

Breastfeeding Photographs Are Not Pornography

Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Monday, October 06 2008 16:22



The so-called news outlets are hyperventilating over the story that someone has stolen and is trying to sell [a picture of Jamie Lynn Spears breastfeeding](#) her daughter. And it is said that **gasp** one of her breasts is completely exposed. Is a naked breast really pornographic?

Because this young mother is only 17 years old, officials are investigating this matter as a federal child pornography case. I'll let you think about that for a few minutes.

The missing picture was one of a set of 12 or so that were taken by the baby's father, Casey Aldridge, who took the memory card to a local big-box store for processing. It was at the store that the alleged theft occurred, with an unknown staffer making extra copies of the pictures and attempting to sell them. Whether anyone bought a copy of the breastfeeding picture is as yet unknown.

Now, while Aldridge wasn't bright enough to predict that something like this might happen, he didn't do anything wrong, either in taking the pictures or in having them developed. I would imagine that many of us have similar pictures in our photo albums or on our own memory cards.

The days we spend with our new baby, learning about him or her and discovering (or rediscovering) the joy of providing nourishment, comfort, and love pass all too soon. When we become nursing mothers, our breasts, while still part of who we are sexually, take on the role for which they are designed. They become less alluring and more functional ... well, to women, anyway. I would imagine that men might have a different viewpoint.

So why is this a federal case? Well, as the article states, "Peddling pictures of a minor's breast – even if not taken for sexual purposes – could land the seller and the buyer in federal prison if they are marketed across state lines for the purpose of being lurid."

Is an image of a mother nursing her infant at one breast and the other breast exposed pornographic? Possibly. In our society, a bare breast, a nipple, and, heck, even the swell of a breast is – pardon the expression – titillating for many.

I find it fascinating that the focus of all the articles about this story I came across on the Web was the naked breast (her left one, in fact). What I found shocking, in a good way, was that this 17-year-old girl was nursing her baby, and doing it in front of her mother, her sister, and her baby's father.

Here is a girl who could afford all the formula she'd ever need, and she chose to breastfeed her infant. Heck, she could have even hired a wet nurse for baby Maddie. I don't much care for the whole celebrity worship that goes on in the media. I really don't care what show Spears starred in

or that she's the younger sister of Britney. None of that has anything to do with me or my life. However, I did feel a kinship for her when I learned that she was a nursing mother.

I approached breastfeeding first with an attitude of, "I'm sure going to try." When my first son was delivered prematurely (and I developed postnatal depression – but that's another story), I believed that nursing him was the only thing that would guarantee that he'd be all right. I pumped for six straight months, even after we'd finally gotten the hang of things. And I kept pumping for him when I went back to work ... and did the same thing three years later, when his brother was born.

With all the shock and horror over Jamie Lynn Spears's exposed breast, the media is doing her and other women a disservice. Instead of being creepily obsessed with her bare breast, they could at least offer her kudos for doing one of the most natural things in the world: breastfeeding.

Perhaps if one article included, "giving little Maddie a good start in life" or a similar statement, other young (and not-so-young) women might just consider giving nursing a whirl.

What's obscene is that someone has stolen a photograph of a private moment in a young mother's life and is attempting to profit by attempting to make a natural function appear pornographic.

Laurel Haring is a writer and editor. She and her family live in Wilmington, Delaware. She really hesitated using the word "titillating" and hopes that you'll forgive her this one tacky little pun.

<http://www.typeamom.net/breastfeeding-photographs-are-not-pornography.html>