, "Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from evil"; and Proverbs 22:15, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child: the rod of discipline will remove it far from him."

Now, you will note that all of these are from Proverbs, ascribed to Solomon. But Solomon was a lousy father to most of the children he sired with his wives and concubines. Further, his admonitions to not spare the rod turned out badly for his son Rehoboam, who lost a civil war. Rehoboam, taking counsel from young men who were brought up with him (we assume with no sparing of the rod either) regarding how to respond to the citizens who requested that he lift the yoke of oppression that Solomon had placed on them, said, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." This is an early lesson that violence breeds violence.

In these two paragraphs, Hyman is making a number of assumptions. He states that Solomon was a "lousy father," although scripture doesn't even come close to implying this assumption. Hyman states that Solomon was a lousy father to "most of the children he sired," although the Bible never mentions more than one son, Rehoboam. He assumes that the Rehoboam's acquaintances were also spanked as children, and that because Solomon's son was also a taskmaster, this proves that "violence breeds violence." Hyman implies that because Rehoboam lost a civil war, he was somehow a bad person. Hyman implies that he was a bad person as a result of his upbringing. As we have previously discussed, Rehoboam's actions were being controlled by God. 1 Kings 12:15 states "Wherefore the king (Rehoboam) hearkened not unto the people; *for the cause was from the Lord.*" The king hearkened not unto the people "for the cause was from the Lord." God Himself was controlling the actions of the king in order to establish His will. Hyman is blaming Rehoboam when "God made him do it." Hyman simply doesn't know what he is talking about. He continues,

It is not surprising that many theologians have used Solomon as their guide for discipline, even though he at one time worshiped Moloch, the god who required infant

sacrifices. But it is hard to understand how some of the Biblical sources used to support corporal punishment come into play – they do not even mention corporal punishment. For instance, some theologians used Proverbs 19:18. “Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.”

Where in the world did Hyman get this verse? Perhaps he read the NIV translation of the scripture but is unaware of the lack of credibility in certain personally translated versions of the Bible. The actual verse in Proverbs 19:18 reads, “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” This verse encourages parents to “chasten” the child, and not to be deterred by the child’s crying. It appears that Hyman believes that every verse must contain the words “corporal punishment” in order to be counted as pro-spanking scripture. Or perhaps Hyman should take his Bible back to the store and ask for another, more accurate, version.

Hyman then attacks the New Testament. You should notice that as he writes about the use of the Bible as a tool to advocate spanking, he refers to its use in the past tense, using words like “was” instead of words like “is.” Notice the first sentence in the next section.

Even more surprising was the use of New Testament sources to support the use of corporal punishment. Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus Christ suggest the use of violence against children or adults. In fact, it seems clear that he was absolutely against the use of violence as a solution to problems in all situations.

Evidently Hyman’s Bible is missing numerous sections that are very easy to find in mine. Almost every person that I have talked to knows the story of the moneychangers in the temple, and the subsequent reaction of Christ. John 2:15 reads, “And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables.” Although Mr. Hyman believes that Christ was “absolutely” against the use of violence in “all situations,” he again, is terribly wrong.

The book, *The Case Against Spanking*, like many other books published by the NSA, is loaded with misinformation designed to scare parents into eliminating spanking from their discipline plan. Like other books written by the anti-spanking crowd, a close inspection of the contents creates enough doubt in the reader’s mind to question whether Irwin Hyman knows what he is talking about. I believe his theory is pure speculation. It’s too bad that many parents won’t realize the truth until it’s too late. But then again, that generates job security for my police department!