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## What We Lost When We Lost Rocky -- Paper Fil Teen Torture

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When people talk in the abstract about what we lose when we lose newspapers, it's often hard to drum up much concern that's what happened to the buggy makers when the car took over. Yeah, news is important--but hey, we've got the web who needs them anyway? We've got twitter.

Just last week, Denver lost the *Rocky Mountain News* and before its website disappears, I wanted to share an example

This series--[Desperate Measures](#)--was the first to comprehensively take on the multi-million teen abuse empire various Teen Help. Please take the time to read it--once you start, it's hard to turn away. (And sadly, though WWASP has lost

Expensive to conduct, extensive, well-written and well-reported, this journalism helped inspire a generation of activists How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids, which is the first book length investigation of the billion

In the series, Pulitzer-prize winner Lou Kilzer and photographer Dennis Schroeder make abundantly clear that the program abusive and wildly popular--and they get a top WWASP official to admit that their staff is untrained and its methods co

*"These people are basically a bunch of untrained people who work for this organization," Ken Kay told the Denver Rocky Mountain News he rejoined Teen Help as a vice president. "So they don't have credentials of any kind. ..."*

"We could be leading these kids to long-term problems that we don't have a clue about because we're not going about it

"How in the hell can you call yourself a behavior modification program -- and that's one of the ways it's marketed -- when you determine: Is this good, is this bad?"

Kilzer shows that WWASP's contract with parents allows the programs to *"use handcuffs, mechanical restraints, electrical shocks, and other means in order to restrain the student."* Parents could not sue the program for *"liability or damages resulting from restraint procedures."*

In one of the earlier demonstrations of the power of multimedia, the series includes a haunting [video](#) of a child sobbing and insisting--as though brainwashed--that he needs to stay in WWASP's program.

The series shows how--in facilities located both inside the U.S. and in countries like Jamaica, Mexico, Samoa and the Philippines--children are intimidated, humiliated, sexually abused and in some cases tortured teenagers.

In case after case, officials and staff present sometimes bizarre excuses for what are clearly systemic abuses. One child was taken down because the police thought it was a ["house of ill-repute"](#).

As a result of hard-hitting journalism like this, [legislation](#) just passed the House for the first time in the new Congress. It is "designed to degrade or humiliate" children and allows them access to a hotline to report abuses at these facilities. The Labor Committee Chair George Miller (D-CA) and work is underway to introduce it in the Senate.

Websites cannot afford to do investigations like this--bloggers are not paid and reporters are hurried to keep up with omissions. Authors cannot investigate every incident without back-up. The loss of newspapers and the investigations they do is a tragedy. Jefferson said he'd rather see a country without government than one without newspapers--it looks like his nightmare is coming true.

Program note: My other book, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook, the child psychiatrist in question, is featured on Oprah today!!!

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