

JG 7068

OFFICE OF THE COUNSELOR TO THE PRESIDENT
DAVID R. GERGENThe White House
Washington, DC 20500

DATE: 1/3/94 NUMBER OF PAGES (w/cover): 9
TO: Bruce Reed (see cc:)
FROM: Jody Greenstone

FAX NUMBER: -67739

COMMENTS: Bruce - I thought you would be
interested in this & I don't think
anyone from WH should go -
do you? Maybe someone from HHS or
Justice will stop by - Give me
a call when you get a chance
Jody (2195)

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cc. by Bernstein
Jose Cerda
Susan Solomon Cooke

CBS

CBS Inc., 51 West 68 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 878-1616

Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

TO: Listed Organizations

FROM: Preston Padden, Executive Vice President,
Affiliate Relations, Fox Broadcasting
Jay L. Kriegel, Senior Vice President, CBS Inc.

RE: National Coalition Against Violence

DATE: December 21, 1993

For several months, we have been working with various religious, educational, government and social organizations to design a coordinated national campaign against violence.

Based on these discussions, we have developed a structure for launching such an effort in early 1994 and hope that you and your organization will join us in this campaign.

On behalf of the CBS and Fox television networks, we would like to invite you to attend an organizational meeting in Washington on Monday, January 3. At this meeting, we will screen the one-hour network television program "Kids Killing Kids" which we plan to broadcast jointly in early March. We hope this program, which includes four case histories of teenagers using guns, will be broadcast simultaneously on many broadcast stations and cable channels (without commercials) from 8-9 p.m. on a school night in March.

Many of your organizations have expressed enthusiasm about participating in a broad national coalition against violence. We therefore hope that this program can serve, not just as an important hour of television, but also as a catalyst for families, schools and churches, as well as other social and communal organizations, to engage in a national discussion of the issues of youth violence, guns and personal responsibility.

We hope you will join with us for this meeting to discuss ways in which we can work together on this important problem.

While we apologize for calling a meeting on such short notice immediately after a holiday weekend, many of you have indicated how important it would be for your

participation to be able to view this program and learn about other planned activities as soon as possible so you can start to communicate and plan with your own organizations.

To aid in your consideration, we hope to send you in the next few days a brief summary of the television program and an outline of some proposals of how various organizations and constituencies could participate in the launch of this National Coalition Against Violence.

Please feel free to recommend other organizations that should be invited to attend as we seek to have this campaign as inclusionary as possible. For that, and any other questions, call Jay Kriegel at CBS, 212/975-1515 or Fax: 212/975-6488.

Happy Holidays.

Monday, January 3
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

ANA Westin Hotel
2401 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Room: "The Theatre"

R.S.V.P.
Rachel Friedel
202/457-4508

MEDIA**A. Broadcast Networks:****Broadcast Networks:**

CBS	Martin Franks	202/457-4501	202/628-0801
NBC	Jim Rowe	202/637-4531	202/637-4548
ABC	Mark McCarthy	202/887-7744	202/887-7854
FOX	Preston Padden	202/895-3190	202/895-3193
PBS	Jennifer Lawson	703/739-5163	703/739-0775

B. Cable Networks:

HBO	Michael Fuchs	212/512-1364	212/512-4088
Turner	Ted Turner	404/827-1717	404/827-1575
Viacom	Frank Biondi	212/258-6314	212/258-6358
	Tom Freston	212/258-8310	212/258-8303
USA	Kay Koplovitz	212/408-2700	212/408-8863
BET	Bob Johnson	202/337-5260	202/338-3982

C. Organizations:

MPAA	Jack Valenti	202/293-1966	202/452-9823
NCTA	Decker Anstrom	202/775-3651	202/775-3695
NAB	Eddie Fritz	202/429-5445	202/429-5410
INTV	Jim Hedlund	202/887-1970	202/887-0959
NPA	Cathy Black	703/648-1000	703/620-0046
RIAA	Jay Berman	202/775-0101	202/775-7253
MPA	Don Kummerfeld	212/752-0055	212/223-6375

American Association of Advertising Agencies
 John O'Toole, President
 212/682-2500 212/682-8391

Association of National Advertisers
 DeWitt F. Helm, Jr., President
 212/697-5950 212/661-8057

GOVERNMENT

National Governor's Association
Raymond C. Scheppach, Executive Director
202/624-5300 202/624-5313
National Association of Counties
Larry E. Naake, Executive Director
202/393-6226 202/737-0480
National Conference of State Legislatures
Carl Tubbesing, Director of Sales and Fed. Rels.
202/624-5400 202/737-1069
National League of Cities
Frank H. Shafroth, Director of Policy and Fed. Rels.
202/626-3000 202/626-3043
U.S. Conference of Mayors
J. Thomas Cochran, Executive Director
202/293-7330 202/293-2352

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Federal Order of Police (FOP)
Don Cahill 703/914-0931 703/914-0916
International Brotherhood of Police Officers (IBPO)
Chris Sullivan 703/979-0290 703/979-0294
Major Cities Chiefs (MCC)
Mark Spurrier 410/887-2201 410/887-4958
National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO)
Robert Scully 202/842-4420 202/842-4396
National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
Melinda Lund 703/836-7827 703/838-5350
International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
Kevin Patrick 703/836-6767 703/836-4543

EDUCATION

NEA Keith Geiger 202/822-7020 202/822-7974
Lyle Hamilton 202/822-7215 202/822-7292
AFT Al Shanker 202/879-4440 202/879-4545
Claude Duncan 202/879-4596 202/879-4556
National PTA
Arnold Fage 202/331-1380 202/331-1406
National School Boards Association
Jerry Floyd 703/838-6722 703/683-7590
National Assoc. of Secondary School Principals
Tom Koerner 703/860-0200 703/476-5432
The American Assoc. of School Administrators
Gary Marx 703/875-0737 703/528-2146
National Assoc. of Elementary School Principals
June Million 703/684-3345 703/549-5568
National Catholic Education Assoc.
Sister Catherine McNamee
202/337-6232 202/333-6706

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

WISC - Washington Interreligion Staff Council
& Baptist Joint Commission

Dr. James Dunn 202/544-4226 202/544-2094

National Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell 212/870-2511

Catholic Bishops Conference

Msr. Robert Lynch 202/541-3100 202/541-3166

Synagogue Council of America (Religious Action Center)

Rabbi David Saperstein 202/387-2800 202/667-9070

Evangelicals for Social Action

Ron Sider 215/843-9269 or 645-9354 215/645-9395

MEDICAL AND HEALTH

American Medical Association
Margaret Danaher Garikes 202/789-7409 202/789-7485
American Nurses Association
Virginia Trotter-Betts 202/554-4444 202/554-2262
National Assoc. of Social Workers
Sheldon Goldstein 202/336-8200 202/336-8310
American Academy of Pediatrics
Janis Guerney 202/347-8600 202/393-6137
American College of Emergency Physicians
Stepyanie A. Kennen 202/728-0610 202/728-0617
American Psychiatric Association
Kathy Sullivan 202/682-6322 202/682-6287
American Psychological Association
Barbara J. Calkins 202/955-7673 202/955-7689
American Public Health Association
Richard Gilbert 202/789-5661 202/789-5661

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ABA

Bruce Nicholson 202/331-2685 202/331-2220

RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

National Rainbow Coalition
 Rev. Jesse Jackson 202/728-1180 202/728-1192
 Handgun Control
 Richard Aborn 202/898-0792 202/371-9615
 Pacific Center for Violence Prevention
 Andrew McGuire 415/285-1793 415/282-2563
 Children's Defense Fund
 Marion Wright Edelman 202/628-8787 202/662-3580
 Hattie Ruttenberg 202/662-3596 202/662-3540
 NAACP
 Benjamin Chavis 410/358-8900 410/486-9257
 League of Women Voters
 Lloyd Leonard 202/429-1965 202/429-0854
 American Association of Retired Persons
 John Rother 202/434-3704 202/434-3714
 TIAA CREF
 Matina Horner 212/916-6240 212/916-6230

FOUNDATIONS

Conrad Hilton & BEST Foundation
 Brad Sales 818/382-3860 818/382-2882
 Aaron Diamond Foundation
 Vincent McGee 212/757-7680 212/262-0646
 Charles Revson Foundation
 Lisa Goldberg 212/935-3340 212/688-0633
 Joyce Foundation
 Debby Leff 312/782-2464 312/782-4160
 William Caspar Graustein memorial Fund
 David Nee 203/498-6036 203/498-6078
 A.L. Mailman Foundation
 Luba Lynch 914/681-4448 914/681-5182
 New York Community Trust
 Joyce Bove 212/686-0010 x552 212/532-8528
 Tides Foundation
 Jim Browne 202/833-4663 202/833-4670
 Public Welfare Foundation
 Larry Kressley 202/965-1800 202/625-1348

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Caryl Vontz

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SPORTS**National Basketball Association**

David Stern

212/826-7000 212/888-7931

National Football League

Paul Tagliabue

212/758-1500 212/826-3454

Major League Baseball

Bud Selig

414/933-4114 414/933-4655

National Collegiate Athletic Association

Cedric Dempsey

913/339-1906 913/339-0038

BUSINESS**National Association of Manufacturers**

Jerry J. Jasinowski, President

202/637-3000 202/637-3182

Business Roundtable

Samuel L. Maury, Executive Director

202/872-1260 202/466-3509

Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Richard L. Lasher, President

202/659-6000 202/463-5836

National Federation of Independent Businesses

S. Jackson Faris, President and CEO

202/554-9000 202/554-2470

Business for Social Responsibility

Michael Levett, Executive Director

202/842-5400 202/842-3135

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**Scholastic Magazine**

Dick Robinson

212/343-6740 212/343-6701

American Airlines

Ed Faberman

202/857-4221 202/857-4245



CBS Inc., 81 West 52 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 875-1515

Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

December 2, 1993

Bruce Reed
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Bruce:

As you requested, here is an outline of the Violence Project now being designed jointly by the four networks.

The keystone of the project is a one-hour primetime television special on youth violence and guns which would be broadcast in 1994. The program would be "roadblocked" by ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC -- shown simultaneously on all four networks from 8-9 p.m., the hour of high youth viewing, on a week night (school night). We believe that this has never been done before.

In addition, we would make this program available to every other broadcast station and cable network so that it would hopefully not just be on four channels, but on 10 or 20 or 30, including those with heaviest viewing by young people.

The objective of this project is to use the power of network television not just to communicate and educate, but as a catalyst to focus and mobilize the resources of the most important private sector institutions to participate in this debate.

The elements under discussion include the following:

1. Schools: The National Education Task Force on Violence (NEA, School Boards, etc.) plus the AFT and the Catholic Education Association would ask each school and each teacher in America to assign this program as "homework." (Never been done before.)

We hope to distribute more than 2 million Teacher's Guides for the program.

2. Families: More than just "student homework," we will urge that this be true "Family Viewing" -- that every family in America watch this program together.

We are talking to the Newspaper Association of America about their making available to every newspaper a full page "Parents Guide" to the program -- what parents should discuss with their children after watching the program -- and asking that it be published that day in every newspaper.

3. Teach In: The day after the broadcast, not only would every school be asked to discuss the program, but we would seek to conduct the largest Teach In in the nation's history -- hopefully led by the President and the First Lady.

We would seek to connect the schools with adults from all different segments of the community -- political and government leaders, religious leaders, sports and entertainment figures, business leaders, lawyers and doctors -- who would talk to students about violence, guns and personal responsibility.

4. Religious: That weekend the nation's major religious organizations (National Council of Churches, Catholic Bishops Conference, Baptist Joint Commission, Evangelicals, Jews) would suggest that these issues be preached from every pulpit in America.

5. Other Organizations: Other constituencies or organizations that have expressed interest in participating:

- a. American Bar Association
- b. American Medical Association
- c. the major sports leagues
- d. the Hollywood production community led by the MPAA
- e. minority music and entertainment community (coordinated by HBO)
- f. minority media

6. Local Support/"Grassroots": We are simultaneously working from "the streets up" to design locally-based private sector anti-violence campaigns in major cities.

This effort has started in New York and Miami as a partnership of business executives and community leaders ("New Yorkers Against Violence"). The focus is on ways that the private sector can stimulate and support

community-based anti-violence efforts through both enforcement and prevention programs.

In each city, in cooperation with the key government officials and agencies, we will be focusing on such efforts as place-based safety programs in schools and housing projects; gun buy-backs; youth programs; self-help and advocacy groups (block associations, Mothers Against Violence, etc.) and job and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth.

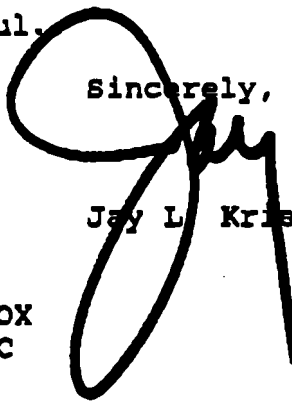
Next week Miami and New York leaders are meeting with representatives of Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and Philadelphia -- as well as other private sector groups and the President's Task Force to discuss how to coordinate and expand these local efforts. Peter Edelman has graciously offered to host the meeting at HSS (Tuesday, December 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.).

The grassroots piece will parallel the national effort and help to ensure ongoing local efforts in major cities.

There are also other follow-up pieces to the national campaign, such as PSAs and special programming planned by each of the networks as well as our collaboration with the Harvard Project on Violence.

I hope this is helpful.

Sincerely,



Jay L. Kriegel

cc: Rick Cotton, NBC
George Vradenburg, FOX
Steve Weiswasser, ABC

CBS

CBS Inc., 51 West 52 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 875-1515

Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

To: Bruce Reed

FROM: Jay L. Kriegel

12/02/93

Jay Winsten of the Harvard School of Public Health would very much like the President to include in his remarks on Saturday something like the following:

The television industry working with Harvard on the Designated Driver campaign demonstrated how the media can exert a positive influence on behavior with the result of actually saving lives. A similar collaboration regarding youth violence is now in development for launch next year and holds great promise for using the power of the television to encourage young people to withdraw from violent conflicts.

MEDIA

Reed-fyi

[Handwritten signature]

PRESS CLIPPINGS

January 7, 1994

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For
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No. 1-94

CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES TIMES • DECEMBER 26, 1993

Tracking the Media-Violence Explosion

By ROBERT W. WELKOS



It was another year of living dangerously. Turn on television in 1993 and there was proof

galore that America seemed awash in violence.

Terrorists tried to blow up the world's tallest building. A gunman blasted commuters inside a railway car. A 12-year-old girl was abducted from a slumber party and strangled. Followers of a fiery preacher met a fiery end. And that Reginald Denny tape repeated over and over and over.

And that was only the fare served up on the evening news. Film at 11.

But what really concerned a growing chorus of critics from living rooms to the White House was the violence portrayed in the entertainment media. A growing number of social scientists drew a causal relationship between the madness in the streets and glamorized violence in TV programs, movies, rap music and even the next generation of entertainment—video games.

President Clinton had left no doubt about what he would like to see when he politely lectured hundreds of top entertainment figures, imploring them to examine how film and TV violence affect the lives of impoverished young people. Atty. Gen. Janet Reno went even further when she warned a Senate committee that if TV violence isn't reduced, "government action will be imperative."

Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), author of the 1990 Television Violence Act and a leading congressional crusader against gratuitous TV violence, described a cycle by

which the entertainment industry ducks responsibility for curbing violence.

"Broadcasting blames cable, which blames the movies," he told the National Press Club. "Executives say they use what producers give them; producers blame the screenwriters; and the screenwriters say they script what they have been instructed to write. And then they all point the finger at others."

Under Simon's TV Violence Act, Congress had given the networks until this month to do something about it. Concerned that the act would expire without anything being done, Simon and other lawmakers leveled warning shots at CBS, NBC, ABC and the Fox network.

The entertainment industry—always fearful of censorship—was once again on the defensive, as lawmakers in Washington convened hearings and at least nine bills were introduced in Congress to crack down on TV violence. One would require new TV sets to come equipped with computer chips enabling parents to block violent programming. Another would threaten TV station owners with loss of their licenses and heavy fines for violating anti-violence standards.

It was enough to drive network officials and veteran filmmakers up the wall.

"For these people to zero in on network TV, which has put its house in order better than any other media, and threaten them with government censorship, this is a political disgrace," said Edgar J. Scherick, who has produced such TV miniseries as "The Kennedys of Massachusetts."

Network officials said that the era of "Miami Vice," "Vega\$" and "Hunter" was long gone but not-

ed that in the public mind, network TV somehow symbolizes all the gratuitous violence depicted in the media.

Yet, during the May sweeps period alone, the networks of-fered viewers made-for-TV movies such as "Murder in the Heartland," "Black Widow Murders," "Visions of Murder," "When Love Kills," "A Case for Murder," "In the Line of Duty: Ambush in Waco" and "Terror in the Towers."

Other forms of entertainment could not escape the anti-violence tidal wave of 1993.

On cable television, MTV was compelled to remove fire jokes from "Beavis and Butt-head" after an Ohio mother said her 5-year-old son, inspired by the popular animated series, set the bed on fire with a cigarette lighter, killing his 2-year-old sister.

Debate continued to rage over rap music, but allegations that some gangsta rappers committed real-life crimes didn't seem to hurt sales. Snoop Doggy Dogg, whose debut album, "Doggystyle," zoomed to the top of the charts, faced criminal charges in Los Angeles stemming from an incident in which his bodyguard fired a shot that killed a man, from a car the rapper was driving. Both Snoop and the bodyguard pleaded not guilty, calling the shooting self-defense. And in New York, rapper and actor Tupac Amaru Shakur—whose hit single "Keep Ya Head Up" was being touted for its positive pro-woman message—was arrested after a 20-year-old woman alleged that the singer and two other men held her down while a fourth sodomized her in a room of the upscale Park Meridien Hotel.

Some radio stations chose to deal with the verbal violence in rap. KPWR-FM, the most popu-

lar English-language radio station in the Los Angeles-Orange County market, announced it was eliminating three derogatory words from rap songs, while KACE-FM banned all music that glorified violence or denigrated women and a New York radio station also announced it would do the same.

The video game industry scurried to police itself after critics complained about "Mortal Kombat"—soon to be a major motion picture—in which martial arts combatants can remove vital organs and body parts from their defeated enemies. (A character called Sub-Zero, for example, yanks off his foes' heads with their spines attached.) Toys "R" Us, the nation's No. 1 chain of toy stores, announced it would no longer carry another video game, "Night Trap," in which players try to save scantily clad sorority sisters being terrorized by hooded killers wielding a neck-drilling device.

Movies also came in for some criticism. Although Hollywood churned out a significant number of family films in 1993, studios continued to rely on a steady stream of action movies to achieve box-office success in the global marketplace.

As always, some films in 1993 were notable for their violence: the gunplay and blood-soaked fights in Morgan Creek's "True Romance"; "Cliffhanger," with its savage beatings and even a death by impaling on a stalactite, and the disturbing serial murders of "Kalifornia."

The biggest-grossing movie of all time, Universal's "Jurassic Park," might seem geared toward the young, but even director Steven Spielberg said that he wouldn't take his young children to it. That didn't stop the usual commercial toy tie-ins.

Why did the issue of media violence flare with such intensity in 1993?

Marcy Kelly, who heads Mediascope, a Studio City-based nonprofit group that encourages the reduction of violence to re-

solve plots in Hollywood productions, believes that one reason for the current debate is that American society appears to be increasingly violent.

"When you see people shot in offices, on a Long Island commuter train and in post offices—places that should be safe—it's not amusing anymore," Kelly said.

Mike Medavoy, who as chairman of Sony's TriStar Pictures has released both action ("Basic Instinct," "Cliffhanger") and nonviolent ("Sleepless in Seattle") movies, agrees that "some movies with sick characters on the screen can, in some instances, create antisocial behavior." But he defended Hollywood, saying that "everyone from directors to studio executives know their responsibility to society." He says his job entails trying to "figure out a balance between a filmmaker's artistic prerogatives and my responsibility [to the studio and public]. I've had knockdown, drag out fights with filmmakers."

Sources said Medavoy chose not to make the next film—"Pulp Fiction"—by "Reservoir Dogs" writer-director Quentin Tarantino because it is too violent. The movie will be made by Miramax Films.

Like many producers in Hollywood, Michael Pressman, co-executive producer of the Emmy-winning CBS drama "Picket Fences," said he fears that the current criticism of media violence, while properly addressing societal concerns, "seems to be a loose-cannon approach to looking at the ills of society."

"I think there is a genuine concern about rising violence in society," Pressman said. "The fact that children are exposed to a lot of violence on the screen and television is one of the concerns being expressed. I believe, however, that you can't create legislation about this, because it is censorship. To make legislation is, in essence, to put the judgment in the hands of the government."

As the year came to a close, Sen. Simon said that he too does not want censorship of television programming in any form. But

the mood in Congress, he warned, is "very hostile to industry."

Simon said he plans to meet with the CEOs of the three major networks next month and discuss putting together an industry group to monitor violence in TV programming.

If that doesn't work, he said, "Then I will introduce legislation to set up some kind of monitoring group . . . either with the National Institute of Mental Health or the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta or with the Federal Communications Commission."

Words to grab Hollywood's attention in 1994. □

Robert W. Welkos is a Times staff writer.

MEDIA

The New York Times

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1993

Despite Clinton, Hollywood Is Still Trading in Violence

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

HOLLYWOOD, Dec. 26 — Within hours of President Clinton's highly publicized speech here imploring entertainment industry leaders to curb depictions of murder and mayhem in movies and television, a number of studio executives who praised Mr. Clinton for what they called his inspiring words were in a bidding war for a movie script in which 11 people are killed in the first seven pages.

"A studio has a genuine responsibility in this issue," said Peter Chernin, the chairman of 20th Century Fox, referring to violence in the movies, "but we'd be a pretty impoverished society if we were to also say that in all of the arts we must remove violence." Mr. Chernin's studio eventually landed the script, titled "Overkill," for a price that may run as high as \$1 million.

He is not alone. Executives of Warner Brothers, Columbia and New Line Cinema, who praised Mr. Clinton when he gave his speech several weeks ago, also bid on the script, by a young writer named Reed Steiner.

In the intensifying debate over the nation's violence, the movie and television industries say they face a difficult, if not unsolvable, problem: how to reflect the violence in the United States without exploiting it.

But critics of violence, who include groups that monitor violence in films and television and even some movie industry executives, say that while Hollywood studios pay lip service to their responsibilities as outlined by Mr. Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno, they are in fact churning out movies that seem to be becoming more violent, not less.

"The violence in movies is powerful and terrifying; we've become addicted to it," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, a Los Angeles psychiatrist and a former chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence. "Violence sells. And the movie industry is, to my mind, taking it far less seriously than television."

But Joel Silver, perhaps Hollywood's most successful producer of action films, insists that the current debate over violence is absurd. The threat by the Administration and Congress to move for the first time

into some vague legislation to control violent content is essentially an easy way of avoiding the core issues of crime, poverty and gun control, Mr. Silver said. His credits include the "Lethal Weapon" and "Die Hard" series, as well as "Demolition Man," and "The Last Boy Scout."

"All week long I've been looking at the James Bond films on television," Mr. Silver said in an interview. "My films are a direct descendant of those films. They're fun. When Bond throws a bad guy into a pool of piranhas and says, 'Bon appétit,' the audience loves it. Is that violence? Yes. Is it a fantasy? Yes. It's not meant to be taken seriously."

Diverging Trends

Even critics of violence acknowledge that the television networks, unlike major film studios, have generally curbed violent programs in the last decade, although the expansion of cable, with its freewheeling use of language, violence and sex, has appeared to dilute television's efforts to keep a lid on violence.

In the 1970's and 80's, such popular shows as "Miami Vice," "Magnum P.I.," "CHiPs," "T. J. Hooker" and "Matt Houston" were far heavier on gunplay than such acclaimed shows of today as "Law and Order," "N.Y.P.D. Blue" and "Homicide." These newer programs have grittier language and more sexual situations than their predecessors but are rarely as violent.

Violence in films, however, seems to have gone in the opposite direction. Of course, movie violence is nothing new. The 1960's produced such classic examples as "Bonnie and Clyde," "The Wild Bunch" and "In Cold Blood," followed in the next decade by "Taxi Driver," "A Clockwork Orange" and "The Godfather." The pain and damage wrought by violence are intrinsic to these films.

Shocking the Masters

Now, however, they have given way to the almost cartoonish violence of such 1990's movies as "True Romance," "Kaliifornia" and "Reservoir Dogs." In these films, the motivations for killings are often unclear; often, the violence is seen as a lark. "The end result is violence inflicted by sexy young renegades in a highly stylized fashion with little or no conflict to show for it," said a recent article in The Hollywood Reporter titled "Killer Chic." The film makers Tony Scott, Quentin Tarantino, Wal-

ter Hill, John Woo and Abel Ferrara are part of this new wave of hip violence, with scarcely a hint of remorse.

In the coming months, Mr. Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction," a violent drama, and Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers," about two mass murderers, will most certainly fuel the debate about films whose sexy murderers show little remorse.

Today's screen murderers are young, sexy and not a bit sorry.

Which came first, the violent society or the violence depicted in films that society patronizes?" asked Robert Shaye, the chairman of New Line Cinema, which has produced the successful "Nightmare on Elm Street," horror films, as well as this year's "Menace 2 Society," an extremely violent, though acclaimed, film about ghetto youths.

"There is an extremely gray area where artistic integrity and pandering can get mixed up," Mr. Shaye said. "'Nightmare' is a series of horror films, fantasy, comic-book violence, like 'Batman' or 'Superman.' Audiences love it."

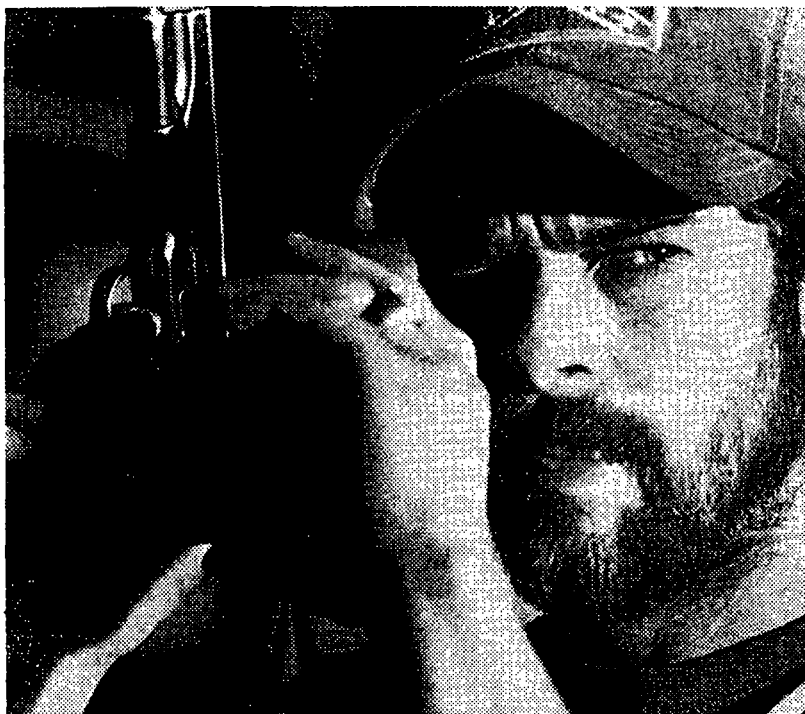
In "Menace 2 Society," though, an especially horrific opening sequence in which Korean shop owners are gratuitously murdered, was toned because Mr. Shaye found it too shocking.

"When something shocks my sensibilities, I ask the question, 'Is this what I want to be associated with?'" he said. "That's what I often base decisions on. It's an issue that goes beyond violence. It's a question of censorship. It can be sexual censorship or political censorship, too. At the end of the day, it's a subjective judgment. Some people find Picasso or Francis Bacon or Robert Mapplethorpe just as shocking."

The Foreign Market

One reason for the scale of violence in American films is that violence, which needs no translation, sells well abroad. "Violence travels well; violent movies frequently do well in foreign markets," said Laurence Mark,

Despite Clinton, Hollywood Is Still Trading in Violence



Gramercy Pictures

Brad Pitt portrays a psychopathic killer in "Kalifornia," one of the recent Hollywood film releases that are dominated by violence.

a producer. "Hence, the resistance to doing away with violence in movies."

Nearly half of all film revenue now comes from abroad, compared with about 30 percent in 1980. The most popular international film stars are Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone. The overseas success of Mr. Douglas in "Basic Instinct" has at least doubled his salary demands, to about \$15 million a film.

What leaves many critics in Hollywood dismayed is the kind of double-speak involved in the violence issue. After Mr. Clinton's speech, Larry Gordon, a prominent producer, observed: "It was very inspiring. We all have a lot of thinking to do." Mr. Gordon helped produce the violent "Die Hard" series.

Mark Canton, the chairman of Columbia Pictures, said: "It causes me to feel like I have to take note. I'm going to really take Sunday to put things in perspective." (Mr. Clinton made his comments on Dec. 11, a Saturday. By the following Monday, the studios, including Columbia, were actively bidding on "Overkill.")

Little Help in Ratings

Hollywood's tolerance of violent films is nurtured by its rating system, which by all accounts is far more concerned with sex than with violence. Louis Malle's elegant "Damage" (1992), about an obsessive love affair, had far more trouble getting an R rating than did "Basic Instinct."

"If a man touches a woman's breast in a movie, it's an R rating, but if he cuts off a limb with a chain saw, it's a PG-13," said Martin Shafer, a top executive at Castle Rock Entertainment, which has produced films including "In the Line of Fire" and "When Harry Met Sally."

"It speaks to the extreme in the way violence seems to be O.K. in ratings, but sexual situations are targeted," he added.

(An R rating carries the notation "Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian." The PG-13 advisory is "Parents strongly cautioned.")

In response to the violence issue, the Motion Picture Association of America, which represents the major studios, has held half a dozen meetings with network and movie executives since September. But there has been no resolution on how to monitor violence, and the only point of agreement seems to be that no one wants government intervention.

As Dr. Lieberman, the former chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, said: "All there is is lip service in the movie business on this issue. Are they taking this issue seriously? Of course not."

January 4, 1994

Seeking cure for violence

4 health care organizations back Clinton's call for 'new awareness'

• Related stories on pages 57 and in International section.

By Brooks Bollek

WASHINGTON — A number of health care organizations applauded President Clinton in a letter for his address to Hollywood last month urging television producers and movie makers to tone down the violence.

"We hope your call to the creative community, together with our written appeal to entertainment industry executives, can be the beginning of a new awareness that each of us must take responsibility for restoring a sense of structure, hope, essential dignity and purpose to the lives of our young people," the letter to the president

said. It was signed by the heads of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Assn., the Society for Adolescent Medicine and the American Psychiatric Assn.

At a Democratic Party fund-raiser at the Creative Artists Agency on Dec. 4, Clinton urged the creative community to be more sensitive about the impact that popular culture — and particularly violence portrayed in the media — has on people growing up in dysfunctional families or those who do not have jobs.

The speech was one of the most visible efforts by the government to tone down television violence — an effort unlikely to abate in 1994.

Last month, the four organizations, in a letter to 125 entertainment industry executives, pledged their help in "lessening the harmful effects of violence in films, television, music and video games." In the organization's Dec. 30 letter, they offered the same help to Clinton.

"We agree with you, Mr. President, that the level of violence in our society is not inevitable," the groups wrote. "Because our members deal with both victims and perpetrators of violence, they come face-to-face with the 'realities that so many of our young people live with,' to use your words, and we know the devastating toll it is having on our society — economically, physically and emotionally."

The letter was signed by Frank Farley, president of the American Psychological Assn.; Dr. Betty Lowe, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Dr. Jack McIntyre, president of the American Psychiatric Assn.; and Dr. Lonnie Zeltzer, president of the Society for Adolescent Medicine.

Congress is likely to take up the television violence issue again this

year unless broadcasters and cable operators take more steps on their own. Last year, they agreed to label shows that may contain violent content.

Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., is expected to meet with top television and cable executives this month to discuss their plans, according to Simon aides. While Simon, one of the key lawmakers pushing the issue, admits that violence in network programming has declined, he still has concerns.

Simon wants the networks and cablers to set up an industry association to report on violent content. If they do not, he has threatened legislation.

Other lawmakers have introduced measures that attempt to attack violent programming. Among them:

- Senate Commerce Committee chairman Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., has introduced a bill that would channel violent programming into late-night hours. Committee aides say Hollings is likely to begin pushing his bill soon.

- A House bill, sponsored by House Telecommunications Subcommittee chairman Ed Markey, D-Mass., has been introduced that would require TV manufacturers to produce sets that contain a computer chip that parents could turn on to block violent programming. That bill also has some support.

- Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., released a version of his television violence report card. The "card" would tell viewers and the sponsors of TV programs which shows were most violent. The idea is that once people knew, they would stop watching the shows and sponsors would shy away from supporting violent fare.

Any of those measures or others could gain steam and be joined. □

Funds Go to Battle Epidemic of Violence

■ **Research:** Wellness Foundation's first major grant boosts fight against violence using public health approach to disease as a model.

By JILL LEOVY
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

WOODLAND HILLS—Last year, the board of directors of the newly formed California Wellness Foundation set out to find a health-related cause worthy of \$30 million.

They passed over prenatal care. They rejected vaccination. Instead, startling the research community, the board announced its first major grant program for a subject that the public only recently began to link to public health: violence prevention.

The program, launched by the foundation created by Health Net as part of a state-brokered deal that allowed the HMO to drop its nonprofit status, was by far the largest private contribution ever made to the public health approach to violence prevention.

The foundation is funding violence research by nine fellows into topics such as why some people are repeat victims of violence, and which programs best curb aggression in children. But rather than wait for results, the foundation is also funding dozens of grass-roots violence prevention programs, and has created an organization to lobby for less violence in movies and television.

Its approach mirrors new research being done across the country in the area of violence prevention. Investigators say their research is distinct from

medical research into what some think may be genetic explanations for violent behavior—criticized as overly deterministic by some public health experts.

Instead, Wellness Foundation researchers and other public health investigators are focusing on social causes, and education programs and government policies to prevent violence.

Researchers seek to prevent violence in the same ways they would seek to prevent any epidemic—by applying the standard tools of the disease scientist's trade. The method is no different whether the disease in question is violence, yellow fever or dysentery, researchers say. Only the solutions vary—what washing hands and building sewers are to digestive parasites, job programs and anger-management training may be to violence.

Using this model, epidemiologists map the progress of the so-called violence epidemic, identify vulnerable "host populations" and risk factors, and seek vectors or transmitters that help it spread. Then they identify policy changes that might prevent it, and educate people about behaviors that promote the disease.

Public health researchers first began attempting to frame shootings, stabbings and assaults as manifestations of disease more than a decade ago. Today, it appears that efforts to instill this approach in the public consciousness have gone a long way toward success. Newspapers casually refer to the "epidemic of violence." Aspects of the public health approach are found everywhere, from presidential speeches to television sitcoms.

And money has followed. Where violence, the social problem, was long too political for mainstream foundations, violence, the public health problem, is a magnet for corporate grants.

Not just the Wellness Foundation, but the Carnegie Corp. of New York, the Joyce Foundation and the Ford Foundation in recent years have announced new grant programs for violence prevention.

Advocates say the change is a result, in part, of a concerted campaign to reframe age-old arguments about gun control and media violence in terms of public health.

"Once it becomes a public health problem, people from all ends of the political spectrum can own the

issue," explained Howard Kahn, Wellness Foundation president.

"Before, it was just 'Build more prisons,'" said Susan B. Sorenson, an associate research epidemiologist at UCLA's School of Public Health, who has received a Wellness Foundation grant. Now, she said, public health researchers have succeeded in getting physicians, and even police, to look at the economic and social context in which violence occurs.

The Wellness Foundation's research grants will further advance incursions of epidemiology—the study of disease—into the area of violent crime.

"Instead of a virus, think of a bullet," said Andrew McGuire, executive director of the San Francisco-based Pacific Center for Violence Prevention, which is funded by the Wellness Foundation.

Not all supporters take the disease model so literally. But they see clear benefits in defining violence in terms of disease rather than criminality.

They point to widespread changes in national attitudes and policies brought about by public health campaigns to limit smoking and drunk driving, and argue that the same changes can occur in the area of violence once it comes to be seen as a matter of public health.

The Wellness Foundation will provide about \$5 million in grants over six years. This year's initial awards total nearly \$1 million to five California universities and the state Department of Health Services to pay for research by nine academic fellows, including psychologists, epidemiologists and surgeons.

Dozens of grants will also go to community leaders who organize grass-roots programs to prevent violence, organizers of programs to teach violence prevention in schools, and conferences for violence prevention.

In addition, Wellness Foundation grants established the \$1.2-million Pacific Center for Violence Prevention, which will provide technical assistance to policymakers and training to fellows and community leaders. Also, \$300,000 will be provided over three years to Mediascope, a San Fernando Valley-based group that advocates changes in the way violence is depicted in movies and television.

The foundation was formed by order of the state corporations commissioner as part of an agree-

VIOLENCE: It's Viewed as Disease in New Search for Remedies

ment that allowed Health Net, California's second-largest HMO, to become a for-profit company.

With a total of \$300 million in assets, and 80% ownership of Health Net shares, the newly formed foundation is typical of many of the nation's largest, corporate-style mega-endowments.

Such organizations don't usually launch major initiatives for fringe causes. Observers say the Wellness Foundation's embrace is a sign of the new legitimacy of the violence-prevention movement.

Geno Tellez, a trauma surgeon at San Francisco General Hospital, is one of the foundation's new academic fellows.

He will use his new research money to investigate "recidivistic" trauma victims—patients who return to hospitals over and over again with violent injuries.

Tellez said about 30% of trauma victims have been treated for trauma before. He wants to identify these people, who appear particularly prone to violent injuries, and develop interventions to prevent their constant reappearance in emergency rooms.

"People think violence is an acceptable complication of our society," he said. "But from a medical standpoint, this complication is not acceptable. Death is not acceptable."

The crusading tone should not come as a surprise, said Jim Whorton, a professor of medical history at the University of Washington.

The idea that public health could cure society's deepest ills is rooted deep in the history of the discipline. Early English sanitary reformers thought of disease as tightly correlated to the poverty, prostitution, crime and filth that plagued 19th-Century urban

slums, he said.

"They believed by preventing disease, they could prevent violence. They envisioned a future with no disease and no problems and no poverty—socially and medically purified cities," Whorton said.

Later reformers dropped the idea that a little soap and hygiene could cure a plethora of social ills. Scientists studying epidemics shifted their focus to germs. But today, Whorton said, researchers are harking back to a broader vision.

"The question is, can epidemiology, which has succeeded so well against environmental problems and disease agents, work as well in the area of violence?" Whorton said.

Kahn, the Wellness Foundation president, said it is not realistic to pretend that recasting violence as a disease will solve the problem. But he defends the effort as a response to a problem that affects nearly everyone.

"It absolutely is not as easy as a vaccination," he said. "But what is the alternative? Not to address the problem?"

MEDIA

Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1993

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Fears Cloud Search for Genetic Roots of Violence

■ **Sociology:** Many say studies could open the door to abuses and racism. Scientists are sharply divided.

By SHERYL STOLBERG
TIMES MEDICAL WRITER

As gun detectors become standard furniture in schools and some children learn to fire automatic weapons before they learn to drive, Dr. Markku Linnoila is struggling to unravel a great mystery of human behavior: What transforms innocent little children into brutal teen-agers and adults?

Across America, hundreds of other scholars are on a similar quest, frantically searching for the roots of modern violence. Most are pursuing the obvious leads: poverty, parental neglect, lack of education, drugs, guns and TV violence.

Not Linnoila. He is hunting for clues in genes—and triggering great controversy while he is at it.

In his laboratory at the National Institutes of Health, the soft-spoken native of Finland has spent 13 years immersing himself in the intricacies of the brain chemical serotonin. By examining the spinal fluid and blood of more than 1,000 Finnish prisoners—including 300

■ FIRST OF TWO PARTS

violent offenders—he says he has proved over and over again that people with low levels of this neurotransmitter are prone to impulsive, violent acts, especially when they abuse alcohol.

Now, Linnoila is searching for “vulnerability genes” that create this serotonin deficit. His goal: to be able to predict who might become violent, and then to prevent it—either with programs to help these people change their behavior or, if that doesn't work, new drugs.

At a time when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control has declared

that violence is America's most pressing public health threat, Linnoila's work raises some of the most intriguing—and politically volatile—questions in medical research today: Are some people biologically or genetically predisposed to violence? Could traditional medicine hold clues, even tiny ones, to making streets safe again?

“We are trying,” Linnoila explains simply, “to address this public health problem with an open mind.”

But not everyone's mind is so open.

His work challenges long-held assumptions that social and environmental factors—poverty, joblessness, discrimination, lack of education—are the sole causes of crime and violence. And there is bitter controversy over whether science should even attempt to answer the questions raised by his research.

Critics say research like Linnoila's is dangerous, that it holds too much potential for abuse. The biggest fear is that the studies will be used to discriminate against people of color, particularly African Americans. This is because blacks are disproportionately represented in arrest statistics; the federal government reports that African Americans, who make up about 12% of the population, account for 45% of all arrests for violent crimes such as homicide, rape and robbery.

Thus, scientific pursuits have become entangled in delicate discussions of race. Social tensions are spilling over into the laboratory. Not surprisingly, the debate sometimes gets emotional.

“We know what causes violence

in our society: poverty, discrimination, the failure of our educational system,” said Dr. Paul Billings, a clinical geneticist at Stanford University who has spoken out against such research. “It's not the genes that cause violence in our society. It's our social system.”

Counters Adrian Raine, a USC psychologist who has reviewed all published research that attempts to link biology to violence: “It is irrefutably the case that biologic and genetic factors play a role. That is beyond scientific question. If we ignore that over the next few decades, then we will never ever rid society [of violence].”

Many Factors at Work

It is a classic nature-versus-nurture debate—one that might be confined to the ivory tower, if it were not for the dreadful toll that violence is taking on America.

The United States leads the industrialized world in murder, with an annual rate of homicide four times that of Scotland, the country with the next-highest rate. Murder is responsible for more deaths among young black men in America than any other cause, and Latino men are three times as likely to be killed as whites. According to the CDC, homicide is the nation's 11th-leading cause of death.

Theories abound concerning the reasons for this upsurge: Poor parenting. Television violence. Poverty. Discrimination. Substandard housing. Inadequate education. Easy access to guns. Drug abuse. Genetics and biology. The truth is, all these factors are at work, but no one really knows how they play in combination with one another. There are many questions. Answers are scarce.

“There are lots of things that we don't know,” Yale University sociologist Albert Reiss said. “What is it that accounts for the fact that we have more interpersonal violence [than other nations] and that it is disproportionately among blacks? That's a puzzle. And why is it that women have so much less homicide, but suicide ranks higher? If

VIOLENCE: Fears Cloud Search for Genetic Causes

you think we know the answers to all those questions, then there is no reason to do research."

Although rational voices agree that biology and genetics probably play a role in causing violence, what they cannot agree on is this: How much of a role? Or is this intellectual territory better left unexplored?

Last year, the National Research Council stepped into the fray and gingerly sided with the argument made by Raine of USC. As the research branch of the National Academy of Sciences, the most prestigious scientific group in the nation, the NRC brought together 19 of America's most prominent academics to explore every aspect of the nation's violence problem.

In a massive 464-page report titled "Understanding and Preventing Violence," the scientists recommended that along with traditional research into the social causes of violence, biomedical research into violence should be increased.

The language was cautious, noting that "evidence of a genetic influence specific to violent behavior is mixed." But the message was clear: The human body may hold clues to what makes people violent. And scientists ought to pursue them.

Aside from genetics, the NRC cited other important biological leads, including studies that show certain brain abnormalities are linked to violent behavior. And it suggested new drugs might be developed to prevent violent behavior "without undesirable side effects."

Yet using medicine to "cure" violence is precisely what opponents find so abhorrent.

Among the most vocal critics is Dr. Peter Breggin. As founder of the Center for the Study of Psychiatry in Bethesda, Md., Breggin has made a career of fighting medical approaches to social problems. He envisions a frightening scenario in which government-funded genetic screening programs will label inner-city youngsters at risk for becoming violent, and then dope them up in what he calls "a

The High Cost

Violence is one of the United States' most pressing public health threats, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some of the sobering figures:

■ **THE TOLL:** Homicide is the nation's 11th leading cause of death, and the leading cause of death for young black men. It is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15 to 24.

■ **TEEN-AGERS:** Firearms are responsible for the deaths of more U.S. teen-agers than are all diseases combined.

■ **THE GUN'S ROLE:** More than 60% of all murders are committed with guns. At least 80% of the cost of treating firearms injuries is paid by taxpayers.

■ **THE HOSPITAL SCENE:** Each year, more than 2 million Americans suffer injuries as a result of violence, and more than 500,000 are treated in emergency rooms.

■ **THE COST:** By some estimates, the nation spends as much as \$18 billion each year caring for victims of violence; by comparison, \$10 billion was spent last year to treat people infected with the AIDS virus.

massive drugging of America's children."

Not one to mince words, Breggin compares attempts to find genes for violence to the horrifying genetic experiments that took place during the Nazi Holocaust. "It's like if you go into the concentration camps and see how bad the Jews are doing, to look for genetic factors for it!" he exclaims. "This is biomedical social control."

If history is any guide, Breggin may have reason to be fearful. Americans have long been fascinated with biological explanations for violence, and the research can-

not escape its own sordid history, a legacy of one debunked theory after another.

During the early 20th Century, advocates of eugenics—a movement that asserted society should encourage breeding by those with "good traits"—claimed that certain immigrant groups had higher crime rates because they came from genetically flawed stock. Advocates of eugenics believed that criminal tendencies were linked to what was then called feeble-mindedness. While eugenics was in vogue, more than 30 states passed laws providing for the sterilization of the feeble-minded or insane.

More recently, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a flurry of interest around scientific reports that boys born with an extra Y chromosome were destined to become violent. The studies were ultimately discredited, but not before researchers in Boston began screening newborn boys—a program that was canceled amid public outrage. Jonathan Beckwith, a Harvard University geneticist, said: "The whole premise of the study was based on terribly faulty science."

Yet over the years, science has developed a significant—if scattered—body of evidence that indicates some people are indeed biologically prone to violence. For instance, studies have shown that a disproportionate number of murderers have suffered from head injuries. Hypoglycemia—low blood sugar levels—has been linked to violent and aggressive behavior. So has the male hormone testosterone, in high concentrations.

Sophisticated brain imaging has pinpointed differences in the prefrontal cortex—the region of the brain believed to control social behavior—of violent criminals. Other studies have suggested that people with low levels of "arousal"—heart rate, sweat rate and electrical activity of the brain—are more likely to commit violent crimes.

Controversial History

Not all of these biological differences have their roots in genes, and so far research into the links between genetics and violence has been limited.

But recent advances in molecular biology are opening up vast—and as yet largely untapped—possibilities for studies into how genes affect behavior, including violence. This field, “behavioral genetics,” has been fraught with controversy; claims of genes for schizophrenia, manic depression and alcoholism have all either been disproved or come under severe criticism. Some say the same will undoubtedly be true of any attempt to find a gene for violence.

Others worry about how the research will be used.

“Let’s just assume we find a genetic link [to violence],” said Ronald Walters, a political scientist at Howard University in Washington. “The question I have always raised is how will this finding be used? There is a good case, on the basis of history, that it could be used in a racially oppressive way, which is to say you could mount drug programs in inner-city communities based upon this identification of so-called genetic markers.”

So far, just one study has made a connection between a specific gene and violence. In October, a team of Dutch scientists reported that they had found a genetic mutation in a family whose men had a long history of violence—including a rape that occurred 50 years ago, two arsons and an incident in which a man tried to run down his boss with a car after receiving a negative performance evaluation.

These men, the researchers found, had abnormal genes that code for enzymes that help break down the brain chemical monoamine oxidase, which could cause someone to respond violently to stress if allowed to build up in high concentrations. But the study’s authors—well aware of the controversy their work might engender—were quick to caution that their discovery of the so-called aggression gene applied only to the one family they studied, and that the genetic defect was probably not widespread.

The serotonin deficit that Linnoila is investigating is far more commonplace; he estimates it may be present in as many as one out of every 20 men. But, Linnoila adds,

there are more than 20 genes that could control the manufacture of this brain chemical. And it will be at least another decade before he understands how they work together—in connection with other factors, such as alcohol abuse or poor parenting—to make people violent.

“The low serotonin turnover as such does not make anybody a violent criminal,” Linnoila said. “It is simply a predisposing factor. . . . The challenge is really to understand how the genes and environment interact.”

Uproar Over Research

No scientist has suggested that there is a single gene for violence, or that biology alone can explain the broad swath of crime cutting through American society. But Linnoila and others do say these studies could provide science with clues about why people become violent in certain situations—and how to prevent it. Even if the research applies to only a small number of people, advocates argue, it will still be worthwhile.

“Violent behavior is a problem for society,” said Kenneth K. Kidd, a geneticist at Yale University. “And there is growing evidence that some small component—I have no idea how big yet—of violent behavior has a genetic basis. So I think it is worth trying to understand what causes that and trying to understand how we can minimize it.”

Dr. Frederick Goodwin thought so too, but he was not nearly so careful in his choice of words as Kidd, and it got him into trouble.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Goodwin, a respected psychiatrist, conducted studies into the connection between serotonin and violence. Goodwin later became director of the now-defunct federal Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration. Two years ago, while still in that job, he called for government scientists to embark on a large-scale violence initiative that would include biomedical research.

But Goodwin sprinkled his speech with several remarks that were later interpreted as racist, including one that suggested studies involving monkeys might prove useful in understanding violence in humans. The comments sparked a

huge uproar, the violence initiative was scuttled and amid the fury, the NIH convened a special panel to review all its violence-related research.

The panel has not yet made its recommendations, but members say it is likely to suggest the NIH expand its research into the social causes of violence. Goodwin, meanwhile, was forced to resign his post with the alcohol and drug abuse agency and now serves as director of the National Institute of Mental Health. He declined to be interviewed.

But the controversy has failed to subside.

Among those it has snagged is David Wasserman, a 40-year-old lawyer and research scholar at a University of Maryland think tank. Wasserman organized and scheduled a conference on genetics and crime for October, 1992—eight months after Goodwin made his ill-fated remarks.

Although the NIH had agreed to foot the \$78,000 bill for the conference, it yanked the funding after Breggin and others complained about the conference. Wasserman was forced to cancel the meeting, but the university appealed and the money has since been reinstated. The conference will be held, Wasserman says, but its agenda will be nowhere near as broad as the one he first envisioned.

That is because the researchers he invited are now afraid to discuss their work.

“I had scientists who were invited to the conference telling me that they were going to tone down what they were going to say because they didn’t want [their funding] to be placed in jeopardy,” he said.

For scientists interested in the biology of violence, any public pronouncements are fraught with danger. Sarnoff Mednick learned that lesson long ago.

Mednick is a USC psychologist who in the late 1970s conducted a landmark study of genetics and crime. His was a classic genetics study. It relied not on the sophisticated techniques of molecular biology but on a painstaking analysis of the criminal records of more than 14,427 adopted children in Denmark between 1927 and 1947. (Scandinavian nations are particularly suited to genetic studies because their populations are homogeneous and because they keep excellent records.) He compared

these records with the criminal records of the children's biological and adoptive parents.

Mednick found no evidence that children inherited a tendency toward violence. But he did find that youngsters were more likely to commit property crimes, such as theft, if their biological parents had also committed property crimes. And, like Linnoila, he found himself caught up in a heated political debate.

"People were out of their minds trying to deny that this could possibly exist . . .," he said. "When I presented the paper orally at the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science, there was a mob scene, with the press running after me and me running away. I was amazed."

A Public Health Issue

In 1983, Mednick proposed a large-scale study that would have measured arousal—sweat rate, heart rate and brain electrical activity—in juvenile delinquents. The object was to predict who would become repeat offenders. He says his plan received initial approval from the U.S. Department of Justice, which was to fund the study, and that he had the cooperation of judges in San Diego, where the research was to have been conducted.

But the funding was withdrawn, Mednick said, after a Washington newspaper columnist published an article comparing his proposal to "something cooked up by the Nazis' Dr. Mengele." Now, 10 years later, Mednick is about to embark on the same study—in Australia, where the political opposition is not as great.

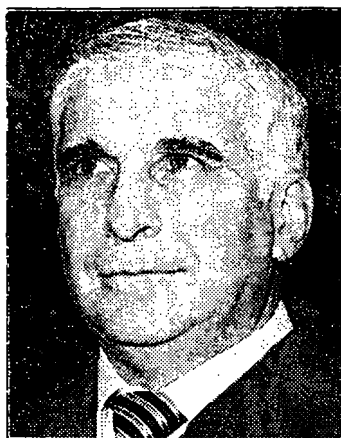
Mednick is morose about the future of this biomedical research into violence. "It's kind of hopeless," he said. "Nobody permits the studies to be done. Nobody permits the conferences to be held."

And like most others in the field, Mednick tries to shield his work from publicity. "I think most of the people who are doing serious work on this try to avoid it," he said in a recent telephone interview. "Like I was trying to avoid this phone call for some time."

Linnoila, too, worries that anything he says will be misconstrued. He fears he will be branded as "one of these crazies," and he chooses his words with caution. He is careful to say that, in his vision,

The Debate

As academics across the nation struggle to understand the causes of violence and how to prevent it, some scientists are looking to the human body for clues. There is scientific evidence that biology and genetics play some role in violent behavior. But biomedical research into violence is highly controversial, and some critics would like to see it quashed.



"It's like if you go into the [Nazi] concentration camps and see how bad the Jews are doing, to look for genetic factors for it! This is biomedical social control."

—Dr. Peter Breggin, who opposes attempts to find genes for violence.



"Our critics paint these nightmare scenarios . . . that somewhere there is a bogymen who wants to start drugging people. . . . I think we have a very significant problem with interpersonal violent behavior. It behooves us, if we are serious about this, to try to understand how to prevent it."

—Dr. Markku Linnola, who believes that science may be able to find some clues to violence.

drugs would be used to control violent behavior only as a last resort, after other programs had been tried and failed. And he offers—without being asked—that he does not consider his research "an ethnic issue."

But he believes fiercely that science may hold at least some clues to curing America's violence epidemic, and that his own research is crucial to the public health of a nation at risk.

"Our critics paint these nightmare scenarios based on their own imaginations . . . that somewhere there is a bogymen who wants to immediately start drugging people, and I don't see that," he said. "I think that we have a very significant problem with interpersonal violent behavior. And it behooves us, if we are serious about this, to try to understand how to prevent it."

Violence and the Brain

Dr. Markku Linnoila of the National Institutes of Health has spent the past 13 years researching serotonin, a neurotransmitter—or brain chemical—that modulates emotion. Linnoila's research has repeatedly shown that people with low levels of serotonin (pronounced SER-uh-TOE-nin) are prone to impulsive, violent acts. Linnoila is now looking for genes that create this serotonin imbalance. Finding these genes could help scientists predict who might become violent—and give them preventive treatment.

Background

The brain has 10 billion to 100 billion nerve cells. Messages between cells are communicated by both electrical and chemical processes. Here is a look at how the chemical process works:

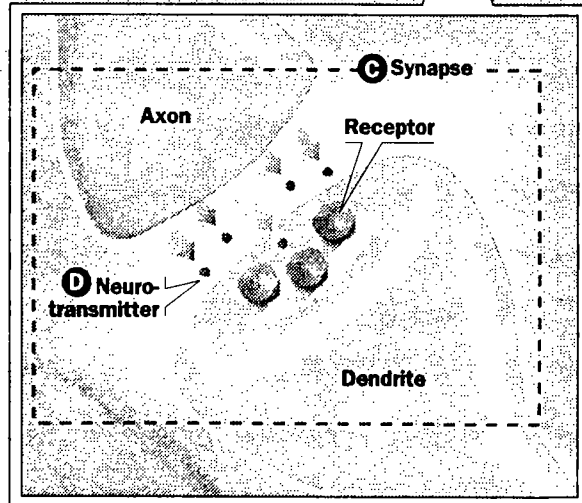
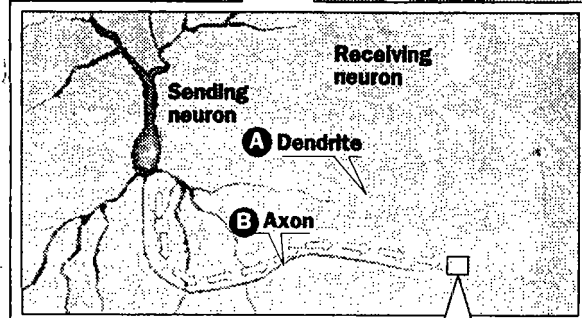
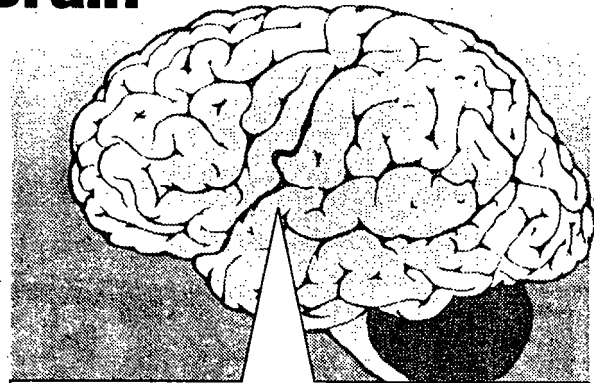
The Messengers

- A.** Nerve cells, called neurons, contain tentacle-like structures known as axons that carry messages. Others, known as dendrites, receive messages.
- B.** The axons of one nerve cell are separated from the dendrites of another by a tiny gap called a synaptic cleft, or synapse.
- C.** Messages are transmitted across the synapse by the various neurochemical transmitters.
- D.** Many researchers believe that the neurotransmitter known as serotonin plays a key role in a number of emotions. Imbalances in serotonin levels have various effects; low levels have been tied to depression, suicidal behavior and aggression while large amounts can bring on emotional highs, including mania.

What Is Serotonin?

Serotonin, which is converted from an amino acid called tryptophan, is a naturally occurring chemical found in the brain, blood and other parts of the body. It can also be produced synthetically. In the brain, it is one of at least 40 chemicals that serve as messengers between nerve cells.

Research by NONA YATES/Los Angeles Times
Sources: World Book Encyclopedia, Times files.



DENNIS LOWE / Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1993

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COLUMN ONE

Nipping Violence in the Bud

■ With studies linking genetics and criminal behavior, one pioneering program tries to identify and help children at risk. The Chicago study is testing the theories in real-life settings.

By SHERYL STOLBERG
TIMES MEDICAL WRITER

CHICAGO—Five wide-eyed 11-year-olds are gathered around a Formica table in the cafeteria of the James G. Blaine Elementary School, a 100-year-old brick building with pockmarked wooden balustrades and stairs worn down from too much use. This aging public school hardly seems a place where cutting-edge science is conducted.

Yet here, in a working-class neighborhood not far from Wrigley Field, a grand experiment is under way, with these and other young students as its subjects. Although they do not know it, the youngsters have been selected because a battery of tests have shown that they are at risk for one of America's worst public health threats.

The threat is not cancer, or tuberculosis, or even AIDS: It is that these children will grow up to be violent.

Margot Mosley is trying to stop that from occurring. The behavioral researcher from the University of Illinois has come to the Blaine

cafeteria on this blustery December day to deliver an alarmingly simple lesson: Think before you act.

"Shauna," Mosley says brightly in her best teacher's voice, "give me an example of a time in your life when you found it important to stop and think."

Shauna, a tall skinny girl in maroon stretch pants and a striped shirt, pipes up with the story of a

■ SECOND OF TWO PARTS

fight she had with her brother: "He was whoopin' the dog and I had hit him so he got on top of me and I tried to pick him off and he hit my mama's glass and she got real mad."

"Did you regret breaking the glass?" Mosley asks.

"No," the girl flatly replies.

"Did your mama get upset?"

"Uh huh."

This exchange—aimed at changing the way one child handles her anger—is one tiny part of a massive violence prevention project, unprecedented in size and scope. More than 8,600 children in 16 Chicago area schools have participated in the program, which is paid for by the National Institutes of Health and run by a team of University of Illinois psychologists.

They take children as young as 8 and attempt to identify who is likely to become violent later in life; then, they "treat" them with lessons such as the one Mosley conducted. Shauna, whose name was changed to protect her privacy, and the others will be tracked for at least five more years and, researchers hope, until they turn 22. Only then will psychologists know whether their plan has had a lasting effect.

This is uncharted territory. Children's lives are at stake. Although the program is generating praise from teachers and parents who see it as a steadying influence on young people, the team is treading lightly, knowing that some might find its methods unsettling.

For instance, although parents

sign consent forms, they are kept in the dark about the project's goals. To preserve confidentiality and to avoid stigmatizing the children, researchers say only that they are trying to help the youngsters do well in school. Moreover, some children—the "control subjects"—get no treatment at all, even though they might benefit from it.

This is all in the name of science. And science is what sets the Chicago project apart from nearly every other violence prevention program in the nation, making it more difficult to conduct yet also more promising.

The research builds upon 30 years of medical evidence that shows that aggressive behavior in children can be measured, and used to forecast aggression. Yet with all the furor over America's mean streets, this project—along with one conducted by Vanderbilt and Duke universities—marks the first time anyone has attempted to use evidence on predicting violence to develop a solid plan for preventing it.

"This is exactly what we need to do, and do more of, in this field," said Jim Mercy of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "We are so focused on reacting to the problem through a criminal justice approach that very little research has been devoted to preventing violence in the first place."

□

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of violence prevention programs in America—everything from late-night inner-city basketball leagues to "scared straight" programs for juvenile delinquents. Rarely are they conducted as true experiments, with control groups and rigorous analysis. So nobody can be sure if they are doing any good.

The Chicago study will be different. It is being conducted with all the rigor of a pharmaceutical firm testing a new drug.

"We would never put drugs on the market without trials to see if

they work, and yet we do this all the time for kids," said Nancy Guerra, the psychologist who heads the study. "There are so many violence prevention programs out there. Everybody and their brother is funding this and that, and one of the real unfortunate things is we have very little data about what works."

The data that does exist focuses mostly on the fallout from violence, rather than the cure. The statistics are oft-cited:

The United States has the dubious distinction of leading the industrialized world in murder. Race is a troubling factor. Murder is the No. 1 cause of death for black men between ages 15 and 24, and Latino men are three times as likely to be killed as whites.

The costs are enormous, both in human and economic terms. The nation may spend up to \$18 billion a year in direct medical costs to care for victims of violence. That does not include billions more in lost wages and productivity, and a lifetime of social services for the injured.

Against the backdrop of these figures, Mercy and his CDC colleagues for more than a decade have argued that violence is a public health problem, one that can be studied scientifically and prevented, just like heart disease. This year, for the first time, their philosophy found a receptive ear in the White House.

With President Clinton endorsing the CDC line, the agency is funding 14 prevention programs in large and small cities across the nation. Although each will be evaluated for years to come, Mercy said, "we feel very strongly that we can't tell communities: 'Don't do anything until we find the perfect scientific answer.'"

□

There will, of course, never be the perfect scientific answer. But in Room 3033 of the Behavioral Sciences building at the University of Illinois, there may one day be enough information to come close.

There, 25 file cabinets are stuffed with behavioral evaluations of every youngster participating in the Metropolitan Area Child Study. Across the hall, graduate students tap away on computers, building a massive data base that includes aggression ratings for each child.

The pioneer in this field—and the guiding force behind the Chicago research—is Leonard Eron, a straight-talking 73-year-old psychologist at the University of Michigan.



"Sometimes I think, what the hell are we doing with our cockamamie procedures when this is such a tremendous problem? . . . You can't reach the parents. They don't have telephones or they're not at home. A lot of them are on drugs. We have some of our children living in crack houses. Those problems are so awful, so horrendous, I don't know what we can expect to achieve."

— **Psychologist Leonard Eron, whose pioneering research forms the basis for the Chicago violence prevention project.**

In 1960, Eron set out to measure aggression among 875 third-graders in New York state's Columbia County, a semirural region on the Hudson River. He interviewed parents, teachers and, most important, the children, asking a series of simple questions: Who starts a fight over nothing? Who pushes and shoves? Who always gets into trouble? The idea was to let the subjects rate one another.

Eron followed the children until they turned 30. What he found was startling. Those who were highly aggressive at age 8 were about three times as likely as their peers to commit crimes by age 30. And the crimes committed by the "high aggressors" were violent more often than not.

Clearly, this is not a perfect predictor. But Kenneth Dodge, a clinical psychologist at Vanderbilt, said: "It is impressively better than chance—better enough that we have judged that it is worth trying to intervene with those children who are at risk."

The Chicago team is trying to do just that. Using Eron's methods of picking out children at risk, it is offering a variety of interventions—or "treatments"—to youngsters who score in the top half on the aggression scale.

Some get a year's worth of classroom lessons, conducted by their regular teachers (the cheapest intervention). Others, such as Shauna, the 11-year-old at Blaine, attend small group sessions, lasting 22 weeks, where behavior experts teach them to resolve conflicts peacefully. Others get special family counseling (the most expensive treatment), also for 22 weeks.

One of the biggest dangers is stigmatizing the children. Mindful of this, the Chicago researchers have taken great care to keep the aggression ratings strictly confidential—and to put a positive spin on their work.

Shauna and the others in the small group sessions are given a hearty round of congratulations and sent home with a letter that says they have been selected for "leadership training." Parents are told the family counseling will help their children excel in school.

It is a deception, the researchers admit, but one that they say is justified—and necessary—to avoid harming the children and skewing the results. Medical ethicists agree. They liken it to a clinical trial for a new drug, in which some people get a placebo and some get the real thing.

"Is it totally on the up and up? No," said psychologist Pat Tolan, a principal investigator on the study, "in the sense that we don't say to people the real reason we're being funded is because we believe these kids are at high risk for antisocial behavior. But anybody who knows prevention research will say that it's two sides of the same coin. The same things that promote good development and academic achievement and pro-social behavior also prevent antisocial behavior."

But can antisocial behavior be prevented in today's violent climate? It is a long way, Tolan and his colleagues are learning, from semirural Columbia County, N.Y., in the '60s to the rough city life of Chicago in the '90s.

Guns are everywhere; a recent nationwide survey found that 270,000 weapons are carried to school each day by U.S. students. Drugs add danger to the mix. Last year, a crack house operated next door to one school in the Chicago study, and two teachers were

raped in the parking lot. In one survey the team conducted, 45% of the second-graders said they had seen someone shot.

This is not lost on the academics. The harsh reality of the streets has intruded on the ivory tower.

"Sometimes I think: What the hell are we doing with our cockamamie procedures when this is such a tremendous problem that it is going to take macro-forces to make changes?" Eron said with a sigh. "This is very, very difficult. You can't reach the parents. They don't have telephones or they're not at home. A lot of them are on drugs. We have some of our children living in crack houses. Those problems are so awful, so horrendous, I don't know what we can expect to achieve."

Yet there are bright spots, glimmers of hope, places such as Fuller Elementary School.

Fuller may be the poorest school in the Chicago study. There is no integration there; all the students are black. More than nine of 10 live below the poverty line. Many began life as crack babies, said Principal Judith Riggins. Most don't have fathers who live at home.

The school sits between a patch of weed-covered lots and a block of burned-out, boarded-up buildings on Chicago's South Side. To get to school, youngsters must tread across the turf of two of the city's toughest gangs, the Disciples and the Vice Lords.

In Riggins' office, a spent shotgun shell sits on a secretary's desk; a young student brought it in for show. Although few guns have made their way into Fuller, knives, scissors and screwdrivers are confiscated more often than the teachers care to discuss. Some complain that the kids are running the school, that even the little ones resort to violence to settle their disputes.

"What I see are outbursts of anger, kicking, hitting other students, cursing," said John C. Greene, who has taught there for more than a decade. "Some of the little kids can out-curse the adults."

Unlike the students at Blaine, who receive intensive small-group training, the Fuller students have received only classroom instruction, offered by their teachers and based on a curriculum the university psychologists have devised. But as a bonus for Fuller, the researchers recently began "peer mediation" training to teach students to arbitrate disputes that turn violent.

Even with this less intensive treatment, the program is having noticeable success, at least by principal Riggins' estimation. She said the rate of violence—as measured by disciplinary actions her office has taken—has dropped 40% since the project began three years ago.

Whether that drop will translate into a long-term behavior changes will not be known for years. But for Riggins, the thought that it might is one of the few sources of hope in a job that is increasingly grim.

"Our little children grow up and they don't know how to handle their violence. They see their parents using violence to solve their problems. We have one little boy who's been told [by his parents] that no matter what he does wrong his father will come over here and [rough] up the people. . . . This program is badly needed. Without it, I see more kids being shot, stabbed, dying young. The answer will lie in people learning how to handle their anger."

□

It is a delicate business, however, to pick out kids and declare them "at risk" for anything, let alone violence. Experts acknowledge that there is a danger the predictions of violence could turn into self-fulfilling prophecies, or that the "treatments" could hurt more than they help.

What if the kids in the control group—those who got no treatment—grow up to be violent? What if the researchers pick the wrong kids for treatment? Will a lot of time and money have been expended for nothing?

Albert Reiss, a Yale sociologist and expert on violence, is wary of the whole affair. He says that because the predictions are never

100% accurate, the Chicago team will inevitably be treating kids who do not need the help, and missing kids who do.

"The prediction thing is very, very tricky," Reiss said. "There are more false positives than you or I would want to live with. You are predicting someone will turn out to be a delinquent, except they don't turn out to be that way. And so you've done all these things to them because you thought they were going to be somebody they are not."

One famous—if relatively unsophisticated—attempt at preventing violence backfired. From 1939 to 1945, the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Program provided counseling to 500 delinquent boys in Massachusetts. When sociologist

Joan McCord of Temple University did a follow-up study 30 years later, she says, she found that the boys who got the counseling died an average of five years younger than those in a control group and were more likely to be career criminals and alcoholics.

"From every point of view you care to name, the kids in the treatment program were not turning out better," McCord said.

The Chicago researchers insist that their plan will not do its young subjects any harm. But they know that, like any experiment, this one could flop.

"I know that's a possibility," Tolan said. "Do I think our project is harmful? No. If I did, I'd stop it immediately. . . . But my feeling is that the choice is to do it this way, or just continue to spend money and submit kids to things that we don't know work, and I don't think that's an option."

Even if Tolan and the others do prove violence can be prevented—and that their program is a way to do it—there remains the question of the bottom line: Will Americans be willing to foot the bill for this nationwide?

The taxpayers, through the NIH, are giving the Illinois researchers \$650,000 a year. Tolan estimates that the most expensive treatment—the family counseling—costs \$1,200 per child each year. By comparison, it costs anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year to keep a person in prison. The numbers, he said, speak for themselves.

"If you could target the right kids and keep 30% of them from spending a year in jail, look at all the money you have saved. And that's not counting whether you care about keeping people from hurting one another."

Predicting Aggression

Psychologists employ a variety of means to forecast aggression in children. One way is to simply ask youngsters questions about their classmates and themselves.

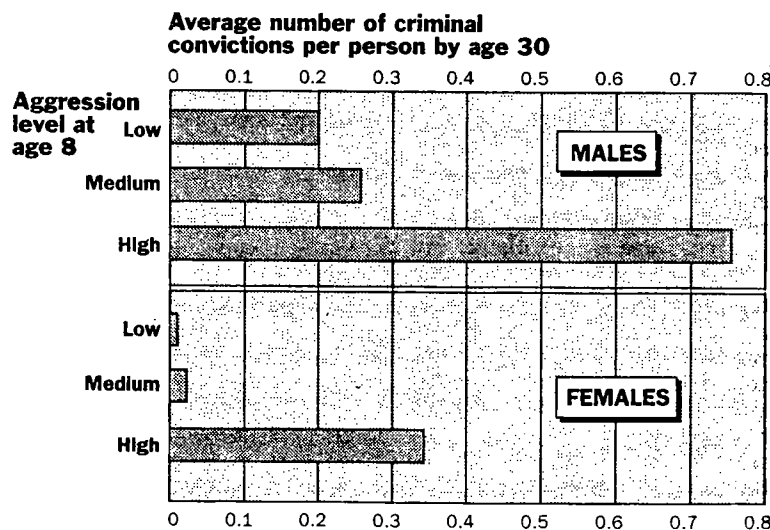
Here are some of the questions that researchers in a massive violence prevention project in Chicago ask; the answers help determine who is at risk for becoming violent later in life.

- Who likes to share with others?
- Who does not obey the teacher?
- Who often says, "Give me that!"?
- Who pushes and shoves other children?
- Who gives dirty looks or sticks out their tongue at other children?
- Who helps other kids?
- Who starts a fight over nothing?
- Who is always getting into trouble?
- Who says mean things?
- Who takes other children's things without asking?
- Who are the children who get picked on by other kids?
- Who are the children you would like to have as your best friends?
- Who wiggles or moves around in their seat a lot?

SOURCE: University of Illinois

Pattern of Violence

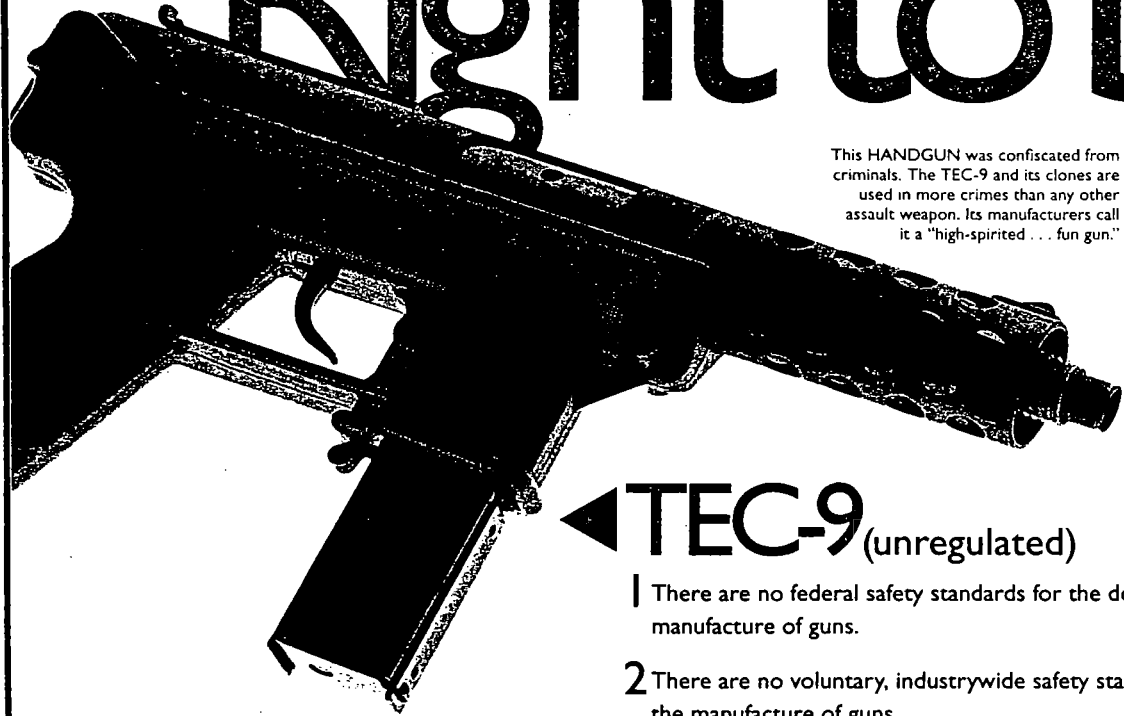
Pioneering research by psychologist Leonard Eron has demonstrated that children who are considered highly aggressive at age 8 are three times as likely as other children to commit crimes by age 30. On average, those placed in the low or medium levels at age 8 had fewer criminal convictions by age 30.



Source: Leonard Eron, University of Michigan

Los Angeles Times

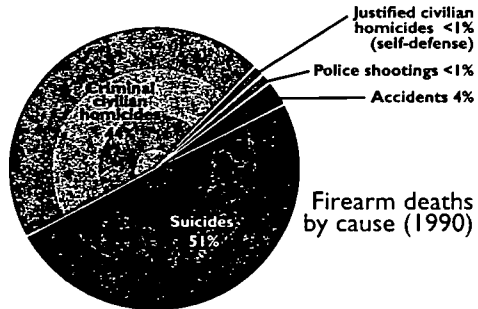
The Right to bears & arms



This HANDGUN was confiscated from criminals. The TEC-9 and its clones are used in more crimes than any other assault weapon. Its manufacturers call it a "high-spirited . . . fun gun."

◀ TEC-9 (unregulated)

- 1 There are no federal safety standards for the domestic manufacture of guns.
- 2 There are no voluntary, industrywide safety standards for the manufacture of guns.
- 3 Approximately one gun model is recalled every three years.
- 4 Keeping a gun in your home makes it three times more likely that someone will be killed there.
- 5 In 1990, guns killed 37,184 people in the United States.



Solutions

Regulate guns like other consumer products.

Ban all handguns and assault rifles.

Tax ammunition heavily.

MOTHERJONES

MOTHER JONES, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994

Guess which one has more manufacturing regulations?

▶ Teddy (heavily regulated)

- 1 At least four broad types of federal safety standards cover teddy bears: sharp edges and points, small parts, hazardous materials, and flammability.
- 2 In 1976 the toy industry issued a comprehensive voluntary toy-safety standard. The Toy Manufacturers Association has maintained a safety standards committee since the early 1930s.
- 3 Six separate teddy bear models were recalled in fiscal year 1992 alone.
- 4 Keeping a teddy bear in your home does not increase the chance that someone will be killed there.
- 5 Teddy bears killed nobody last year. Only eight child deaths from all accidents involving toys were reported in the first eight months of 1993.



Every **2** minutes somebody somewhere in the U.S. is shot.

Every **14** minutes somebody dies from a gun wound.

Each gun injury involving hospitalization costs **\$33,159**. A license to sell a gun costs **83¢** a month.

A gun rolls off the assembly line in America every **10** seconds. America imports another gun every **11** seconds.

There are **246,984** gun dealers, but only **240** inspectors to keep an eye on them.

For the first time ever, a majority of Americans, **52** percent, favor a ban on handgun sales.

a **MOTHERJONES** pullout

Poster reprints of this pullout are available for \$1.95 each, from Mother Jones, 1663 Mission St., San Francisco CA 94103. Substantial discounts for bulk orders. To subscribe to Mother Jones, call (800) GET MOJO. Photograph by Fred Stimson. Research by Julie Petersen and Ariel Sabar. RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY LEXIS-NEXIS.

MEDIAWEEK

Vol. 4 No. 1

"THE MAGAZINE OF THE MEDIA MARKETPLACE"

January 3, 1994 \$2.50

Violence Study Raises More Questions Than It Answers

TELEVISION By Eric Schmuckler

The grudge match between Hollywood and Washington over television violence got a little uglier with the recent release of a study that purports to identify the most violent shows on TV and the sponsors behind them. The study, distributed by Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) two weeks ago, named Fox as having "the most violent programming" among the networks, followed by ABC, then NBC and CBS.

TV violence remains one of the hottest buttons in Washington, with several bills before Congress aimed at the issue. Dorgan has one that would require the Federal Communications Commission to produce a quarterly TV violence report card, and this study was an attempt to show how it can be done. He said, "This project demonstrates that my proposal . . . is not only feasible but also produces useful results."

Useful? The survey covered only one week—a slender sample on which to base sweeping pronouncements about a network's behavior. The ten most violent primetime shows were listed as *Adventures of Brisco County Jr.*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Out On a Limb*, *Walker: Texas Ranger*, *Daddy Dearest*, *In the Shadows*, *In Living Color*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

and *Thea*. Of these, three are movies, three are comedies and one is a syndicated show mistakenly attributed to Fox.

Brisco County was cited as having 117 acts of violence per hour. And it turns out the episode that was monitored featured a boxing match, with each punch counted as a distinct violent act. (Continued on page 5)



Adventures of Brisco County: 117 violent acts per hour?

MARKET INDICATORS

NET TV: Steady

Some prime scatter happening. Nets bullish on 1st QTR. NFL playoffs well sold; NBC raising prices on AFC Championship.

Spot TV: Slow

Reps celebrate new year with the traditional slow market. Only business moving is a few upfront annual buys.

Net Cable: Moving

Intense year-end activity. BMW, MasterCard, Frito-Lay and American Home Products among those spending.

Radio: Slow

It's buy-one-get-one-free time as stations drum up business during seasonal lull. Buyers say all markets easy to get into.

Magazines: Moving

Men's mags see 1st QTR softness give way to 2nd QTR increased activity. Chrysler's Neon placing spreads.

Study Stokes Controversy On Network TV Violence

NETWORK TV

(Continued from page 1) *Brisco* and *Deep Space* alone accounted for Fox's margin of victory.

And the comedies? According to Dr. Mark Covey, the associate professor of psychology at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn. who conducted the study, "a plausible threat from one person to another is counted as a violent act." So when Don Rickles threatens to knock someone like a hockey puck, the threat is credible? "That's part of the difficulty," said Covey. "Look at Saturday morning, with kids turning into rockets. People could say that's implausible and thus O.K. We decided not to make that distinction." Covey couldn't recall whether *Daddy Dearest's* score included a granny hitting someone with her purse, as one Fox insider claimed.

There are an infinite number of

hairs to split. *Monday Night Football* got a fairly low grade because, Covey said, a clean hit "didn't fit our definition"—but a clip or blindside tackle did. Replays of such cheap shots were fair game.

"The point was to demonstrate that we can get people with moderate training to evaluate content in a way that yields fairly reliable results, and I think we did that," said Covey. As for Fox, "Frankly, I don't know why they're ticked off. When we took out the shows that weren't theirs, their average of violent acts per hour went up."

Dorgan released a list of the sponsors of the most violent shows, headed by Pepsico, McDonald's, American Express and Ford. Said a Pepsi spokeswoman, "It doesn't seem to be consistent with how we advertise and the number of complaints we get." ■

TV VIOLENCE TAKEN TO TASK

Org calls for safe-harbor hours on 'gratuitous' programs

BY DENNIS WHARTON

WASHINGTON — The Citizen's Task Force on TV Violence Wednesday recommended entertainment industry adoption of a code — patterned after Canada — that bars showing "gratuitous, dramatized" violence between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

The recommendation, which was forwarded to Attorney General Janet Reno, was unveiled at a press confab here presided over by Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.).

The task force comprised a number of influential groups, including the American Medical Assn., the National PTA, the National Council of Churches and the American Psychiatric Assn.

Conrad said, "The time for studies is over. The time for de-

bate is over. It is time to act" on the problem of TV violence. As an example, he cited the recent CBS vidpic "Murder of Innocence," in which a woman sprayed bullets into a class full of children, and said it is "disturbing" that NBC plans a primetime airing of "Witness to the Execution" during the February sweeps.

Those remarks prompted a strong response from NBC, calling the attacks "a gross misrepresentation of the film" that "further demonstrate the inherent dangers of the current debate about media violence ... (which) underscores the bias underlying this debate, and the corrosive atmosphere of censorship that is being created."

The movie, set in the future, deals with televising an execution as a means of attracting viewers

in a coming 500-channel environment.

With Conrad acknowledging that his allusion to the movie was based on press clippings, the network said it's "dismayed by the apparent willingness to pre-judge" the movie by some public officials and members of the media. NBC added that the movie carries a strong anti-violence message, with only a brief depiction of violence at the end that is "neither graphic nor gratuitous."

Highlighting the task force recommendations was the call for "safe harbor" viewing period between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. that would be free of violence.

The proposal is patterned on a voluntary code adopted recently by the Canadian Assn. of Broadcasters.

The task force urges the FCC

to come up with its own anti-violence rules if broadcasters, cableers and programmers refuse to adopt voluntary guidelines.

The group's recommendations included:

- Urging the White House to hold a violence summit, with a special emphasis on TV violence.

- Suggesting that violent TV programming be barred from prisons.

- Calling upon the FCC to hold hearings on TV violence throughout the country.

The Task Force also announced support of Rep. Ed Markey's (D-Mass) "V-chip" bill that require insertion of a microchip in all new TV sets, allowing parents to block out violent programs.

Brian Lowry contributed to this report.

Late-breaking news & views

December 25, 1993

• CONGRESS •

Sen. Simon Sets January Deadline on Violence

Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) has summoned the heads of ABC, CBS, and NBC to his office early in January to hear what progress, if any, they've made in voluntarily setting up an Advisory Office on Television Violence. The agency would keep track of violent incidents on entertainment TV and report those findings each year. Simon floated the idea at an industry conference



Sen. Simon: Seeks network compliance.

last August, and many network officials immediately declared their opposition to it.

Now, however, Sen. Simon is declaring that if they *don't* establish such a monitoring agency themselves, he aims to get tough. "I will be introducing my own legislation," he told TV GUIDE, if—after the January confrontation—he feels the industry is dragging its heels. His bill would direct "either the FCC or the National Institute of Mental Health to monitor violence" on both broadcast and cable. "There is a feeling on the part of legislators that we've achieved some improvement in reducing TV violence, but that the industry is reluctant to make the improvement permanent. My concern is that if next year some violent program gets great Nielsen ratings, the herd will follow." Simon says that "about 15 members of the House and Senate have talked to me about additional TV violence legislation"—on top of the nine bills currently pending in Congress.

Nadine Strossen, president of the American Civil Liberties Union, claims any Congressional effort to mandate the

monitoring of TV violence "raises very serious constitutional questions." It would be "government surveillance for a specific purpose," she says: namely "putting pressure on the medium to change its content." And there is "nothing that is more contrary to the First Amendment than government intervention into the content of speech."

NBC general counsel Richard Cotton agrees. He declined to say what NBC will tell Sen. Simon at the January meeting. "Our view, however—and it's very strongly felt," Cotton said, "is that a government solution raises very severe censorship issues, including the definition of what violence is and what the American public should or shouldn't see. We're against any effort to move legislatively in this area."

—Neil Hickey

• PRIME TIME •

Spielberg Series to NBC

Despite the often third-place finish of Steven Spielberg's *seaQuest DSV*, NBC is contracting with the mogul for a new hour-long sci-fi action/adventure series, *Earth 2*, about the colonization of a planet. Spielberg has also pitched a Michael Crichton ("Jurassic Park") series about an emergency room. "When someone of Spielberg's caliber approaches us with a project, we take a hard look at it," says NBC exec Preston Beckman.—Ileane Rudolph

PERSPECTIVE ON VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

How to Disarm the Thought Police



We say we're sick of television, films and music that contaminate our society—so let's prove it.

By MARIO CUOMO

Our television screens are awash in blood. And we're starting to see that the electronic mayhem encourages even more real-life bloodshed in a society that already has at least as much as it can deal with. Americans—a significant number, anyway—want to see something done about it. So it is no surprise that the idea of tough new governmental regulation is beginning to be spoken of seriously in some of the most unlikely and usually clear-minded circles.

But at this point, let's ask ourselves: Do we really want a thought-police crackdown?

Government censorship—and that's what it would be—would mean seizing an important part of our freedom and delivering it to a government we already distrust; substituting the opinions of faceless and unaccountable bureaucrats for our own judgments about what is valuable or interesting or entertaining.

And even if we could muster a cadre of governmental Brahmins that we would trust more than ourselves, what rules would they apply in censoring our radio and television—not to mention, eventually, our printed media? Would "NYPD Blue" be acceptable because its violence seems to have a moral? How about Arnold Schwarzenegger? Or operas? Would artful violence be allowed, but poorly done violence banned? What about news programs that zoom in on the gore and degradation of war?

In the end, government regulation simply does not represent the least intrusive means to the end we all desire. The cure would be worse than the disease.

What choices are left? Maybe instead of regulation by government, we should consider trying a little self-regulation. Can't the rest of us work a little harder at living out—and displaying—the message that violent solutions diminish us as human beings? Can't we work harder at delivering more constructive messages? Shouldn't we, especially the parents among us, be doing more to reject the violence and filth we see around us? Can't we keep our children from watch-

ing and being contaminated by the poisons of television the way we keep them from the bottles marked with a skull and crossbones? It would surely be part of the solution.

Another alternative would be some kind of self-policing by the broadcasters, a strategy supported by a number of important voices in the indus-

try. Warning labels are already in effect, and "V-chips" that block pre-labeled violent shows are being talked about.

All these ideas might help, but they won't be enough in the end. We function in a profit-driven, free-enterprise system, a system that imposes on the broadcast industry an overriding pressure to produce dividends for its shareholders—no matter what.

This suggests still another possibility. Perhaps the swiftest, most powerful way to improve the quality of radio and television—as well as movies and popular music and advertising—would be the purest kind of legitimate commercial persuasion. A real campaign by the consumers: We won't buy your action-adventure killer robots or your lemon-fresh soap or your cold-filtered beer if you keep purchasing garbage and pouring it into our living rooms!

A kind and grand referendum. A coast-to-coast cooperative campaign—led by the President and Mrs. Clinton—enlisting every thoughtful American, embracing every worried parent, to demand that we aim for a higher standard in what the cables and air-

waves pump into our lives, in what we see at the movies or buy on a compact disc. A campaign that includes young people and government officials and corporate executives and our great spiritual leaders. If such a campaign were conducted, it could help push us, through our own good instincts, to the kind of civility and sensibleness and feeling of community that has been eclipsed by the dark images coming from our television screens.

And if the campaign failed, it would nevertheless serve a purpose. It might prove that the executives of radio and cable and television are not, after all, jamming sex and violence and profanity down our throats, but that the American people are choosing it from a menu called the program guide. That the truth is, the American people boost the ratings of the overheated, made-for-TV movies about other people's adultery. That we're the ones with the appetite for endless re-enactments of the real, live blood and terror of police work.

If America does indeed contain this extraordinary contradiction—this desire for what disgusts us, this disgust for what we desire—then maybe we should admit it to ourselves. Admit, that as a nation we were born in violence and we will live with it, and all our protestations are mostly pretense. That kind of look in the mirror on the morning after might shock us into a real commitment to change things.

Mario Cuomo is the governor of New York.



MIKE SMITH
LAS VEGAS SUN NORTH AMERICAN SUMMIT 1993
MIKE SMITH, Las Vegas Sun

Orgs oppose bid to muzzle TV

BY DENNIS WHARTON

WASHINGTON — The entertainment industry's bid to ward off TV violence legislation will soon get a boost from a coalition of book publishers, newspaper trade associations and the American Civil Liberties Union.

A press conference is being planned to coincide with Congress's return this month, according to a D.C. source. Purpose of the press confab, the source said, is to "show that the entertainment industry is not alone in believing that this exercise (against TV violence) puts Congress on a slippery slope that could lead to censorship."

By design, neither the major industry trade associations (the Motion Picture Assn. of America, the National Assn. of Broadcasters, the National Cable Television

Assn.) nor the four networks will participate in the confab, the source said.

People for the American Way, the liberal D.C. public interest advocacy group founded by producer Norman Lear, is participating in the effort.

The coalition's efforts represent the first organized non-industry effort to thwart congressional efforts to pass a tough anti-TV violence bill. However, ACLU legislative counsel Robert Peck says he's resigned to the fact that some form of legislation will probably be enacted in 1994.

More than a half-dozen bills have been offered in Congress targeting TV violence, including measures from influential Senate Commerce Committee chairman Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) and House telecommunications subcommittee chairman Ed Markey (D-Mass.).

WHAT UP, G?



Dr. Dre



Ice Cube



Does gangsta rap promote violence or reflect society?

By Fred Shuster
Daily News Music Writer

As Long Beach gangsta rapper and murder suspect Snoop Doggy Dogg's album hits the top of the charts, a controversy swirls in various quarters of the city about the impact on teen-agers of violent or negative imagery in rap music.

On one side are community activists, parents and even some listeners who insist the fast-selling music — which often describes shootings, revenge scenarios or sexual situations — glorifies behavior and may lead susceptible listeners to mimic the actions portrayed in the songs.

Rappers, fans and radio station officials, however, say the music actually delivers thinly veiled warnings and offers modern-day morality tales that describe the consequences of violence and promiscuity.

"Gangsta rap is negative on purpose," said Dane Webb, rap editor at Urban Network, a Burbank-based music industry weekly. "It is designed to tell a story, and that story happens to be negative based on the reality the rappers have seen."

But according to Muhammad Nassardeen, spokesman for the Inglewood-based Stop the Violence/Increase the Peace Founda-

Snoop Doggy Dogg's debut album has soared to the top of the national pop album charts.

See **RAP** / Page 5

L.A. LIFE

DAILY NEWS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1993

tion, the effect of repetition on the listener overpowers the music's message, no matter how blatant.

"If you hear something over and over again, it can lead to action," he said. "And as for the way our community is portrayed in some of these songs, we want to make it clear that this is not how our community communicates with each other. Most of the gangsta rappers are young, and it shows that we as parents have not been responsible."

At top-40/dance music radio station KPWR-FM (105.9) — Power 106 — the discussion took to the airwaves Friday when morning host Frank Lozano moderated a four-hour forum on certain forms of rap.

"I like rap and don't believe in censorship," said a listener, "but we have to think about the kids."

Power 106 vice president-program director Rick Cummings said the station would continue to play certain songs that have been targeted, but defended his policy of removing or masking words that may be offensive.

"We may (accidentally) be teaching the white or Latino culture that it's OK to use (a common epithet for African-Americans)," he said. "So we're covering it with a drum beat or taking it out altogether. But most rap music is merely reflecting the problems facing youth, not glorifying it."

By extension, local r&b outlet KACE-FM (103.9) recently dropped from its playlist about a dozen rap hits deemed insulting to its chiefly African-American listenership. The station is thought to be the first to take such action.

Tough-talking rapper Ice Cube defended his use of controversial words and imagery by arguing that he's just reflecting his environment.

"I'm just expressing myself," he said. "The words I use that people get upset about I first heard on TV shows like 'Dynasty' when I was growing up. To the black women out there: We're your creations. If you bake a cake and it comes out wrong, do you get mad at the cake or the baker?"

New Jersey rapper Queen Latifah said she agreed with those who say "little kids shouldn't be listening to these types of records at all. But I think you have to go beyond the words and look at what they're really saying."

Ice Cube, who plans to address the student body at a South Central Los Angeles high school today, said he uses edgy imagery in his music to gain the respect of listeners who expect those ingredients in popular entertainment.

"We watch shows like 'Cops' and 'Inside Edition,' shows which feed the addiction to sex and violence," he said. "The kids are the same way, and, before you can teach them, you have to gain their respect. We abuse sex and violence, so I give them that in my records to teach them the real deal. But love does what a gun cannot. Love will make you run into a fire to save a baby. It's the lack of love that keeps the world poor and raggedy."

"Doggystyle," Snoop Doggy Dogg's debut album, sold an exceptionally high 803,000 copies in its first week of release, placing it at No. 1 on the national pop albums chart. Snoop — real name Calvin Broadus — faces arraignment Wednesday in Los Angeles Superior Court on one count of murder in the Aug. 25 fatal shooting of a reputed rival gang member near Culver City. Broadus, 22, has admitted an affiliation with the Long Beach Crips.

Manny Velasquez, team leader with Community Youth Gang Services, said in some "hard-core neighborhoods" gangsta rap helps certain kids "fulfill their fantasies. It's an affirmation of who they are as people. They bring it home and begin playing out the myth."

The music has also sparked a fashion trend, leading some teenagers with no gang affiliations to dress in clothes that have traditionally been associated with street gangs. Velasquez warned that the "wanna-be" syndrome can have dire consequences.

"Hard-core gang members are

like anybody else — they judge the book by its cover," he said. "These days, gang members don't even always ask where you're from before they begin shooting. And I've known white kids who have been victims because they can afford the clothes a gangbanger cannot."

Velasquez said while the majority of hip-hop or rap culture is positive, the negative aspects can sometimes set off a chain reaction that begins with dress, leads to graffiti and then to other gang activity.

Chili Chill X, a 24-year-old South Central rapper who is part of a five-member outfit called Rebels at War (R.A.W.), said he may rap about the harder edges of city life, "but I don't want anyone to mimic me. Our music is like a book or movie — it just tells stories."

"We're not making anything up. If you look at me, I'm a roughneck, but deep down I'm a gentle Ben."

A rundown of rappers' rap sheets

Fans may be better off looking in on Court TV rather than MTV for appearances by their favorite gangsta rappers. In a trend that has life imitating rap, several artists have had highly publicized run-ins with the law and observers are questioning whether the tough-guy image is really just a pose.

Here is a rundown of the rap sheets of some well-known rappers.

Snoop Doggy Dogg: Faces arraignment in Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday in connection with his alleged role in the August murder of reputed gang member Philip Waldemariam at Woodbine Park near Culver City. Snoop (Calvin Broadus) is charged with one count of murder for allegedly driving the getaway vehicle.

Tupac Shakur: Arrested Nov. 19 in Manhattan on charges of sexual assault. Three weeks earlier, 22-year-old Shakur, who reportedly has a home in Newhall, was booked in Atlanta for allegedly wounding two off-duty policeman during a traffic dispute.

Dr. Dre: The high-profile Compton rapper who produced Snoop Doggy Dogg's hit album, Dre recently settled a lawsuit brought by rap-TV host Dee Barnes after she was allegedly beaten by him in a Los Angeles nightclub. Dre, who lives in Calabasas, was reportedly under court order to wear an electronic ankle bracelet to restrict his activities after dark.

Flavor Flav: The 34-year-old member of Public Enemy was arraigned Nov. 2 in New York on attempted murder and weapons possession charges. Flav (William Drayton) was arrested on suspicion of shooting at a neighbor in a dispute authorities say may have started over the rapper's girlfriend.

Slick Rick: Emerged in the late '80s as a forerunner of the tough-talking street rap genre. Now serving a three-to-10-year sentence in New York for attempted murder.

— Fred Shuster

ANN LANDERS**Too Much Crime? Blame the TV Set**

DEAR ANN: Every day, we hear reports about the epidemic of violent crimes among our nation's youth. People blame inner-city squalor, racial tension, drugs and poverty, but the real culprit is TV.

In most American homes, the TV is on morning, noon and night. Weapons are shown as the answer to resolve every conflict. Crime with a new twist is standard fare. Can you imagine the number of children who, from infancy, are exposed to this constant barrage of violence? Pictures of the most violent crimes in progress are so routine that people don't even bat an eye.

Meanwhile, educators, lawmakers and parents scratch their heads and wonder what can be done about the high crime rate among teen-agers. When are we going to get smart?

—GLAD TO BE LIVING
ON AN ISLAND IN ALASKA

DEAR ALASKA: By the time you read this, you will, I hope, have seen some evidence that TV pro-

grammers are trying to clean up their act. It had to get worse before it got better, and that's what has happened. The antics of Beavis and Butt-head turned the tide.

I think you can get off that island in Alaska now and return to Anchorage. If it turns out that I was overly optimistic, I'll apologize publicly.

□

DEAR ANN: My husband is 14 years older than I am and approaching retirement. I am enjoying a very interesting and satisfying career that I entered relatively late in life, after our children were grown.

My husband wants to retire. I don't want to be alone for years while I continue. I'm not interested in doing work or joining club.

I don't want to be alone. I would also like to have a ship to live on. Security.

I don't want to be alone.

share mine, but we can't figure out how to do it. Can you help us?

—NEW JERSEY

DEAR NEW JERSEY: I see a picture that is badly out of focus. You have an interesting career, and you don't want to quit working. Your husband wants to retire but do it alone.

You'd be alone. You'd be alone and devoted to your career.

Gun exchange strikes nerve



Fernando Mateo's Toys-for-Guns program in New York City spawned national attention, including an appearance on NBC's "Today."

Reebok joins Toys 'R' Us to support cause

By Riccardo A. Davis

Major marketers are joining a crusade to rid the nation's streets of guns.

A stunningly successful Toys-for-Guns exchange in a troubled New York neighborhood is going national and for marketers of everything from sneakers to beds, the effort is emerging as the latest in cause marketing.

Foot Locker, Reebok International and Dial-A-Mattress have already joined Toys "R" Us in pledging support to the program,

which allows gun owners to turn in their weapons in exchange for \$100 gift certificates.

"We are going to see if we can't encourage the broadest range of advertisers to step up to the plate," said Benjamin Chavis, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and co-chairman of the Toys-for-Guns program.

Mr. Chavis got involved in the effort last week, but Toys-for-Guns was the brainchild of Fernando Mateo, co-chairman of

the program and a carpet store owner, whose teen-age son said he would gladly give up his Christmas toys to help get guns off the streets.

Mr. Mateo put up \$5,000 of his own money to offer \$100 Toys "R" Us gift certificates to gun owners who turned in their weapons at the police station in Manhattan's crime-plagued Washington Heights neighborhood.

After the money quickly ran out, Toys "R" Us put up \$20,000. Foot Locker later

(Continued on Page 38)

Guns

(Continued from Page 3)

pledged another \$25,000 in gift certificates for its stores. By late last week, more than 500 guns and assault weapons had been turned in at the precinct and the program had been extended until Jan. 6 thanks to a total of \$70,000 in corporate and private donations.

The Toys-for-Guns program attracted nationwide news coverage and touched a raw nerve by keeping the spotlight on the issues of gun control and unchecked violence in America.

USA Today last week devoted an entire issue to a comprehensive report on gun violence, one day after running a lead story on the Toys-for-Guns swap.

"The cry of the people has made it what it is," Mr. Mateo said of the program.

Mr. Mateo, with the help of Mr. Chavis and Rep. Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) chairman of the Congressional Crime Committee, is planning to develop a national gun exchange program.

Messrs. Mateo and Chavis said they have received dozens of calls from local and national marketers pledging support. Mr. Chavis said marketers of designer jeans and sneakers, entertainment companies and others that market to inner-city neighborhoods should consider backing the exchange program.

Although no formal agreements

were reached outside of those with Foot Locker and Toys "R" Us, companies including Reebok and Dial-A-Mattress said they intend to back the program.

"Anything we can do to get the guns off the streets, we see as our civic duty," said Daniel Flamberg, director of marketing for Dial-A-Mattress. "It is cause marketing."

He said the bedding company views the program as "an opportunity to add to our marketing

Toys-for-Guns attracted nationwide news coverage and kept the spotlight on gun control and unchecked violence.

palette."

Dial-A-Mattress will also offer \$100 gift certificates for its merchandise to people who turn in guns in New York. Although Dial-A-Mattress only operates in eight U.S. markets, the company plans to continue supporting the program as it goes national.

As for Reebok, Toys-for-Guns "can count on us as they expand," said Sharon Cohen, VP-public affairs. "We want to stop the violence and make our cities a safe place. If there isn't violence on the streets, every single person in America benefits."

Reebok does not yet know how much money it will contribute to

the program or what it will offer in exchange for guns. But Ms. Cohen said the effort fits with Reebok's \$2 million cause marketing program, which offers after-school activities to keep youths off street corners and out of trouble.

Mr. Mateo said the program will be introduced throughout New York before expanding into such major cities as Washington; Newark, N.J.; Chicago; and Los Angeles in mid-1994.

Both Toys "R" Us and Foot Locker have also said they will continue to support the exchange effort as it expands.

"Our customers are affected by gun-related violence every day," said a Foot Locker spokeswoman. "As the largest athletic retailer in the country, we have the responsibility to give something back to the community."

Critics of the program have argued that it is not taking guns from criminals or taking lawbreakers off the streets. But supporters insist they don't care where the guns come from as long as they come.

"We think it's fantastic if it reduces the number of guns," said a spokeswoman for Toys "R" Us.

Added Mr. Mateo: "A \$25 gun can kill you just as effectively as a \$1,000 one. However, you can't put a value on a life."

The NAACP's Mr. Chavis said Toys-for-Guns is a first step in curbing urban violence and empowering poor people.

"The ultimate swap," he said, "would be a job for a gun." □

Late-breaking news & views

January 8, 1994

• **FORECASTS** •

TV Insiders: More Choices, Less Violence Ahead in '94

Where is TV headed in 1994? We asked industry observers and honchos to share their predictions for the new year. Interestingly, many point to an expanded role for viewers, as well as more opportunities for them to make a difference:

• **Dorothy Swanson** (president, Viewers for Quality Television): The networks will finally realize that by leaving a series on the air

in a consistent time slot for 13 weeks, they will reap solid successes. Given that, I predict that *Second Chances* will be a mega-hit for CBS on the scale of *Knots Landing*; that Fox's *The X-Files* will become the next *Twilight Zone*; that *Picket Fences* will become a steady performer for CBS; that *Homicide* will rejuvenate and honor NBC; and that *NYPD Blue* will win ratings and awards for ABC.

• **Tom Freston** (chief executive, MTV Networks): Young people will get actively involved in the crusade against violence, working to change attitudes among their peers and help pass stricter gun-control laws (for more on this, see p. 34).

• **Dick Wolf** (executive producer, NBC's *Law & Order*): I see a modest resurgence in hour dramas. People are suffering from a mild case of—I wouldn't call it intellectual starvation, but a need for something beyond newsmagazines and sitcoms.

• **Jon Mandel** (senior vice-president, Grey Advertising): 1994 will be the year parents will take responsibility for what they and their families watch, taking pres-



Zelda Rubinstein:
Her "Fences" will build.

sure off telecasters to be responsible for all the ills of society.

• **L. Brent Bozell III** (chairman, Media Research Center): There will be more family shows like *Against the Grain* and [the upcoming] *Christy*. Just as movies are going more toward the PG format, so too will television. Second, you'll be seeing more political campaigning via talk show. You'll see even prospec-

tive Presidential candidates testing the waters on talk shows.

• **David Caruso** (star, ABC's *NYPD Blue*): All the predictions about this show leading to the fall of civilization were wrong (see story, p. 8). As for 1994, I have no idea whether some producers will put on shows with more nudity or rough language because they think that's the reason behind *NYPD Blue*'s success. But I think if they try to emulate anything, it should be the quality.

• **Marshall Herskovitz** (executive producer, *thirtysomething*): With 60 channels today and maybe 600 tomorrow, fewer and fewer shows will have the economic resources to do quality work. We'll need to be more adventurous to continue to push the envelope artistically and emotionally.

• **Harry Thomason** (executive producer, CBS's *Hearts Afire*, *Evening Shade*): By the end of 1994, we will see entertainment shows shot on floppy disk rather than tape.

—Mark Schwed, Tim Carlson

• SPECIAL REPORT •

TV's New Plan to Curtail Street Violence: 'Squash It!'

Try it. Hold your arm upright and make a fist. Then, form a "T" by slapping your other hand atop the fist while saying "Squash it!" (It looks a bit like the "time out" signal athletes use.) Street kids have been using the phrase to head off potentially violent confrontations. "Just squash it!" one of the kids will say, meaning, "Back off! No need to fight. Go in peace."

Now—if a plan by Dr. Jay Winsten, a Harvard University public-health expert, succeeds—the phrase and its accompanying gesture will become emblems of a new campaign to use the power of television to reduce violence on our streets. You'll be seeing it in sitcoms and dramas, and in televised public-service announcements made by prime-time stars, sports figures, and rap artists. Performers on some of your favorite shows will occasionally just walk away from a fight to show there are better ways to resolve conflict than a punch in the face or a gunshot to the head.

So far, most of the strategizing for the "Squash It" campaign has gone on behind closed doors. But later this month, Winsten will be meeting in Los Angeles with TV producers and writers, some of whom have already said they'll participate.

"This is a project specifically about youth and street violence," Winsten told TV GUIDE. "The kind that's creating war zones in our cities and keeping people captive in their homes. Adult violence is

a horrible problem too, but that's a different project." The strategy is a simple one; it worked well in a previous effort pioneered by Winsten and embraced by Hollywood: the Designated Driver program.

Winsten will encourage programmers "to consider on an occasional basis"—and only if it fits naturally into the show—"incorporating lines of dialogue that promote a new social norm, namely that it's cool and smart to walk away from a confrontation without resorting to violence." In focus groups with urban youths around the country, Winsten learned that the expression "Squash it!" is part of current street talk, and he embarked on a mission to give it wider currency. He hopes its real-life origins as a face-saving device among combative teens will give it acceptable street credibility.

For its public-service commercials, the "Squash It" campaign will need to recruit credible spokespersons: Martin Lawrence (*Martin*), perhaps, along with Sinbad, Will Smith, Queen Latifah, Kriss Kross, and Michael Jordan. The choice of spokespersons is crucial, says Winsten—which is why he thinks Nancy Reagan's "Just say no" anti-drug campaign in the 1980s was not a roaring success: She had no real credibility with the target audience. Producer Paul Junger Witt (*Nurses*, *The John Larroquette Show*) says that while television isn't a principal cause of urban violence ("Despair is"), the industry must do its part. "We've got to make people aware

This is a project specifically about youth and street violence... the kind that's creating war zones in our cities and keeping people captive in their homes.'

that it's not normal to accept the kind of violence we live with on a daily basis." About the "Squash It" campaign, he says, "I laud it. I support it. And we'll certainly do everything we can on our series to show alternate ways of resolving conflict."

The Fox network has "a peculiar and unique responsibility" to combat violence, according to Fox vice-president Dr. Helen Boehm. "The audience that Dr. Winsten is addressing is very much within our demographic group. A lot of our performers would be very comfortable using 'Squash It.'"

At least one network, NBC, has its own PSA campaign already in place, with special emphasis on preventing violence and resolving conflicts peacefully. Called "The More You Know," it has aired spots with messages from, among others, Joey Lawrence (*Blossom*), Karyn Parsons and Daphne Maxwell Reid (*The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*), and John Spencer and A Martinez (*L.A. Law*).

Predictably, some executives at the networks and Hollywood studios are hotly critical (but only off the record) of Winsten's scheme. It's an intrusion onto their turf, they claim, and it may result in some bad scripts and thus affect ratings. TV watchers tune in to be entertained, not to be preached to about how to manage one's aggressions and alter one's behavior, says one exec. Moreover, he continues, what's the good of planting anti-violence messages in shows like *Murphy Brown*, *Northern Exposure*, and *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* when street kids are really watching MTV, VH-1, uninterrupted movies on HBO, rented videos, and youth-targeted series on Fox?

"Winsten is overstepping his bounds," says a network v-p (who hinted darkly that Winsten dreamed up the campaign only because "Hollywood is more fun than

Harvard"). "He's conducting an end run around the networks by going straight to the producers and writers and trying to persuade them to put this stuff into their scripts." Since other activists are making similar appeals—environmentalists, safe-sex advocates, anti-drug groups—the fear is that prime-time TV may soon become one long sermon about warm-and-fuzzy causes, devoid of any entertainment value.

Winsten waves away all such criticisms. He quotes an African-American teenager in one of his focus groups: "If you do it good, people will suck up to it," the youngster told him. "If you do it lousy, they're going to look at you and laugh." Winsten is aware that anti-violence messages must appear totally natural and well-integrated into the storyline—or else "they will stick out like a sore thumb and won't work for the audience." Writers want to tell good stories, he says, "and if this doesn't help them tell a good story, they won't want to do it—and they shouldn't do it." He also hopes the message will be targeted at shows kids watch—including MTV and cable.

Recently, civic leaders in Kansas City, Mo., decided to use their city as a prototype for the "Squash It" initiative. Star players on the Kansas City Chiefs football team may be spokespersons. Local television stations and rap performers are participating. A theater chain based in Kansas City will show a "Squash It" slide in more than 1600 movie theaters around the country. "Now I'm getting lots of telephone calls from leaders in other cities," Winsten says. "They are kind of ahead of me. They're looking for guidebooks on how to do this."

Jay Winsten doesn't claim to have written the book; he's still working on the first chapter. But he's started, and he's trying.

—Neil Hickey

The fear is that prime-time TV may soon become one long sermon about warm-and-fuzzy causes.

Commentary

DRAWINGBOARD / BENSON



STEVE BENSON, Arizona Republic

Games People Shouldn't Play

Rating violent video games 'adults only' misses the point. Many of these electronic toys encourage behaviors unbecoming a civilized human being of any age.



By JANET BERNSON-PARMENTER

A 60-second piece on the radio catches my attention as I drive to pick up my son from school. Representatives of Nintendo and Sega Genesis are arguing the virtues of rating violent games before a government meeting on ratings and violence.

I cringe as Nintendo Vice President Howard Lincoln accuses Sega of not rating its video "Nighttrap" until public pressure demanded it. Sega's Bill White has just stated proudly that the game has always been rated for adults only. They argue further.

I believe that violence is not good for any human being. (I also question the validity of video games in general, but that's another story.) Since when is a video that instructs the victor to drill a hole in the neck of a woman a game a healthy adult would want to play?

The news broadcast is filled with horrific things. It usually is these days. I am not sure if the violence came first and the news after or the other way around. But I'll give you the results of my personal study of violence and human beings when compounded with video games.

Take my son, 10-year-old Billy. Billy has a friend who from the time he was little has played a Nintendo bestowed upon him by his loving parents. The friend lives next door, which is both a blessing and a curse, for the family is pleasant but oblivious to the effect their electronic gift has had upon their children.

Billy's friend lacks basic problem-solving skills that a video game does not teach. Video games do not teach people how to solve conflicts except by chopping, stomping or shooting. Escape from an assailant is rare and does not make points.

Recent games give blood a realistic ooze, plus screams of agony and despair. When my son goes to play with his friend, he comes

back argumentative and at times violent. Hunger and fatigue are rarely the cause, so the game is my chief suspect.

My work with young people has further solidified my position, be they children of single- or two-parent households, rich or poor or in between.

A recent discussion with a ninth-grade student at Pacoima Middle School chilled me to the bone. I asked him what he likes about violent video games and film.

"I guess they fascinate me," he replied. "I've seen people get killed in real life. It's not much different than a movie. The sound effects are better in the movies."

This detachment is unfortunately not uncommon. Many kids are absolutely unaware of the wrongness of what they are viewing or playing. Whether they can distinguish reality from fantasy when faced with events like killings in high schools is a question we all should be asking ourselves. With few creative outlets, we may be raising violent automatons. On a recent visit to a mall, I asked an employee of the video arcade about the customers.

"They're morons," he said. "They play these games for hours, then fight with each other when they run out of money or lose, sometimes both."

Ratings? How will these places be policed even if the games are age-rated? By parents who send their kids to the arcade while they shop?

Video games are not the cause of the horrors we are seeing in the schools, of course. There are other things that add to the violence in our culture, like television shows, graphic news stories and open displays of hostility by a frustrated public. But I'm convinced the games contribute, and giving a child a game which encourages behavior unbecoming a civilized human being is not only ridiculous but bordering on criminal.

I can only imagine the day when Messrs. Lincoln and White introduce video games to enhance the well-being of humanity, and look forward to its possibility. They might sell, if the special effects included the joy one gets from solving a tough problem, or making a new friend or helping someone less fortunate.

Maybe then the gift of a video game system will be a positive expression of love. Until then, I'm giving my son something he can't plug in.

Janet Bernson-Parmenter is a free-lance writer who lives in Van Nuys.

'Times Square Billboard Tick-Tocks a Mournful Tally of Deaths From Firearms



BY MELAYNE SEIDMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Robert E. Brennan, who is funding the project, said he hopes it will help create "an antidote to the voice of more guns that is the NRA."

By Rachel E. Stassen-Berger
Special to The Washington Post

NEW YORK

Soon after thousands of boisterous revelers counted down the seconds while the Times Square ball dropped to signal the arrival of 1994, the National Deathclock began a mournful count upward.

At 1 a.m. yesterday, the 35-foot-high digital billboard, mounted above Times Square on a nine-story building at 47th Street and Seventh Avenue, began to tally two numbers: gun-related deaths (from street murders to hunting accidents) and guns in circulation in the United States.

Every 5½ seconds, tick, the clock will note the manufacture of a gun. Every 14 minutes, tock, another death will be logged.

"Our goal with the Deathclock is to start a national communications campaign to heighten and sustain awareness of the alarming growth in the number of gun-related deaths in this country," said Robert E. Brennan, 49, of Brielle, N.J., an investor funding the project.

Brennan told reporters last week that his brother, Kevin, 21, was shot and killed in 1968 in "a tragic and senseless homicide with a handgun."

The Deathclock's two numbers are being updated periodically with statistics produced by the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Now is the time to prompt people to act against the proliferation of guns and related violence, Brennan said, citing a rash of recent mass slayings and passage of the Brady law, which mandates a five-day waiting period for handgun purchasers starting in February.

Others here, reacting to the rising homicide rate, have acted to capitalize on increasing public concern.

In Crown Heights, the Brooklyn neighborhood where black and Jewish residents fought in 1991, a community youth leader has painted an ankh, an Egyptian symbol of life, on sidewalks where young people have been shot and killed. In Washington Heights in Manhattan, a program at the end of last month produced 850 guns, swapped for \$100 gift certificates for toys and other goods.

Such programs, Brennan said, "are very useful and positive steps. They provide wonderful symbolism." But, he added, during the initial three days of the gun swap, 45,000 firearms were manufactured. "You're kind of going upstream against a current," he said.

Brennan's long-range hope, he said, is to inspire people not only to get guns off the streets but also to force their legislators to back limits on the manufacture and sale of guns. He wants to create "an antidote to the voice of more guns that is the NRA," the National Rifle Association.

Building the Deathclock cost \$300,000, and monthly maintenance is \$20,000. The fees will be paid through the Dehere Foundation and the Dehere Gun Fighters of America, anti-gun groups established by Brennan in August. Brennan pledged all winnings by his 2-year-old thoroughbred racehorse, Dehere, and an additional \$3 million to the two organizations.

In the 24 hours after the clock was unveiled Wednesday, well before its giant numbers began operating, 20,000 people called the number listed on the billboard, 1-800-WHY-GUNS, for more information, Brennan said. Callers who left addresses were sent details about the voting records of members of Congress on gun control.

"For the first time ever, nearly half of people surveyed are prepared to boot their congressmen and senators out of office over gun control," Brennan said, citing a Roper survey commissioned by the Dehere Foundation Dec. 8, the day after a gunman opened fire on a Long Island Rail Road commuter train and killed six passengers. "That is a result of people saying, 'Enough is enough.'"

Brennan said he plans to construct similar Deathclocks in Washington, Los Angeles, Miami and Newark as soon as Dehere Gun Fighters of America finds appropriate, high-visibility sites like that of the glitzy, neon-decorated Times Square, through which more than a million people pass each day.

The foundation is scouting several possible sites for a Deathclock in the District, although Brennan would not elaborate. The D.C. billboard would be visible to citizens and "the people that all of us sent to live in Washington part time from around the country," he said.

Video game makers to develop ratings

By Diane Duston
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Under pressure from Congress, the electronic games industry will begin next weekend to develop a rating system to help parents decide which games are not for children.

The drafting of a rating system will begin Saturday at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas and could involve 200 or so industry representatives, the Software Publishers Association said Monday.

It comes after a Senate hearing last month in which lawmakers, led by Sens. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., and Herb Kohl, D-Wis., threatened to legislate a rating system if the industry did not come up with a satisfactory one voluntarily.

Games such as "Mortal Kombat" and "Night Trap," picturing

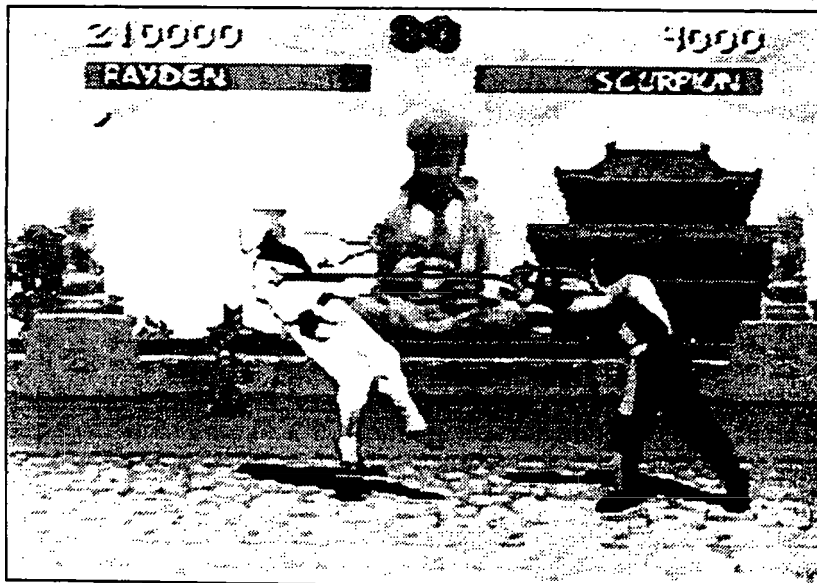
gruesome acts of violence, outraged members of the Senate.

A bill introduced by Lieberman and Kohl would give the industry a year to come up with its own system.

The furor over video games is part of a congressional attack on violence in society, demonstrated by passage recently of the Brady gun control bill and nine pending measures that would restrict violent TV programming.

Lieberman said he is targeting video games that "glorify violence and teach children to enjoy inflicting the most gruesome forms of cruelty imaginable."

In "Mortal Kombat," martial arts warriors kill each other by either ripping out the heart of the opponent or his head and spinal column. Lawmakers have said that in "Night Trap," sorority sisters are chased by black-hooded killers who



Associated Press

An outcry over violence in video games like "Mortal Kombat" has prompted the electronic games industry to plan for a rating system.

use a drill device to drain blood from their necks.

The maker of the "Night Trap" game, Tom Zito of Digital Pictures Inc., said it actually is a parody of the B-grade, low budget horror movies of the 1950s. In it, men and women are chased by vampires

through a hotel where the vampires try to drain their blood, he said, adding that it is meant to be played by people over 17 years of age.

Sega of America Inc., which distributes the game, supports ratings and has placed them on all new Sega games since last August.

Nationwide, juvenile arrests for violent crime have been climbing steadily over the last six years, as have victimization rates. (A juvenile is defined here as any person under the age of 18.) Locally, there has been more year-to-year fluctuation during that period. But the tale is the same: a large number of juveniles are perpetuating violence and falling victim to it. The 1993 local figures, which are not complete, are for the year through the third quarter and into the fourth quarter.

JUVENILE CRIME ACROSS THE NATION

Juvenile arrests for homicide

■ Arrests for murder increased from 1987 to 1991.

85%

Juvenile violent crime

■ Overall, juveniles committed 112,409 violent crimes in 1992—an increase of

47%

over the last 10 years

Arrests of children

■ Arrests of children younger than 10 for violent crimes jumped

50%

in the last 10 years.

Homicide victims

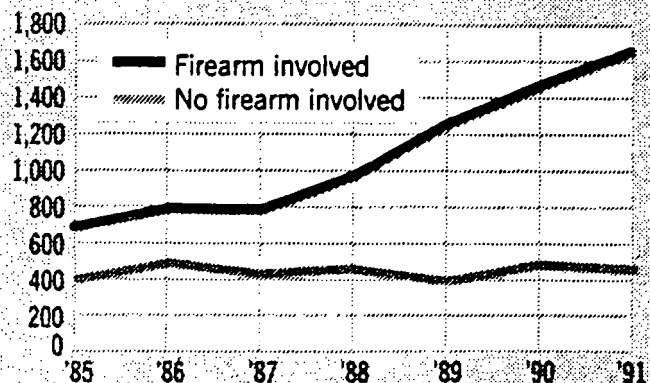
■ In 1992, 2,428 juveniles were homicide victims, more than

67%

six years earlier.

JUVENILES AND GUNS

Number of homicides committed by juveniles in the United States.





RCA Thinks Global
With Its First
ZZ Top Release

PAGE 14

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC, VIDEO AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT

JANUARY 8, 1994

Radio

Stations Step Up Anti-Violence Crusade; NewMarket Media Sells Off Its Roster

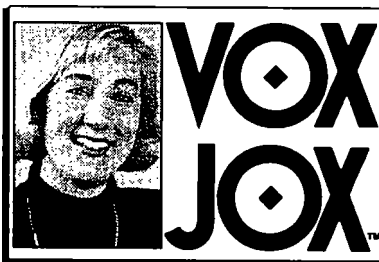
URBAN KKBT (the Beat) Los Angeles has joined the growing list of stations taking a careful stand on rap songs with explicit, violent, or derogatory lyrics (Billboard, Dec. 18).

After meeting with representatives of the local Stop The Violence/Increase The Peace Foundation, KKBT announced, "It is consistent with our Community Action goals and our existing programming to delete [offensive] words, as appropriate, from our present and future broadcasts."

Station management claims the new policy affects only three songs on the current playlist.

In related news, WBLS New York, which has a similar music policy as well as an ongoing anti-violence promotional campaign, sponsored a toy gun amnesty promotion the week before Christmas. The station asked parents and children to collect toy guns and turn them in at a rally in an effort to "send a powerful message—not only to sellers and manufacturers of the guns, but to all citizens."

Meanwhile, the first station to publicly announce it had banned questionable lyrics, KACE Los Angeles, was presented with the first installment of what is to be an annual media award by the National Organization for Women for its "courage and trailblazing refusal to play violent or misogynistic rap music." In addition to the station, awards were presented to PD Rich Guzman and MD Mark Gunn. The awards recognize "outstanding commitment to [presenting] positive images of women."



'Gun Culture' Runs Deep Among Youth

■ **Violence:** Study finds 1 in 5 high school students in high-crime areas owns a gun. Most are obtained illegally, casting doubt on legislative control efforts.

By ELIZABETH SHOGREN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—More than one in five male high school students surveyed in high-crime urban neighborhoods acknowledged owning a gun, and 45% said they had been shot at or threatened with a gun on their way to school in recent years, according to a federal study released Sunday.

In another finding that underscores the broad challenge facing current gun control efforts, only 11% of the students with guns said they bought them at gun shops or pawnbrokers. Most said they got them from friends, on the street or by taking them from someone's house or car.

"Controls imposed at the point of retail sale likely would be ineffective, at least by themselves, in preventing the acquisition of guns by juveniles studied here because they rarely obtain their guns through such customary outlets," the report said.

The study on the "gun culture" in poor urban neighborhoods was funded by the Justice Department's National Institute of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. It surveyed 758 male students in 10 crime-troubled high schools in California, New Jersey, Louisiana and Illinois in 1991. It also sampled 835 male juvenile offenders in those states.

Released as the Clinton Administration, Congress and many states explore measures to curb gun violence, it documents the prominent place guns play in poor urban neighborhoods where young people believe they are in constant danger and in need of protection.

The desire for protection from "a hostile and violent world" and the need to arm themselves against enemies were the primary reasons both the students and offenders gave for getting guns.

Once they had them, however, their use was not limited to defense. Of the juvenile offenders surveyed, 63% had committed

crimes with guns, and 9% of the students reported having used a weapon to commit a crime.

The students described an environment in which guns are everywhere and getting one is easy. Almost 70% of the students surveyed said there was a gun at home, and 42% said they had friends who routinely carried guns.

Slightly more than half of the juvenile offenders said they carried a gun all or most of the time in the year or two before they were jailed.

There is a "large, informal street market in guns" that supplies young people, the report said, with 14% of the students buying their guns there. Thirty-eight percent got one from a friend, with about 8% acquiring one from a drug dealer or addict.

Since most of the ways the youths reported getting the guns are already against the law, the effectiveness of strictly legislative answers may be doubtful.

"It may matter less where juveniles get their guns than where they get the idea that it is acceptable to use them," the report said. "The problem is less one of getting guns out of the hands of juveniles and more of reducing motivations . . . for youths to arm themselves in the first place."

In the aftermath of passage of the Brady bill gun control law and the recent shooting spree on a Long Island commuter train, leading officials of both political parties have been debating whether it is time to consider a national system of gun licensing or registration.

In an appearance on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation," New York Mayor-elect Rudolph W. Giuliani said licensing is justified. Referring to the assailant in the train shootings, he said: "The same hatred might still be there, but the level of damage would be less if that man had a six-shooter or if that man didn't have a handgun."

Giuliani conceded that stricter laws will not take all the guns off the streets, but he maintained that they would be harder to get.

Los Angeles Police Chief Willie L. Williams said on ABC-TV's "This Week With David Brinkley" that new laws are needed to cut the supply of guns on the street, particularly assault weapons. And he

said a coordinated effort must be made to get a "change in the values of the men and women who live in our country."

He complained that a lack of consistent attention by the news media to the problem is undercutting the effort to fight it. What people are missing "is the day-to-day carnage in our inner cities," he said.

"Los Angeles is the most under-policed city in the country, and we spend multimillions of dollars on overtime. We have our officers out working when they're not even getting paid," he said. But when the news media focuses on a specific crime, that "does bring the community out. And the community support helps, you know, build up that thin blue line in terms of our ability to try to make arrests and make apprehensions."

In Los Angeles and other large cities, Williams said, "we need strong infrastructure repair to support the growth of the department as well, and it's just not clear how much straight time, how much overtime, how much capital, dollars will be there to really help us battle the violent crime in our communities and deal with the social side of changing the views and values of our young people."



HOWARD ROSENBERG

Sharper Than a Ginsu Knife

■ **Television:** Confused about cable rates? Leery of Larry King look-alikes? The Answermaven is here to help.

Knowledge is a blessing only if it's shared. Thus, getting into the holiday spirit of giving, the Answermaven has graciously agreed to respond to questions that you haven't asked but should have.

DEAR ANSWERMAVEN: Frequently, we speak of "the networks" as if they were a monolith. However, don't they have distinct personalities? For example, which of the Big Three networks has the most violence-minded schedule?

—TERRIFIED

DEAR TERRIFIED: Compared to ABC and CBS, NBC is Mayhem Inc., a network whose programming at times appears designed to make Americans feel generally lousy and fearful. Here, for example, are some of the movies on its schedule for January:

"Viper," a series premiere that takes place in a city "terrorized by a powerful criminal syndicate"; "Betrayal of Trust," whose heroine accuses her psychiatrist of raping her while she was sedated; "Secrets of the Father," about a law officer who arrests his father for murdering his mother; "Two Fathers: Justice for the Innocent," whose protagonists pursue the man who murdered their children; "Confessions: Two Faces of Evil," the story of two young men who confess to the Christmas eve murder of a California cop; "Visions of Murder," about a psychotherapist "caught in a web of suspicion and intrigue" when one of her patients is found murdered, and "In the Line of Duty: The Price of Vengeance," centering on an L.A. cop who is stalked and killed by a gang leader following a routine arrest.

Otherwise, peace and good will reign at NBC.

HOLLYWOOD IS NO STRANGER TO ATTACKS THAT CHARACTERIZE IT AS AN ENEMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

The political fringe has always found us a useful target of opportunity from which to nurture demagogic careers or to distract their constituency from the real problems that surround our society.

But not since the horror of the blacklist in the 50's have significant forces *within* the Government of the United States — Senators, Congressmen, even cabinet members — found us a useful scapegoat for their own inability to act in a time of crisis.

It should be clear, even to the most casual observer, that America is bleeding from violence bred from the spread of urban gangs and armed drug syndicates, and encouraged by political pandering that condones certain types of criminality as appropriate responses to personal unhappiness or, even worse, accepts it as a political act, and calls a criminal riot "an uprising." Surely, only the most isolated citizen fails to see that the Criminal justice system has become ineffective, driven by the politics of the street rather than the cry for justice. Rampant drug use, failed public education, despair, voluntary re-segregation, all have combined to feed anger, promote xenophobia, and daily lower the threshold of what Americans expect of their fellow citizens' commitment to the public interest.

But now such mainstream political luminaries as Senator Paul Simon and Attorney General Janet Reno have decided to focus on television and motion pictures as the root cause of this decay of common virtues that is destroying our own present and our children's future. They speak of committees headed by former newsmen to police us, legislation that will empower them to decide *how* we may express ourselves. It is only a matter of time before they conclude we must also be instructed in *what* we can say.

Their indignation would be more understandable, perhaps, if it were not so selective. Why, for example, have these politicians

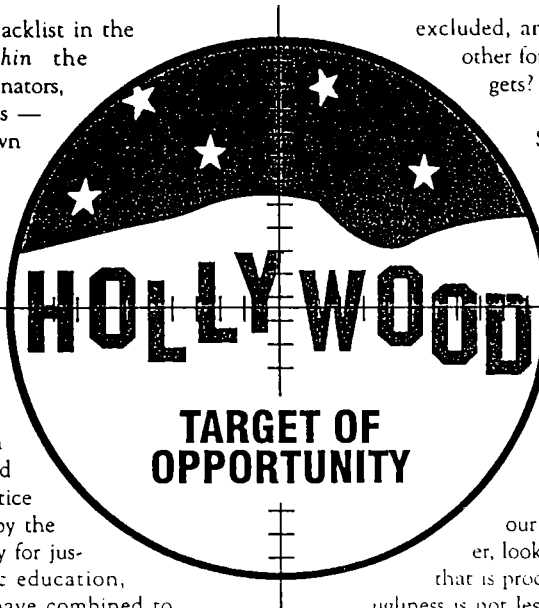
excluded, amongst other things, "Gangsta rap" and other forms of popular media from their list of targets?

At a recent panel on Censorship and Screen Violence organized by the American Forum in Hollywood, a woman in the audience directed this warning to three industry professionals on the podium: "Yes, it's true that horrible things are happening out there. But it's too hard to do anything about them, it will take too long. But we can do something about *you* right now." Her sense of powerlessness to deal with the real issues left her with only one target for her fear and frustration: Hollywood.

We all know that there is a dark side to our output; we have all, at one time or another, looked with shock and distaste at certain work that is produced in our midst. But the answer to that ugliness is not less free speech — it is more. McCarthyism taught us that the consequences of silencing a single voice are far worse than allowing that voice to be heard.

Now, as never before, the Community must take a hard, critical look at itself and the values it projects — but at the same time we must reaffirm our dedication to the unambiguous language of the First Amendment, lest we be forced to relive the tyranny of the blacklist years. We must be the guardian of liberty, never the ally of the authoritarian.

If you are concerned about the dreadful state of civic life in America and believe that our politicians would be best advised to face the mess they have created honestly and bravely rather than seeking an easy scapegoat, then you are urged to join us in responding to the cowardly "politics-as-usual" of those we elected.



Lionel Cherwynd
Writer/Producer

Peter Collier
Writer

David Horowitz
Writer

Larry Mollin
Writer/Producer

Dan Schrier
Producer

David Soul
Actor/Director

Skip Stelloff
President, Saratoga Pictures

Gloria Carlin
Actress

Dennis Considine
Producer

Rob Long
Writer/Producer

Pat Sajak
Edgar Scherick
Producer

Stuart Sheslow
President,
Sandollar Productions

Ted Steinberg
Producer

Greg Strangis
Senior Vice President,
10-4 Productions

In the weeks to come, the American Forum will sponsor a series of events to answer the glib calls for censorship of films and television. We invite anyone who wishes to participate in these events; who wants more information about the Forum; or who would like to support the American Forum to fill in the boxes below or call us at 310-843-3689.

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other

Make checks payable to: The Center For The Study Of Popular Culture
12400 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 304, Studio City, California 91604

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(310) 843-3689

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 10, 1994

NOTE TO: RAHM EMANUEL
MARK GEAREN
BRUCE REED
RICKI SEIDMAN

FROM: Jody Greenstone JAG by (KJ)

RE: ANTI-VIOLENCE OPPORTUNITIES

I wanted to update you on several opportunities to get our anti-violence message out.

- 1) "Squash It." Jay Winsten's "Squash It" campaign will not be launched at the NBA All-Star game this weekend. This means we still have the opportunity to structure the launch around the President's or the cabinet's participation. David Stern of the NBA is interested in trying to do something with us and "Squash It" and will call next week to brainstorm. "Squash It" is getting some good press and Jay is a good guy. However, there is still a question about how "big" the idea will get. I believe at a minimum, we should try to have cabinet level participation in an event.
- 2) NBC. NBC will air an anti-violence documentary entitled Lives in Hazard -- a one-hour special about gang violence on April 8. In conjunction with this, they will distribute poster study guides to all junior high and high schools (public and private). Apparently the Department of Justice and Sony are also participating by providing free videos to schools. NBC also has a special PSA program called The More You Know which not only airs anti-violence PSA's, but also works with affiliates to expand outreach in local communities. The President and/or the First Lady could tape a special message to air before/after Lives in Hazard as part of The More You Know campaign. If we wanted to get more involved, we could do a special screening at the White House with kids from local high schools. I believe this is a solid program with which to be involved.
- 3) Jay Kreigel is still working on his anti-violence project which involves forming a broad-based coalition of religious, education, civic, social welfare, political, and law enforcement organizations. He plans to have CBS and Fox simultaneously broadcast (without commercials) a program exploring four case histories of teenagers using guns. There would be a "teach-in" on youth violence the following day which could involve the President and the First Lady. The program is tentatively set to air on April 26, however, I would not be surprised if this gets pushed back.

I know Mark has also sent around an MTV request for an appearance by the President as part

of its anti-violence campaign (which I think is a great idea) and that the President has just taped anti-violence PSA's for the ad council. I believe it still makes sense to participate in the NBC event. Please let me know how I should proceed.

Thanks.

cc: Liz Bernstein

Jose Cerda

Susan Johnson-Cooke

To Jose

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 16, 1994

FYI

MEETING WITH BROADCAST AND CABLE NETWORK PRESIDENTS

DATE: March 17, 1994
LOCATION: Vice President's Ceremonial Office
TIME: 9:30 - 9:55
FROM: Jody Greenstone

I. PURPOSE

To acknowledge the commitment of the broadcast and cable networks to air your anti-violence PSA's, to acknowledge the other positive steps the industry is taking, and to discuss how the Administration and the networks can continue to address crime and violence in an affirmative manner.

II. BACKGROUND

PSA's and Anti-Violence Programming Initiatives

The broadcast and cable presidents are coming to Washington to support the launch of your anti-violence PSA campaign. (Note, that the cable presidents attending are representing the larger cable industry.) They have all committed significant high visibility air time to the campaign. (Howard Stringer of CBS plans to announce at the meeting that CBS will air the PSA's during this weekend's NCAA tournament.) In addition, the broadcast networks, in particular, have longstanding, ongoing commitments to a variety of other public service campaigns. For example, NBC has put millions of dollars into their own public service campaign called "The More You Know About Violence Prevention," and ABC has substantial commitments to literacy, AIDS and anti-drug PSA campaigns. Moreover, many broadcast and cable networks are undertaking serious anti-violence programming initiatives -- examples include CBS and FOX's airing in April of a special on "Kids Killing Kids" and MTV's launch of a comprehensive anti-violence campaign called "Enough is Enough." The networks believe that these existing PSA and programming efforts (many of which involve much greater commitments than the airing of your PSA) should also be acknowledged. A summary of each network's major public service and anti-violence initiatives is attached.

TV Violence

As you know, the broadcast and cable industries have been under intense public and legislative pressure to reduce TV violence. There are eight bills currently pending in

Congress ranging from Holling's "Safe Harbors" to Markey's "V-chip." In response, in February, the cable industry adopted "Voices Against Violence," a set of initiatives to address TV violence which include outside monitoring, a rating system and viewer discretionary technology. The broadcast industry also agreed in February to their own outside monitoring, but did not endorse a rating system or viewer discretionary technology. Both cable and broadcast networks are using parental advisories and the broadcast networks note that there has been a vast change in the nature of their programming over the years from more violent action/adventure series to sitcoms and news magazines.

While this meeting is not intended to address legislative efforts, the Administration's position on legislation will be foremost on their minds. If it is raised, I suggest you reiterate the answer you gave to TV Guide -- that you prefer the industry voluntarily deal with TV violence (as they have been doing) and channel their brilliance, creative energies, and power for good to this cause. You noted, however, that we probably could draft a constitutional bill. You should also be aware that the Attorney General plans to reach out to the industry (as well as to other interested parties like citizens' groups) to challenge them to live up to their recent agreements and to do even more to get violence off TV and positive programming on.

Call to Action

As you did in your remarks at the Creative Artists' reception in Hollywood, this meeting gives you an opportunity to ask the industry to continue to use its extraordinary capacity to do good to help change our culture (i.e. as they have successfully done before by reducing drunk driving fatalities by 25%, by encouraging the use of seat belts, etc.). Moreover, at several points in your TV Guide interview you questioned whether the White House should be more involved in organizing and directing a strategy to address further affirmative actions the industry could take. This meeting provides an opportunity to hear how the industry believes it can address violence most effectively and to explore the possibility of a greater role for the Administration.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The President

The Vice President

ABC:

Thomas S. Murphy; Chairman and CEO

Mark MacCarthy; Vice President of Government Affairs

CBS:

Howard Stringer; President

Martin Franks; Senior Vice President, Washington

DISNEY Channel:

John Cooke, President

FOX Broadcasting Company:

Lucie Salhany; Chairman

Preston Padden; Executive V.P., Affiliate Relations, Senior V.P. Government Relations, News

MTV Networks:

Tom Freston; Chairman and CEO

NBC:

Robert C. Wright; President and CEO

Richard (Rick) Cotton, General Counsel

SHOWTIME Networks:

Winston (Tony) Hill Cox; Chairman and CEO

McAdory (Mack) Lipscomb, Jr. (Violence representative for Showtime)

USA Networks:

Kay Koplovitz, Founder; President and CEO

MPAA:

Jack Valenti

WHITE HOUSE:

Jose Cerda

David Dreyer

Jody Greenstone

IV. PRESS PLAN

No press coverage

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- You and the Vice President will meet guests in the Vice President's Ceremonial Office.
- You will open the meeting with the attached Talking Points.
- Discussion
- You and the Vice President will depart for the Ad Council PSA Announcement in Room 450 OEOP.
- Guests will be escorted to the Announcement.

VI. REMARKS

Talking Points attached

Attachments: Summary of Broadcast and Cable Network Initiatives
Talking Points
TV Guide interview

SUMMARY OF MAJOR BROADCAST AND CABLE NETWORK INITIATIVES

Broadcast Network Initiatives

- In February, ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX agreed to independent monitoring.
- **ABC**
 - "Read More About It," a major PSA campaign on literacy. In addition, ABC has substantial PSA commitments to AIDS and anti-drug campaigns.
 - "Kids in the Cross-Fire" with Peter Jennings and Janet Reno, aired in November from a Washington junior high school. The show focused on ways to reduce violence in schools and on the street.
- **CBS**
 - Ad Council PSA's on substance abuse and AIDS.
 - "Kids Killing Kids/Kids Saving Kids" deals with kids and handgun violence and is scheduled to air on April 26 simultaneously on CBS and FOX.
- **NBC**
 - "The More You Know About Violence Prevention," comprehensive PSA campaign to raise the awareness of violence, especially among adolescents.
 - "Lives in Hazard," a one-hour special on gang violence produced and narrated by Edward James Olmos to air on April 8.
 - "America the Violent: Fed Up and Fighting Back" took a week-long look at violence in America Jan. 23-30 in news and entertainment programming.
- **FOX**
 - "Stop the Violence," a PSA campaign revealing the tragedy of guns in the schools and neighborhoods of America.
 - "Roc" and "90210" special episodes have dealt explicitly with the issue of handgun violence.

Cable Network Initiatives

- In February, the cable industry adopted "Voices Against Violence." This set of initiatives includes independent monitoring, a rating system and viewer discretion technology.
- **MTV**
 - "Enough is Enough," a comprehensive anti-violence campaign patterned on the "Choose or Lose" political awareness and voter registration campaign. It will include special programming such as forums, MTV news coverage, anti-violence PSA's and local market activities.

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH NETWORK AND CABLE EXECUTIVES

- **Thank you for being here today for the launch of the Ad Council's anti-violence PSA's. And, more importantly, thank you for the commitments you have made to air the PSA's. I realize you all have longstanding serious PSA campaigns of your own and I appreciate the special effort you made to help this important message break through.**
- **I did these PSA's because I wanted to use whatever influence the President has with children to try to change the psychology that so often leads to mindless, reactionary violence.**
- **We all know that violent crime and the fear it provokes are ripping this country apart. But it's not enough to change our laws, we have to change our culture.**
- **I've always believed that television has a great capacity to do good; that it should entertain, it should inform, but also, when society is overwhelmingly on the side of certain objectives, it can also instruct and be used to change people's behavior, to change attitudes. You know better than I do how TV helped increase the use of seatbelts and decrease drunk driving fatalities.**
- **It's clear that the industry has been taking its responsibility seriously. Your efforts to use parental advisories, establish independent monitors and produce anti-violence programming are important. But, our challenge is great. We must do everything we can to rebuild the frayed bonds of community. TV can reach audiences on an ongoing basis that a President can only dream about.**
- **Open up for discussion re:**
 - **Industry's views on best way to use TV to address crime and violence.**
 - **Administration's role to promote affirmative actions.**

501 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022 (212) 371-5999 FAX (212) 171-7007



Ricki S
 TO: Bruce Reed
 Rahm E
 Jose C.
 his Bernstein
 Jonathan Prince
 From: Jody

TO : Jody Greenstone
 The White House
 FROM : Jay L. Kriegel
 DATE : March 15, 1994
 RE : "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" Week

FYI -
 Delatest
 update

from
 Jay Kriegel

Attached is the press release issued today on the week of activities dealing with youth violence.

As you will see, this has unusually broad support from a wide-range of organizations. While a network television program is involved, it is only one element in a themed week of activities that focus on various aspects of youth violence -- medical aspects of gun violence, police, family responsibility, school and religious involvement, etc.

The participating groups would obviously welcome a White House statement of support and encouragement. A 30-page local organizing handbook has been sent to cities today by the Conference of Mayors. There will be some very interesting events in cities across America. Planning is underway in places like Denver, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Dallas, etc.

Please let me know if you need more information.

Should we
 do this? =>

Do we
 want to
 participate?

I think we

should do something - my current preference is to do something in
 connection with the prayers for non-violence -
 but another approach may be a better fit with
 your overall strategy - Please advise

MONDAY, APRIL 25
Physicians and Nurses on Violence
TUESDAY, APRIL 26
Families Talk About Violence
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
Focus on Schools:
Listening to Kids



THURSDAY, APRIL 28
Violence and the Law:
Enforcement and Prevention
FRIDAY, APRIL 29
Hopscotch
SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY 1
Prayers for Non-Violence

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 - May 1, 1994

TO: (Media Organization)
FROM: Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids
RE: A Week-long Campaign Against Youth Violence in Cities
Across America -- sponsored by a broad based coalition of
70 national organizations.

Media Contacts:

Office of Mayor Jerry Abramson (Louisville, KY)
Kathleen Partlow
(502) 625-3018

U.S. Conference of Mayors
Babeus Fenton/Mike Brown
(202) 293-7330

National Education Association
Nelson Canton
(202) 822-7239

American Federation of Teachers
Donna Fowler
(202) 879-4482

Best Foundation
Brad Sales
(310) 282-0339

American Association of Retired Persons
Ted Bobrow
(202) 434-2560

For general information, please call:

Points of Light Foundation
Barbara Lohman
(202) 223-9126

MONDAY, APRIL 25

Physicians and Nurses on Violence

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

Families Talk About Violence

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

Focus on Schools:

Listening to Kids



THURSDAY, APRIL 28

Violence and the Law:
Enforcement and Prevention

FRIDAY, APRIL 29

Heroes

SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY 1

Prayers for Non-Violence

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 - May 1, 1994

For Immediate Release
March 15, 1994

Contact: See cover page

LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS: A WEEK-LONG CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE IN CITIES ACROSS AMERICA

Washington, D.C. -- A broad based coalition of 70 national educational, religious, local government, law enforcement, medical, legal, civil rights, media, community service, and family advocacy organizations have announced a week-long campaign against youth violence scheduled for April 25 - May 1.

The week of activities in cities across America will focus on the tragic consequences of youth violence for families and communities; alternative ways for kids to deal with frustration and anger; and resources and support services available to kids and their families.

"Everywhere in America youth violence has reached crisis proportions. We have come together to demand that America find a way to stop our kids from killing other kids," said Jerry Abramson, Mayor of Louisville, who is President of The U.S. Conference of Mayors and a member of the National Steering Committee for Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids Week.

The centerpiece of the campaign will be a one-hour television special, "Kids Killing Kids," which will be broadcast simultaneously on CBS and FOX on Tuesday, April 26 at 8 p.m. EST. This program will be used to stimulate discussions by families, schools, religious groups, and other organizations about the prevention of youth violence.

"For the effort, the power of network television will be effectively combined with the local activities of an unprecedented number of organizations," added Abramson. "We intend to raise awareness in cities across America about the tragic impact of violence and the use of guns among kids."

- more -

STEERING COMMITTEE
AR, CBS
 Thomas A. Donohue, Secretary-Treasurer
 American Association of National Parents
 Robert H. Smith, Executive Director
 American Association of School Administrators
 Gary Marx, Senior Associate Executive Director
 American Bar Association
 A. William Mc, III, President
 American Federation of Teachers
 Albert Shanker, President
 American Medical Association
 Dr. Richard E. McCall, President-Elect
 American Nurses Association
 Virginia Traylor Smith, J.D., M.S.N., R.N.
 President
 Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
 Dr. James H. Dyer, President
 BICM Foundation
 Greg Bates, Director of Communications
 CBS Broadcast Group
 Edward E. Shapiro, President
 California's Education Fund
 Martin Wright, Chairman, President and Founder
 Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
 Rev. H. Michael Luskman, Executive Director
 Connecticut for Social Justice
 Dr. Ronald J. Eidel, President
 Fox Broadcasting Company
 Leslie S. Schwartz, Chairman
 Japanese American Citizens League
 Randy Sengul, National Director
 The Go Letter May Jr. Center for
 Adolescent Social Change
 Carolyn Scott, Chap, President
 National American Legal Defense Fund
 Beverly Horowitz, President and General Counsel
 National Picture Association of America
 Jack Wavell, President and CEO
 National Association of Elementary
 School Principals
 Jane Wilkins, Director/Public Information
 National Association of Police Organizations
 Robert C. Smith, Executive Director
 National Association of Secondary
 School Principals
 Thomas Korman, Deputy Executive Director
 NACCP
 Barbara F. Chavis, Jr., Executive Director, CEO
 National Catholic Education Association
 Sister Catherine McIlroy, President
 National Conference of Catholic Bishops
 Msgr. Robert B. Lynch, General Secretary
 National Council of Churches
 The Rev. Dr. Gene Brown Campbell, General Secretary
 National Council of La Raza
 Paul Yanez, President
 National Education Association
 Gene Edgar, President
 National Governors' Association
 Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., Chairman
 National Puerto Rican Coalition
 Gen. Thomas, M.D., M.P.A., Chairman
 National Rainbow Coalition
 Rev. Jesse Jackson, President and Founder
 National Young People's Association
 Dr. Jeremiah Roper, Associate Executive Director
 Organization of Chinese Americans
 Douglas Frank, Executive Director
 Police Executive Research Forum
 Chuck Wacker, Executive Director
 State of American Hebrew Organizations
 Rabbi David Shumsky, Rabbi,
 Religious Action Center
 U.S. Conference of Mayors
 Mayor Jerry Abramson, President

Page 2

While the program has been planned by the 70 national organizations, all activities for the week are being organized at the local level by mayors, governors, educators, law enforcement officials, hospitals, and community service groups. Each day's activities are related to specific themes:

Monday, April 25 - Physicians and Nurses On Violence

Tuesday, April 26 - Families Talk About Violence

(Broadcast of "Kids Killing Kids" on CBS and FOX)

Wednesday, April 27 - Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids

Thursday, April 28 - Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention

Friday, April 29 - Heroes

Saturday/Sunday, April 30 May 1 - Prayers for Non-violence

"This week represents an all-out effort to reach kids every way we can," said Abramson. "We will get our anti-violence message to them through those who should have the most influence in their daily lives -- parents, teachers, religious leaders, the media, and their peers."

#

LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS STEERING COMMITTEE

Mayor Jerry Abramson, President, U.S. Conference of Mayors
 Virginia Trotter Betts, President, American Nurses Association
 Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, General Secretary, National Council of Churches
 Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., President, National Governor's Association
 Benjamin P. Chavis, Jr., Executive Director, NAACP
 Horace B. Deets, Executive Director, American Association of Retired Persons
 Thomas R. Donahue, Secretary/Treasurer, AFL-CIO
 Dr. James M. Dunn, President, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
 Marian Wright Edelman, President and Founder, Children's Defense Fund
 Dr. Jeremiah Floyd, Associate Executive Director, National School Boards Association
 Keith Gelger, President, National Education Association
 Antonia Hernandez, President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund
 R. William Ide, III, President, American Bar Association
 Dr. Jesse Jackson, President and Founder, National Rainbow Coalition
 Coretta Scott King, President, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change
 Thomas Koerner, Deputy Executive Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals
 Daphne Kwok, Executive Director, Organization of Chinese Americans
 Rev. H. Michael Lemmons, Executive Director, Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
 Msgr. Robert N. Lynch, General Secretary, National Conference of Catholic Bishops
 Gary Marx, Senior Associate Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators
 Dr. Robert E. McAfee, President-elect, American Medical Association
 Sharon Catherine McNamee, President, National Catholic Education Association
 June Million, Director of Public Information, National Association of Elementary School Principals
 Eric Munoz, Chairman, National Puerto Rican Coalition
 Brad Sales, Director of Communications, BEST Foundation
 Lucille S. Sathany, Chairman, FOX Broadcasting Company
 Rahhi David Saparstein, Director Religious Action, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
 Robert T. Soutly, Executive Director, National Association of Police Organizations
 Randy Sotzald, National Director, Japanese American Citizens League
 Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers
 Dr. Ronald J. Sider, President, Evangelicals for Social Action
 Howard Stringer, President, CBS Broadcasting Group
 Jack Valenti, President and CEO, Motion Picture Association of America
 Chuck Wexler, Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum
 Raul Yzaguirre, President, National Council of LaRaza

MONDAY, APRIL 25**Physicians and Nurses on Violence****TUESDAY, APRIL 26****Families Talk About Violence****WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27****Focus on Schools:****Listening to Kids****THURSDAY, APRIL 28****Violence and the Law:****Enforcement and Prevention****FRIDAY, APRIL 29****Heroes****SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY 1****Prayers for Non-Violence**

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 -- May 1, 1994

STEERING COMMITTEE**APRIL 25**

Thomas A. Donnan, Secretary-Treasurer

American Association of Medical Personnel

Barbara G. Smith, Executive Director

American Association of School Administrators

Greg Myers, Senior Association Executive Director

Adviser for Administrator

E. William Mc, III, President

American Federation of Teachers

Albert Glicker, President

American Medical Association

Dr. Richard S. Hoffman, President-Elect

American Nurses Association

Virginia Trotter Smith, J.D., M.S.W., A.P.N.

President

Capital Joint Committee on Public Affairs

Dr. James H. Dole, President

NEST Foundation

GEO Stiles, Director of Communications

GEO Broadcast Group

Michael R. Gager, President

Children's Defense Fund

Marion Wright Edelman, President and Founder

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Inc.

Rev. H. Robert Loveless, Executive Director

Emergency for Social Action

Dr. Ronald J. Shaw, President

For Broadcasting Company

Linda S. Salsky, Chairman

Interfaith American Citizens League

Randy Susskind, National Director

Northwestern University

Dr. Lester King, Jr., Center for

Non-Violence Action Chicago

Gordon Scott King, President

National American Legal Defense Fund

Arthur H. Bernstein, President and General Counsel

National Parents Association of America

John Vincent, President, and CEO

National Association of Secondary

School Principals

Anne Griffin, Director/Executive Director

National Association of Police Organizations

Robert L. Sells, Executive Director

National Association of Secondary

School Principals

Thomas Kerner, Deputy Executive Director

NAACP

Kathleen F. Clark, Jr., Executive Director, CDE

National Catholic Education Association

Beverly Gifford, Executive Director

National Conference of Catholic Bishops

Bishop Robert E. Lynch, General Secretary

National Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Jean Simon, Executive

General Secretary

National Council of LaRaza

Raul Yzaguirre, President

National Education Association

Keith Gaiser, President

National Governors' Association

Governor Gerald A. Campbell, Jr., Chairman

National Puerto Rican Coalition

Ely Moya, M.A., M.S.W., Chairman

National Business Roundtable

Gov. James Andrew, President and Founder

National School Safety Association

Dr. Jerome Ford, Associate Executive Director

Organization of Chinese Americans

Stephen Tsai, Executive Director

Public Executive Research Forum

Chuck Winkler, Executive Director

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director

Religious Action Center

U.S. Conference of Mayors

Mayor Jerry Abramson, President

LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS
A WEEK-LONG CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE
IN CITIES ACROSS AMERICA

A broad based coalition of 70 national educational, religious, local government, law enforcement, medical, legal, civil rights, media, community service, and family advocacy organizations have announced a week-long campaign against youth violence scheduled for April 25 - May 1.

Each day's activities, which are being organized at the local level, are related to specific themes:

Monday, April 25 - Physicians and Nurses on Violence

Activities will focus on the medical and public health aspects of youth violence, especially health care costs.

Tuesday, April 26 - Families Talk Against Violence

A one-hour television program "Kids Killing Kids" will be simultaneously broadcast at 8 p.m. EST on CBS and FOX.

Students will be urged through their schools to view the program as a homework assignment. Families will be encouraged to utilize the "Family Viewing Guide", published in newspapers across the country, to stimulate discussions with their children about gun use, dealing with anger and conflict, individual responsibility, and values.

Wednesday, April 27 - Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids

The central event of this week will be the discussion in schools across America of "Kids Killing Kids" and the issues it raised. Teachers will be provided with special "Teacher Guides" to help structure classes and other activities.

Thursday, April 28 - Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention

Police, prosecutors, and bar associations will be asked to organize local activities that focus on legal issues related to youth violence like enforcement of existing gun laws, and the legal rights of those injured by gun violence.

Friday, April 29 - Heroes

A focus on local heroes, those people and programs that are doing outstanding work on youth violence, crime prevention, and youth services.

Saturday/Sunday, April 30 - May 1 - Prayers for Non-violence

Religious leaders and institutions will be speaking out against youth violence and participating through sermons, prayer services, and community projects.

MONDAY, APRIL 25
Physicians and Nurses on Violence
TUESDAY, APRIL 26
Families Talk About Violence
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
Faces on Schools:
Listening to Kids



THURSDAY, APRIL 28
Violence and the Law:
Enforcement and Prevention
FRIDAY, APRIL 29
Hopout
SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY
Prayers for Non-Violence

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 ... May 1, 1994

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

AFL-CIO
American Academy of Otolaryngology/Head & Neck
American Association of Retired Persons
American Bar Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Medical Association
American Psychiatric Association
Annenberg Washington Program
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
CBS Broadcast Group
Center to Prevent Handgun Violence
Children's Defense Fund
CityKids Foundation
Concerned Women for America
Council of the Great City Schools
Enterprise Foundation
FOX Broadcasting Company
Girls Incorporated
Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship
Kidsnet
Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund
Motion Picture Association of America
National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming
National Association of Broadcasters
National Association of Counties
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Police Organizations
National Association of Social Workers
National Catholic Education Association
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
National Council of LaRaza
National Education Association
National Institute for Dispute Resolution
National Puerto Rican Coalition
National Religious Broadcasters
National Sheriffs Association
National Victim Center
Newspaper Association of America Foundation
Physicians for a Violence Free Society
Police Executive Research Forum
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
United States Catholic Conference
U.S. Conference of Mayors
World Vision

American Academy of Family Physicians
American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee
American Association of School Administrators
American College of Emergency Physicians
American Jewish Congress
American Nurses Association
American for Democratic Action
Association for Independent Television Stations
BEST Foundation
Business Roundtable
Center for Criminal Justice Studies
Child Welfare League of America
Church of Scientology International
Communitarian Network
Congress of National Black Churches
Criminal Justice Policy Foundation
Evangelicals for Social Action
Fraternal Order of Police
International Brotherhood of Police Officers
Japanese American Citizens League
Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change
NAACP
National Assembly/National Collaboration for Youth
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Collegiate Athletic Association
National Council of Churches
National Crime Prevention Council
National Governors Association
National League of Cities
National Rainbow Coalition
National School Boards Association
National Teens, Crime, & Community Program Center
Organization of Chinese Americans
Points of Light Foundation
Public Affairs Council
United Methodist Church General Board of Church & Society
WAVE, Inc.

Jose & Bruce

Does This Ring a
Bell - I Sent you a
Tape on 3/21 - FYI -
Correspondence Wants to Know
if We answered or Should
They - TX__ Hanne

MTV NETWORKS

A VIACOM COMPANY

Tom Freston
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer

Jim —

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500



Original +
Videotape w/
Carol Rasco

Dear Mr. President:

It is certainly my pleasure to be in Washington today for the announcement of your public service campaign against violence. MTV Networks supports your efforts to "give children back their childhood" wholeheartedly and I am confident that your spots will be well received by MTV's, VH-1's and Nickelodeon's audiences.

We agree that children and young adults have the most to lose in an increasingly violent society. Accordingly, we have made the "anti-violence" issue the Pro-Social priority for MTV Networks this year. We have consulted a wide array of experts in this area and are creating ambitious, creative and hard hitting campaigns for all of our networks; MTV, Nickelodeon, and VH-1. Each of these will receive the same level of support and commitment we gave to our political awareness campaign, "Choose or Lose," back in 1992.

Let me briefly run down the activities under this mandate on each of our networks.

•MTV. MTV has initiated a campaign called "Enough is Enough." Its purpose is to make it "cool" for young people to turn to non-violent conflict resolution as well as to focus attention on the tragic consequences of violence in their lives. The campaign will include special programming like forums with political leaders, MTV News coverage, public service announcements, local market activities, and events with artists and political and community leaders. As the campaign unfolds, we will also enlist the support of our partners in the advertising and cable industries.

We are hoping that you yourself will be able to appear in a forum with MTV viewers that will run on the network and will totally focus on the issue of violence in our society. We are pursuing this request with Mark Gearan from your Communications Office.

•Nickelodeon. Nickelodeon is developing a series of public service announcements in its own style that are specifically devoted to address violence in our society and what

Page 2

kids can do about it. Additionally, we have made special editions of our "Nickelodeon News" program focusing on the violence issue. We already aired one called Are You What You Watch? about the effects of television violence on kids. Again, we hope to utilize the resources of our cable affiliates by servicing these spots to run on their local channels.

•VH-1. VH-1 is about to announce their own campaign on violence that will focus on domestic violence. This campaign will also involve the creation of PSAs and various news reports and specials.

On another note, your administration's interest in issues of importance to young people has been consistent and has not gone unnoticed. We appreciate George Stephanopoulos' participation in MTV's recent fundraiser for "Rock the Vote" and would like to continue this mutually supportive relationship in the future. The fundraiser raised some \$200,000 for "Rock the Vote." It was a tremendous success and will cover a major portion of their expenses.

I have enclosed a tape, which will highlight elements of our anti-violence campaigns to date. It is my hope that your public service campaign in conjunction with our own very ambitious campaigns will give young people "something to say yes to" and a voice for change.

Best Regards,

Dom Freston



TO : Jody Greenstone
FROM : Jay Kriegel
DATE : March 17, 1994

As requested, attached is a draft letter from the President to Mayor Abramson of Louisville, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and spokesman for "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" Week.

As previously discussed, please note that:

1. This is not a "television" or "network" project;
2. The planning has been for a week of wide-ranging activities with broad public and private sector sponsorship that can benefit from the focus and power of network television.

Accordingly, the proposed letter does not refer to the television program but, instead, cites the week of activities of all these participating groups.

Something like this would be very helpful and would be well-received by the participating organizations (list attached), some of whom are confused by your other recent events relating to violence.

Please let me hear from you.

To: Marcia
Fahn
Bruce
Jost
I think we
should do a letter-
If you agree,
please let
me

I know
ASAP
and I
will
set it
out
Jed

*my suggestions
edits, please edit
as you see fit.
J.*

DRAFT
March 17, 1994

Dear Mayor Abramson:

I want to commend you and your colleagues at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, as well as the many other leaders and national organizations that have come together to plan the "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" Week of activities in late April, focusing on youth violence.

This tragic problem, which so afflicts the neighborhoods of every city across America, demands the attention and concerted action of every sector of our society. Your effort, that has brought together so many different groups, can be an important step in marshalling the vast resources of our country to reverse the deadly cycle of youth violence.

help [I know that in planning this week of activities, you have maintained ~~close~~ contact with members of the Cabinet, the White House and the Task Force on Violence.] Please be assured of our support *for* ~~in helping~~ ~~to make~~ "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" Week ~~effective~~. *We must all* ~~in communicating~~ to America's youth and their families the tragic consequences of resorting to guns to settle disputes as well as the realistic alternatives available for resolving conflicts and anger.

[The federal government looks forward to working with the nation's mayors and the other participating organizations on this creative and profoundly important project.] *fe*

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton



JAY L. KRIEDEL
COUNSELLOR

TO : Rahm Emanuel 202/456-2983
 Jody Greenstone 202/456-2215
 Bruce Reed 202/456-7028
 Ricki Seidman 202/456-2461
 George Stephanopolous 202/456-2883
 Christine Varney 202/456-2983

FROM : Jay L. Kriegel

DATE : April 21, 1994

We are sending overnight under separate cover several copies of the tape of "Kids Killing Kids" as it will be broadcast on the CBS and Fox networks next Tuesday, April 26 at 8 p.m. as part of a week of activities focusing on youth violence.

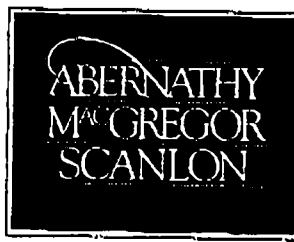
The 86 national organizations participating in this week have asked that youth violence be discussed in schools across the country on Wednesday, April 27, using this television program to help stimulate conversation.

Attached is a release from some of the major national education organizations talking about this unique linkage between the nation's school systems and a network television program. As many of you know, this has never happened before.

Some of the organizations involved in this week of activities were hopeful that the President could find a way to show support next week, especially on Tuesday or Wednesday when the focus will be on kids in school talking about violence.

Here are some possible ideas:

1. On Tuesday, April 26 the theme will be "Families Talk About Violence" stressing the idea of families coming together to watch the television program and then talk about violence.



The National PTA has distributed "5 Questions To Ask Your Kids" after watching the program.
(attached)

Anything that the President might do to call on families to come together to talk about violence would be supportive.

In some cities, mayors will watch the program with several kids and their families. It would be great for the President to do anything like this, but it is obviously a bigger commitment of time.

2. On Wednesday, April 27, adults are going into the schools in many cities to hear kids react to the program, and talk about their concerns regarding violence and what can be done about violence. There will be a focus on student run programs, like a mediation and dispute resolution efforts.

Among the possibilities:

- a. Go to a school to meet with students.
- b. Have a few students come in for a chat.
- c. Do a two-way satellite hook-up with a class of students.
- d. Meet with several trained student mediators.

We hope that some way can be found for the President to demonstrate some participation in this week of activities.

For Immediate Release
April 17, 1994

Contact: See Cover Page

NATIONAL EDUCATION GROUPS JOIN IN
"LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS" CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH-VIOLENCE

Washington, D.C. — The National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Parent Teacher Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of Great City Schools, and the National Catholic Educational Association have joined 70 other broad based organizations in the "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" campaign against youth violence.

"The whole community needs to take responsibility for the unprecedented levels of violence we see among young people. An honest discussion of the real consequences of violence and how kids can avoid violent confrontations is a good place to begin," said American Federation of Teachers president Al Shanker.

Educators across America will hold classroom discussions on youth violence on Wednesday, April 27, based, in part, on the network television special "Kids Killing Kids." "This program and these classroom discussions will help drive home the message that total communities — parents, teachers, and the media — are concerned and are committed to working with young people to help solve this problem," said Keith Geiger, President of the National Education Association.

The "Kids Killing Kids" special, hosted by Malcolm Jamal Warner, will air simultaneously on CBS and FOX (commercial free), Tuesday, April 26 at 8:00 p.m. EST. "The media has greater reach than textbooks and teachers combined," said Samuel Sava, National Association of Elementary School Principals director, "We look forward to their continued collaboration on the critical issues of youth violence."

In preparation for the discussion of violence in the classrooms, national education organizations have disseminated 100,000 eight-page Curriculum Guides, and 80,000 Teacher Mini Guides. The classroom discussions will focus on the tragic consequences of youth violence for children, their families, and their communities; alternative ways for kids to deal with frustration and anger; and resources and support services available to kids and their families.

The day of classroom discussions is part of a week-long campaign against youth violence. The campaign is being implemented at the local level with activities being planned by mayors, governors, educators, law enforcement officials, hospitals, and community service groups across the nation. According to Geiger, "Youth violence is not just a school problem, but a community one."

Each day's activities relate to specific themes:

Monday, April 25 – Physicians and Nurses on Violence

Tuesday, April 26 – Families Talk About Violence

Broadcast of Kids Killing Kids

Wednesday, April 27 – Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids

Thursday, April 28 – Violence and the Law: Prevention and Enforcement

Friday, April 29 – Heroes

Saturday/Sunday, April 30 - May 1 - Prayers for Non-violence

"The children of this country who are confronted with violence are our children, too," said Catherine McNamee, CSJ, National Catholic Educational Association. "This collaboration underscores that all educational and community leaders must make the safety and well-being of our youngsters the nation's top priority."

###

LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS STEERING COMMITTEE

Mayor Jerry Abramson, President, U.S. Conference of Mayors
Virginia Trotter Bets, President, American Nurses Association
Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, General Secretary, National Council of Churches
Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., President, National Governor's Association
Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Executive Director, NAACP
Horace B. Dexter, Executive Director, American Association of Retired Persons
Thomas R. Donahue, Secretary/Treasurer, AFL-CIO
Dr. James M. Dunn, President, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
Marian Wright Edelman, President and Founder, Children's Defense Fund
Dr. Jeremiah Floyd, Associate Executive Director, National School Boards Association
Keith Gelger, President, National Education Association
Antonia Hernandez, President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund
R. William Ide, III, President, American Bar Association
Dr. Jesse Jackson, President and Founder, National Rainbow Coalition
Coretta Scott King, President, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change
Thomas Koerner, Deputy Executive Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals
Daphne Kwok, Executive Director, Organization of Chinese Americans
Rev. H. Michael Lemmons, Executive Director, Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
Mgr. Robert N. Lynch, General Secretary, National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Gary Marx, Senior Associate Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators
Dr. Robert E. McAfee, President-elect, American Medical Association
Sister Catherine McNamee, President, National Catholic Educational Association
June Million, Director of Public Information, National Association of Elementary School Principals
Eric Munoz, Chairman, National Puerto Rican Coalition
Brad Sales, Director of Communications, BEST Foundation
Lucille S. Salhany, Chairman, FOX Broadcasting Company
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director Religious Action, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Robert T. Scully, Executive Director, National Association of Police Organizations
Randy Sepzaki, National Director, Japanese American Citizens League
Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers
Dr. Ronald J. Sider, President, Evangelicals for Social Action
Howard Stringer, President, CBS Broadcasting Group
Jack Valenti, President and CEO, Motion Picture Association of America
Chuck Wexler, Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum
Raul Yzaguirre, President, National Council of La Raza

FAMILIES TALK ABOUT VIOLENCE

On Tuesday, April 26 at 8 p.m. EST (7 p.m. CST) a special one-hour television program about youth violence will be broadcast on CBS and FOX (without commercials). Across America, families will be coming together to watch this program and talk about violence.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILDREN ON TUESDAY NIGHT, APRIL 26

1. *How do they deal with conflict and anger?*
2. *Do others handle it differently?*
3. *How can teens manage their anger without resorting to violence?*
4. *Can teens cope with threats without using guns and still save face?*
5. *What help is available to your children from professionals, youth organizations, hot-lines, community services and adult advisers?*



MONDAY, APRIL 25
Physicians and Nurses on Violence
TUESDAY, APRIL 26
Families Talk About Violence
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
Focus on Schools:
Listening to Kids



THURSDAY, APRIL 28
Violence and the Law:
Enforcement and Prevention
FRIDAY, APRIL 29
Heroes
SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY 1
Prayers for Non-Violence

America focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 — May 1, 1994

April 18, 1994

Dear Editor:

In an unprecedented coordinated effort, the major national education organizations have joined forces with a total of 80 broad based organizations, including network television, in the "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" campaign against youth-violence.

On Wednesday, April 27, youth violence will be the subject of discussion in classrooms across America, based on the TV special "Kids Killing Kids." CBS and FOX are broadcasting "Kids Killing Kids" without commercial breaks on the evening of April 26. Our organizations are encouraging teachers and parents to treat the program as a homework assignment and to focus discussion on effective ways to avoid and combat violence. These efforts are part of a week-long campaign to raise community awareness of the tragic consequences of violence and the alternatives available to young people with problems.

In preparation for the classroom discussions next Wednesday, our organizations have distributed 100,000 eight-page Curriculum Guides, and 80,000 Teacher Mini Guides. (Please find copies enclosed.)

We are committed to helping kids and families combat youth violence, and hope that you will use the power of journalism to aid in our cause.

Sincerely,

Esther Cox
President,
National Association of
Secondary School Principals

Keith Gaiger
President,
National Education Association

Paul D. Houston
Executive Director,
American Association of
School Administrators

Sister Catherine McNamee
President,
National Catholic Education Association

Samuel G. Sava
President,
National Association of
Elementary Principals

Albert Shanker
President
American Federation of Teachers

MONDAY, APRIL 25
Physicians and Nurses on Violence
TUESDAY, APRIL 26
Families Talk About Violence
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
Focus on Schools:
Listening to Kids



THURSDAY, APRIL 28
Violence and the Law:
Enforcement and Prevention
FRIDAY, APRIL 29
Homes
SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY 1
Prayers for Non-Violence

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 — May 1, 1994

For Immediate Release
April 17, 1994

Contact: See Cover Page

NATIONAL EDUCATION GROUPS JOIN IN "LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS" CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH-VIOLENCE

Washington, D.C. -- The National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Parent Teacher Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of Great City Schools, and the National Catholic Educational Association have joined 70 other broad based organizations in the "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids" campaign against youth violence.

"The whole community needs to take responsibility for the unprecedented levels of violence we see among young people. An honest discussion of the real consequences of violence and how kids can avoid violent confrontations is a good place to begin," said American Federation of Teachers president Al Shanker.

Educators across America will hold classroom discussions on youth violence on Wednesday, April 27, based, in part, on the network television special "Kids Killing Kids." "This program and these classroom discussions will help drive home the message that total communities -- parents, teachers, and the media -- are concerned and are committed to working with young people to help solve this problem," said Keith Geiger, President of the National Education Association.

The "Kids Killing Kids" special, hosted by Malcolm Jamal Warner, will air simultaneously on CBS and FOX (commercial free), Tuesday, April 26 at 8:00 p.m. EST. "The media has greater reach than textbooks and teachers combined," said Samuel Sava, National Association of Elementary School Principals Executive Director, "We look forward to their continued collaboration on the critical issue of youth violence."

In preparation for the discussion of violence in the classrooms, national education organizations have disseminated 100,000 eight-page Curriculum Guides, and 80,000 Teacher Mini Guides. The classroom discussions will focus on the tragic consequences of youth violence for children, their families, and their communities; alternative ways for kids to deal with frustration and anger; and resources and support services available to kids and their families.

The day of classroom discussions is part of a week-long campaign against youth violence. The campaign is being implemented at the local level with activities being planned by mayors, governors, educators, law enforcement officials, hospitals, and community service groups across the nation. According to Geiger, "Youth violence is not just a school problem, but a community one."

Each day's activities relate to specific themes:

Monday, April 25 - Physicians and Nurses on Violence
Tuesday, April 26 - Families Talk About Violence
Broadcast of Kids Killing Kids
Wednesday, April 27 - Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids
Thursday, April 28 - Violence and the Law: Prevention and Enforcement
Friday, April 29 - Heroes
Saturday/Sunday, April 30 - May 1 - Prayers for Non-violence

"The children of this country who are confronted with violence are our children, too," said Catherine McNamee, CSJ, President of the National Catholic Educational Association. "This collaboration underscores that all educational and community leaders must make the safety and well-being of our youngsters the nation's top priority."

###

LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS STEERING COMMITTEE

Mayor Jerry Abramson, President, U.S. Conference of Mayors
Virginia Trotter Betts, President, American Nurses Association
Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, General Secretary, National Council of Churches
Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., President, National Governor's Association
Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Executive Director, NAACP
Horace B. Deets, Executive Director, American Association of Retired Persons
Thomas R. Donahue, Secretary/Treasurer, AFL-CIO
Dr. James M. Dunn, President, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
Marian Wright Edelman, President and Founder, Children's Defense Fund
Dr. Jeremiah Floyd, Associate Executive Director, National School Boards Association
Keith Geiger, President, National Education Association
Antonia Hernandez, President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund
R. William Ide, III, President, American Bar Association
Dr. Jesse Jackson, President and Founder, National Rainbow Coalition
Coretta Scott King, President, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-violent Social Change
Thomas Kocmer, Deputy Executive Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals
Daphne Kwok, Executive Director, Organization of Chinese Americans
Rev. H. Michael Lemmons, Executive Director, Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
Msgr. Robert N. Lynch, General Secretary, National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Gary Marx, Senior Associate Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators
Dr. Robert E. McJee, President-elect, American Medical Association
Sister Catherine McNamee, President, National Catholic Educational Association
June Million, Director of Public Information, National Association of Elementary School Principals
Eric Munoz, Chairman, National Puerto Rican Coalition
Brenda Caloe, Director of Communications, BEST Foundation
Lucille S. Sathany, Chairman, FOX Broadcasting Company
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director Religious Action, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Robert T. Scully, Executive Director, National Association of Police Organizations
Pandy Senzaki, National Director, Japanese American Citizens League
Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers
Dr. Ronald J. Sider, President, Evangelicals for Social Action
Howard Springer, President, CBS Broadcasting Group
Jack Valenti, President and CEO, Motion Picture Association of America
Chuck Wexler, Executive Director, Police Executive Research Forum
Raul Yzaguirre, President, National Council of La Raza



TALK TO YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT VIOLENCE

Youth violence is growing, but you can help...

Teachers Join schools across America on Wednesday, April 27 and discuss the causes and prevention of youth violence. This is part of a national week of activities called "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids."

What's Happening? *Kids Killing Kids*—a contemporary television drama (cc), without commercials, hosted by Malcolm Jamal Warner.

• Tuesday, April 26, 8 pm ET, simulcast on The CBS Television Network and Fox TV

It's Riveting! Watch what happens when four kids who use guns with tragic consequences get a chance to relive these events. In the re-take, these kids resolve their personal conflicts without resorting to guns and violence.

When To Act Urge your students to watch *Kids Killing Kids* on Tuesday evening, April 26 and discuss their reactions with their families. At school the next day, Wednesday, April 27, use this program to stimulate class discussion and student projects throughout the week.

Listen and Learn Join with teachers across America on Wednesday, April 27. Talk to students about their experiences with violence. How do they deal with conflict and anger? Do others handle it differently? How can teens manage their anger without resorting to violence? Can teens cope with threats without using guns and still save face? What kinds of help are available from professionals, youth organizations, hot-lines, community services and adult advisors?

Other Activities Encourage students to express their concerns and fears and explore alternatives to violence by providing activities such as assemblies, dramatizations, contests for essays, posters or rap lyrics, rallies and petition drives. Bring community leaders into the school (including government officials, police, medical, legal, business and religious leaders) for a "Listen-In"—to hear students express their concerns about violence.

Join Community Efforts From April 25 to May 1, 1994, educators, physicians, clergy and law enforcement and local government representatives will be talking about youth violence and its prevention.

Participate with your class and your school on Wednesday, April 27 and look for other activities happening in your community.

Discuss the Media Ask your students how violence is portrayed in all types of media—newspapers, television, movies, videos, music and video games. Does the media present alternative ways to resolve anger and conflicts without resorting to guns and violence? What images and messages do students get from the media about violence and its prevention?

Get Help Now! Find resources that can make a difference if you or a young person you know needs help now with violence-related problems

Call

- 1-800-999-9999 NINE LINE, a help line for young people
- 1-800-FYI-CALL National Victim Center INFOLINK Program
- 1-800-222-2000 National Council for Child Abuse and Family Violence
- 1-800-729-6686 National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
- 1-800-662-HELP National Institute on Drug Abuse Referral Line

Experts advise that local suicide hot-lines are the best sources for suicide intervention. For information about suicide, contact the American Association of Suicidology (CA), (303) 692-0985.

Permission is granted to reproduce this guide. Teachers may tape this show off-air and use it in a school or library two times within the first 10 school days from the time of recording. The program may be retained for review until the end of a 45-day possession period, after which the recording is to be erased.

This mini-guide and a detailed study guide are written by June Behrmann, M.Ed for KIDSNET, the computerized clearinghouse for children's television and radio, 6856 Eastern Ave., NW, Suite 208, Washington, DC 20012. For America Online, contact kidsnet@aol.com.

Education Steering Committee for "Let's Stop Kids Killing Kids": American Association of School Administrators; American Federation of Teachers; Council of Chief State School Officers; Council of Great City Schools; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Catholic Education Association; National Education Association; Newspaper Association of America Foundation; National School Boards Association; Teens, Crime, and the Community

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MONDAY, APRIL 25
Physicians and Nurses on Violence

TUESDAY, APRIL 26
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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
Focus on Schools:
Listening to Kids



THURSDAY, APRIL 28
Violence and the Law:
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FRIDAY, APRIL 29
Heroes

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Prayers for Non-Violence

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 — May 1, 1994

LET'S STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS A WEEK-LONG CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE IN CITIES ACROSS AMERICA

STYLING COMMITTEE

AP, CBS
Thomas R. Gombosi, Secretary-Treasurer
American Association of School Principals
Thomas R. Gombosi, Executive Director
American Association of School Administrators
Barry Venz, Senior Associate Executive Director
American Bar Association
R. William Old, III, President
American Federation of Teachers
Albert Shanker, President
American Medical Association
Dr. Robert E. McAlister, President-Elect
American Nurses Association
Virginia Tucker Watts, J.D., M.S.N., R.N., President
Kaiser Family Foundation on Public Affairs
Dr. James H. Donat, President
NYTT Foundation
Paul Selzer, Director of Communications
CBS Broadcast Group
Robert S. Singer, President
Children's Defense Fund
Marion Wright Edelman, President and Founder
Congress of Racial Equality, Inc.
Rev. R. Michael Linneman, Executive Director
Evangelical for Social Action
Dr. Ronald J. Sider, President
For Broadcasting Company
Linda S. Seligson, Chairman
Japanese American Citizens League
Penny Council, National Director
North Light Day, Center for
Developmental Social Change
Carol Ann Smith, President
National American League of Women
Judith H. Bernstein, President and General Counsel
National Post on Association of America
Jack Yablon, President and CEO
National Association of Elementary
School Principals
Joan Miller, Director of Public Information
National Association of Police Organizations
Robert I. Smith, Executive Director
National Association of Secondary
School Principals
Thomas Korman, Deputy Executive Director
NAACP
Benjamin F. Clark, Jr., Executive Director, CEO
National Catholic Education Association
Edward McElroy, President
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Bishop Robert B. Lynch, General Secretary
National Council of Churches
The Rev. Dr. James Brown Campbell, General Secretary
National Council of La Raza
Raul Yzaguirre, President
National Education Association
Leta Stetter Staker, President
National Governors' Association
Lawrence H. Campbell, Jr., Chairman
National Puerto Rican Coalition
Eric Suarez, M.D., M.P.A., Chairman
National Rainbow Coalition
Rev. Jesse Jackson, President and Founder
National School Boards Association
Dr. Jerrold R. Foy, Associate Executive Director
Organization of Christian Americans
Capital Fund, Executive Director
Public Education Resources Forum
Chuck Wedder, Executive Director
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Mayor Jerry Abramson, President

A broad based coalition of 80 national educational, religious, local government, law enforcement, medical, legal, civil rights, media, community service, and family advocacy organizations have announced a week-long campaign against youth violence scheduled for April 25 - May 1.

Each day's activities, which are being organized at the local level, are related to specific themes:

Monday, April 25 - Physicians and Nurses on Violence

Activities will focus on the medical and public health aspects of youth violence, especially, health care costs.

Tuesday, April 26 - Families Talk Against Violence

A one-hour television program "Kids Killing Kids" will be simultaneously broadcast at 8 p.m. EST on CBS and FOX.

Students will be urged through their schools to view the program as a homework assignment. Families will be encouraged to utilize the "Family Viewing Guide", published in newspapers across the country, to stimulate discussions with their children about gun use, dealing with anger and conflict, individual responsibility, and values.

Wednesday, April 27 - Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids

The central event of this week will be the discussion in schools across America of "Kids Killing Kids" and the issues it raised. Teachers will be provided with special "Teacher Guides" to help structure classes and other activities.

Thursday, April 28 - Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention

Police, prosecutors, and bar associations will be asked to organize local activities that focus on legal issues related to youth violence like enforcement of existing gun laws, and the legal rights of those injured by gun violence.

Friday, April 29 - Heroes

A focus on local heroes, those people and programs that are doing outstanding work on youth violence, crime prevention, and youth services.

Saturday/Sunday, April 30 - May 1 - Prayers for Non-violence

Religious leaders and institutions will be speaking out against youth violence and participating through sermons, prayer services, and community projects.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Johnnie E. Potts, Public of Light Foundation, 1727 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, Telephone: 202/723-9185 x182, Fax: 202/723-9224

Physicians and Nurses on Violence

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

Families Talk About Violence

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

Focus on Schools:

Listening to Kids



Violence and the Law:

Enforcement and Prevention

FRIDAY, APRIL 29

Reports

SATURDAY, APRIL 30 / SUNDAY, MAY 1

Prayers for Non-Violence

America focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention / April 25 — May 1, 1994

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

AFL-CIO

American Academy of Otolaryngology/Head & Neck

American Association of Retired Persons

American Bar Association

American Federation of Teachers

American Medical Association

American Psychiatric Association

Annenberg Washington Program

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

CBS Broadcast Group

Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

Children's Defense Fund

CityKids Foundation

Concerned Women for America

Council of the Great City Schools

Enterprise Foundation

FOX Broadcasting Company

Girls Incorporated

Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship

Kidsnet

Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund

Motion Picture Association of America

National Alliance for Non-Violent Programming

National Association of Broadcasters

National Association of Counties

National Association of Manufacturers

National Association of Police Organizations

National Association of Social Workers

National Catholic Educational Association

National Conference of Catholic Bishops

National Council of LaRaza

National Education Association

National Institute for Dispute Resolution

National Parent Teacher Association

National Rainbow Coalition

National School Boards Association

National Teens, Crime, & Community Program Center

Newspaper Association of America Foundation

Physicians for a Violence Free Society

Police Executive Research Forum

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

United States Catholic Conference

U.S. Conference of Mayors

World Vision

American Academy of Family Physicians

American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee

American Association of School Administrators

American College of Emergency Physicians

American Jewish Congress

American Nurses Association

American for Democratic Action

Association for Independent Television Stations

BEST Foundation

Business Roundtable

Center for Criminal Justice Studies

Child Welfare League of America

Church of Scientology International

Communitarian Network

Congress of National Black Churches

Criminal Justice Policy Foundation

Evangelicals for Social Action

Fraternal Order of Police

International Brotherhood of Police Officers

Japanese American Citizens League

Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent

Social Change

NAACP

National Assembly/National Collaboration
for Youth

National Association of Elementary
School Principals

National Association of Secondary
School Principals

National Collegiate Athletic Association

National Council of Churches

National Crime Prevention Council

National Governors Association

National League of Cities

National Puerto Rican Coalition

National Religious Broadcasters

National Sheriffs Association

National Victim Center

Organization of Chinese Americans

Points of Light Foundation

Public Affairs Council - - -

United Methodist Church General

Board of Church & Society

WAVE, Inc.

YMCA of U.S.A.

MTV NETWORKS

A VIACOM COMPANY

Tom Freston
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer

January 11, 1994

Mr. Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
OEOB, Room 216
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Reed:

Each year the senior management and creative people at MTV Networks leave the office and New York City for a few days to focus on big picture planning, improving communication with our audiences and tackling the relevant issues of the day. On behalf of this group -- MTV, Nickelodeon and VH-1 -- I would like to invite you to participate in a moderated panel discussion at MTV Networks' 1994 Management Retreat on how the media can and should impact violence in society. The discussion will take place on Wednesday, February 9, in front of 200 attendees, and will be followed by smaller group discussions (that we would like you to participate in as well) on Thursday, February 10. This year's retreat takes place in San Juan, Puerto Rico at the El San Juan Hotel.

The panel discussion will focus on how media organizations can use their resources to provide leadership on lessening violence in society, how we can change the social norms with regard to this issue and how we can best communicate on this topic with the different audiences we reach. Your expertise will add a critical and important dimension to this discussion. We will follow the panel discussion with Q&A from the audience.

The following day we will break out in small groups, giving the creative people from MTV, Nickelodeon and VH-1 specific questions to brainstorm. Groups may discuss "How MTV and VH-1 can involve the music industry on violence issues - and in developing positive role models for young adults," "How Nickelodeon can encourage children to choose alternatives to violent conflict," or "Should MTV Networks adopt a position and mobilize our audiences on gun control?" Each group will present their ideas at the end of the session.

JOSE -
① SEND HER
A B/D.

② SHE'LL SEND
YOU A LETTER

CARLY CAN HELP
③ ON WH COUNSEL
(OH YEAH, YOU
OWN WH COUNSEL)

BR

I can assure you that this will be an engaging and rewarding event in which to participate. We are a passionately committed group of people who care tremendously about our audiences and about making great television. We believe this issue demands our attention and with your help, we can help impact change in the future.

Confirmed to date are Dr. Jay Winsten, Dr. Katherine Kaufer Christoffel, Dr. Alvin Poussaint, Mark Rosenberg and Deborah Leff, The Joyce Foundation, Chicago.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I have asked Deborah Johns, our Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications, to follow up with your assistant as to your reply.

Best regards,

Tom Freston

MTV NETWORKS

A VIACOM COMPANY

FAX COVERSHEET

From: **DEBORAH HAYES JOHNS**

1515 Broadway/25th Floor
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: (212) 258-8260

FAX: (212) 258-8303

TO: Mr. Bruce Reed

COMPANY: Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

FAX: 202-456-7431

Number of Pages: 3

COMMENTS:

Please phone as soon as possible if all pages are not received.

Contact Person: Jose Cerda
Phone number: 56710
Date of request: January 27, 1994

ACCEPTANCE OF TRAVEL EXPENSES FROM OUTSIDE SOURCE

In order to consider whether the Government may accept from an outside source payment of your travel, subsistence and related expenses under the GSA travel rule, you must complete the information below. The outside source need not be a 501(c)(3) organization, but if it is, please state so on this form and include the IRS determination letter.

Please include a copy of the letter of invitation if one was received.

Your name and position:

Jose Cerda
Title:

Nature of meeting or similar function and how it relates to your official duties:

To participate in a panel discussion on how the media can and should impact violence in society at the MTV 1994 Management Retreat

Date and place(s) of travel:

February, 1994
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Persons or entity making the payment (please also note any financial interests of the person or entity known to you that may be affected by the exercise of your Government responsibilities):

MTV Networks

Nature of expense(s) paid for:

Air fare, lodging, and other expenses incurred

Method and approximately amount of payment (payment may be made either in-kind or by check made payable to U.S. Treasury; you may not directly receive payment in cash or check made out to you):

In-kind

This form and any accompanying memorandum of approval must be attached to your travel authorization. You must complete a travel voucher following the trip. Please send completed form to Room 128, OEOB, at least 3 days before commencement of travel.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 1994

MEMORANDUM TO BRUCE REED
JOSE CERDA
LORRAINE VOLES
DAVID STRAUSS
CHARLOTTE HAYES

FROM: JAMI FLOYD *JF*
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
DOMESTIC POLICY

RE: "STOP KIDS KILLING KIDS":
PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL PARTICIPATION

As you may know, FOX and CBS will broadcast the program, "Kids Killing Kids" on Tuesday, April 26, 1994. The one-hour educational program will be broadcast during prime time and without interruption.¹ This broadcast will be the centerpiece of a week (April 25, 1994-May 1, 1994) of joint anti-violence activities sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors together with 50 of the nation's leading educational, religious, medical, law enforcement and social service organizations.

SUGGESTED ROLES FOR THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

Please consider the following possibilities:

- **Physicians on Violence.**

—> EVENT: On Monday, April 25, medical

¹ABC and NBC are still negotiating the terms of their participation. FOX and CBS hope to achieve a "roadblock" of the airwaves during the broadcast of "Kids Killing Kids."

associations, hospitals, medical schools and public health agencies across the country will focus on the medical and public health aspects of violence, especially the impact on the handgun trade.

- > RECOMMENDATION: The President or Vice President should address one or more of these forums. *These forums provide an excellent opportunity to link our health care and crime messages, with a focus on the cost of crime to our nation's health care systems.*

- **Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids.**

- > EVENT: On Wednesday, April 27, the day after the broadcast of "Kids Killing Kids," schools across the nation will conduct discussions about the issues it raises.
- > RECOMMENDATION: The President and Vice President should each conduct teach-ins to talk to and listen to students. Both men do exceedingly well in this youth town-hall style forum, as evidenced by the President's recent visit to [school] and the Vice President's visit to the Flower School in Chicago. *School events help to link our anti-violence message with our education reform and community empowerment initiatives, as well as to send a message of individual and community responsibility.*

- **Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention.**

- > EVENT: On Thursday, April 28, police officers, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials will organize activities that focus on legal issues relating to gun violence such as enforcement of existing laws, how citizens can organize to prevent violence and possible changes in the law relating to guns.
- > RECOMMENDATION: The President and Vice President should each address one or more of these groups of assembled enforcement organizations. *Although any discussion of the laws relating to guns will be politically sensitive,*

our participation in the enforcement component of the "Stop Kids Killing Kids" week, will send a "tough on crime" to America.

We should be able to schedule one or more of the above events without disruption to the presidential or vice presidential schedules because (1) the "Stop Kids Killing Kids" kick-off is nine weeks away, and (2) these events will be happening in cities across the country and can be added as a stop during a visit to a region for a different purpose. Moreover, many of the events will be here in the District.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance in this matter. Also, don't hesitate to phone for my "thumbs-up" review of "Kids Killing Kids."

Attachments

KIDS KILLING KIDS

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention

THE WEEK'S SCHEDULE

April 25 - May 1

Monday, April 25	-	Physicians on Violence
Tuesday, April 26	-	Families Talk About Violence
Wednesday, April 27	-	Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids
Thursday, April 28	-	Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention
Friday, April 29	-	Heroes
Saturday/Sunday April 30 - May 1	-	Prayers for Non-Violence

A SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Monday, April 25 - Physicians on Violence

Focus on the medical and public health aspects of gun violence, especially the impact on medical resources, individual health and the cost of gun injuries.

Medical associations, hospitals, medical schools and public health agencies to sponsor local activities, including release of data analyzing and quantifying the impact of gun violence; forums for discussion of issues; press conferences. The participation of individual victims with their physicians would graphically illustrate in personal terms the actual cost and impact of gun injuries.

Tuesday, April 26 - Families Talk About Violence

Telecast of the one-hour television program "Kids Killing Kids" at 8 p.m. EST with the focus on making this an hour of "Family Viewing." Through the schools, students will be urged to view the program with their families as a "homework" assignment. Television promotion and newspaper editorial material will urge each family to

come together, watch together and talk together -- urging parental involvement, dialogue and family responsibility. Newspapers will be asked to publish a "Family Viewing Guide" that includes questions and topics for parents to talk about with their children after watching the program.

Wednesday, April 27 - Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids

The central event of the week will be the discussion in schools across America of the television program "Kids Killing Kids" and the issues it raises -- dealing with anger and conflict, gun use, dispute resolution, support services, individual responsibility and values. Teachers will be provided with "Teacher Guides" to help structure classes and other activities.

While teachers will lead and organize these activities, the primary theme will be LISTENING TO KIDS -- listening to what students say about the television program and their concerns about violence. Students can organize anti-violence activities for this day either in school or their communities, ranging from assemblies, essay contests, dramatizations or rap contests, petition drives, rallies, etc.

Additionally, Teach-Ins can be organized to bring into the schools local leaders from all walks of life (government, business, labor, police, legal, medical, civic, sports, media, etc.) to go to classes and assemblies, both talking to and listening to students. Parents can also be brought into the process.

Thursday, April 28 - Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention

Police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials, as well as lawyers and bar associations, to organize activities that focus on legal issues relating to gun violence such as statistical analyses of gun crimes, enforcement of existing laws, gun buy-back and safety programs, how citizens can organize to prevent violence, the legal rights of those injured by gun violence and possible changes in the law relating to guns.

Friday, April 29 - Heroes

A focus on local "heroes," individuals and programs that are doing outstanding work on youth violence, crime prevention and youth services. This day will salute the extraordinary efforts of the private sector in providing a vast array of support services and advocacy for young people. Activities could involve local award ceremonies and recognition events, the spotlighting of outstanding local

organizations and service programs, and the promotion of programs and hot-lines that are available to provide counselling and guidance to kids in distress.

Saturday/Sunday, April 30 - May 1 - Prayers for Non-Violence

Religious leaders and institutions speak out and participate through sermons and other activities such as special prayer services, issue forums, community projects and service programs.

Within this general national framework, each city can design its own local programs. We expect the mayors to play a leading role in convening meetings of the various organizations and constituencies involved and to coordinate planning for the week's activities. While the national organizations would endorse this thematic schedule, events would be dependent on local leadership and planning -- medical and public health for Monday; school boards, administrators, principals, and teachers for Tuesday/Wednesday along with local media (newspapers and television); police, law enforcement and legal groups for Thursday; the non-profit service sector for Friday; and religious leaders for Saturday/Sunday.



CBS Inc., 61 West 52 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 675-1515

Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

TO: Interdepartmental Working Group on Violence

FROM: Jay L. Kriegel, Senior Vice President, CBS
Preston Padden, Executive Vice President,
Affiliate Relations, Fox Broadcasting

RE: "Kids Killing Kids" --
A National Week of Anti-Violence Activities

DATE: February 14, 1994

Following months of discussion regarding violence in our communities, including consultations with the Administration and the Working Group on Violence, more than 50 national organizations have agreed to come together for a week of joint anti-violence activities. This includes virtually all of the nation's major educational organizations and religious denominations, plus medical and legal organizations, police, mayors, social services and welfare groups.

The centerpiece of the week (the last week of April 1994) will be the television broadcast of a one-hour program called "Kids Killing Kids," with four case studies of the consequences of kids using guns.

We are now broadening this effort to include many more groups involved in civil rights, youth services, community and religious-based services, law enforcement and criminal justice. At the same time, we are beginning to assist mayors in organizing activities on a local level for this week.

To help you and your agency understand the proposed schedule of events and the television program involved, we are holding a screening of the television program and organizational briefing on Thursday, February 17 from 2-4 p.m. at the NEA Headquarters in Washington, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., "NEA Auditorium."

We hope you will come or send a representative who can report back to you and your colleagues.

We look forward to seeing you on February 17. For planning purposes, please RSVP to our office.

R.S.V.P. Rachel Freidel
202/457-4508

February 17, 2-4 p.m.
NEA, 1201 16th St, NW
Washington, D.C.
"NEA Auditorium"

Jamii Floyd
Office of the Vice President
Old Executive Office Building
Room 286
Washington, DC
202-456-7871
202-456-6231 (fax)

Mike Janis
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Room 4100
Washington, DC 20410
202-708-0702
202-619-8478 (fax)

Suzan Johnson-Cook
Domestic Policy Council
Old Executive Office Building
Room 213 1/2
Washington, DC
202-456-2164
202-456-7028 (fax)

Bob Nash
Department of Agriculture
14th and Independence, SW
Room 205W
Washington, DC 20250
202-720-4581
202-720-2080 (fax)

Peter Necheles
Department of Agriculture
14th and Independence, SW
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TO:	David Gergen	202/456-2883
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	Rahm Emmanuel	202/456-6423
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Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

TO: David Gergen
Counsellor to the President
The White House

FROM: Jay L. Kriegel

DATE: February 17, 1994

RE: A Week of Anti-Violence Activities

As we finalize our plans for a week of anti-violence activities, I wanted to provide you and your colleagues with a status report.

A broad range of national organizations have now come together to sponsor a week of activities across the country focusing on youth violence, guns, alternative to conflict, personal responsibility, etc. The core groups involved are the national education organizations (NEA, AFT, school boards, principals, etc.) and the major religious denominations (National Council of Churches, Catholic Bishops' Conference, Baptist Joint Commission, Evangelicals, Synagogue Council, Black Churches). Additionally, major organizations for mayors, police, medical and legal, civil rights, youth services, business, media, etc. are all participating.

Rather than appearing to form a new organization or "coalition," the groups have chosen to join together for this one week of activities to be conducted in cities across the nation, and not to have a national organizational structure. The entire week will be called "Kids Killing Kids."

It is important to note that this is not a "television" or "network" project. While the week involves the broadcast of a one-hour program called "Kids Killing Kids," this schedule of events has been planned by these various constituencies and gives them each a role and an opportunity to emphasize their particular issues within this seven-day period.

Beyond the announcement, there are several ways the Administration could participate in the week's activities, which can be discussed at a later date. These include:

Monday, April 25 - "Physicians on Violence" -

Participation by the Surgeon General, the Secretary of HHS and others in events that dramatize the impact and cost of gun violence;

Tuesday, April 26 - "Families Talk About Violence"

The First Family could urge every American family to watch the program "Kids Killing Kids" together and then to discuss it as a family (an emphasis on parental involvement, family dialogue and family responsibility);

Wednesday, April 27 - "Focus on Schools" -

The President and Mrs. Clinton could participate in a "Listen In" in Washington or some other city, going into a school and listening to kids. (Our version of a "Teach In" modelled after the President's and Vice President's recent visits to a Washington, D.C. school). Other high ranking members of the administration could do the same.

Thursday, April 28 - "Violence and The Law"

The Attorney General, the Director of the FBI and others could participate in gun enforcement activities with local police.

Friday, April 29 - "Heroes" -

Members of the Administration (perhaps the Vice President) could attend local recognition ceremonies in various cities

The days of the week have therefore been "themed" as follows:

Monday, April 25	"Physicians on Violence"
Tuesday, April 26	"Families Talk About Violence"
Wednesday, April 27	Focus on Schools - "Listening to Kids"
Thursday, April 28	"Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention"
Friday, April 29	"Heroes"
Saturday/Sunday April 30 - May 1	"Prayers for Non-Violence"

The attached memo provides a summary of the purpose of each day. While this is a national framework, the focus of activities will be local -- in each city. We expect mayors and police chiefs to play a leading role in coordinating the planning for the week's activities in their own cities by convening meetings of the various constituencies and organizations involved -- medical and public health for Monday; schools and media for Tuesday/Wednesday; police and lawyers for Thursday; the non-profit service sector for Friday; and religious leaders for Saturday/Sunday. (The U.S. Conference of Mayors has just asked 1200 mayors to start this planning process. The letter is also attached.)

Each day, there will be visible activities in cities across the country, especially hospital-based medical events on Monday; school-based activities on Wednesday; police/law enforcement/bar association on Thursday; support services on Friday; and churches and synagogues on Saturday/Sunday.

We have targeted a public announcement of these plans during the week of February 28 through a press release. We will have:

- a) the schedule of the week and themed days;
- b) a Steering Committee with the head of 25/30 of these national organizations (education, religious, mayors, police, business, civil rights, etc.); and
- c) a list of participating national organizations.

If there is any interest in having the White House participate in this announcement, we would be delighted to work with you to find an appropriate vehicle.

for citizens and organizations that help kids in trouble and work to prevent crime. (There could also be a national recognition event.)

Saturday/Sunday
April 30 - May 1

"Prayers for Non-Violence"

The First Family could attend services and lead the nation in listening to sermons and praying for peace in our streets.

The immediate issue is whether you have any interest in participating in some form in the initial announcement (scheduled now for the week of February 28).

Of course, at any time before April 25, you could convene a White House meeting with leaders of the various constituencies -- educators, mayors, police, religion, medical, legal, civil rights, non-profit service, business, labor, etc.

I look forward to hearing from you.

cc: Peter Edelman
Rahm Emmanuel
Jody Greenstone
Bruce Reed
Ricki Seidman
George Stephanopolous
Christine Varney

WORKING DRAFT - CONFIDENTIAL

KIDS KILLING KIDS

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention

APRIL 25 - MAY 1

THE WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Monday, April 25	"Physicians on Violence"
Tuesday, April 26	"Families Talk About Violence"
Wednesday, April 27	Focus on Schools - "Listening to Kids"
Thursday, April 28	"Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention"
Friday, April 29	"Heroes"
Saturday/Sunday - April 30-May 1	"Prayers for Non-Violence"

A SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Monday, April 25 - "Physicians On Violence"

Focus on the medical and public health aspects of gun violence, especially the impact on medical resources, individual health and the cost of gun injuries.

Medical associations, hospitals, medical schools and public health agencies to sponsor local activities, including release of data analyzing and quantifying the impact of gun violence; forums for discussion of issues; press conferences. The participation of individual victims with their physicians would graphically illustrate in personal terms the actual cost and impact of gun injuries.

Tuesday, April 26 - "Families Talk About Violence"

Telecast of the one-hour television program "Kids Killing Kids" at 8 p.m. EST with the focus on making this an hour of "Family Viewing." Through the schools, students will be urged to view the program with their families as a "homework" assignment. Television promotion and newspaper editorial material will urge each family to come

together, watch together and talk together -- urging parental involvement, dialogue and family responsibility. Newspapers will be asked by publish a "Family Viewing Guide" that includes questions and topics for parents to talk about with their children after watching the program.

Wednesday, April 27 - Focus On Schools - "Listening to Kids".

The central event of the week will be the discussion in schools across America of the television program "Kids Killing Kids" and the issues it raises -- dealing with anger and conflict, gun use, dispute resolution, support services, individual responsibility and values. Teachers will be provided with "Teacher Guides" to help structure classes and other activities.

While teachers will lead and organize these activities, the primary theme will be LISTENING TO KIDS -- listening to what students say about the television program and their concerns about violence. Students can organize anti-violence activities for this day either in school or their communities, ranging from assemblies, essay contests, dramatizations or rap contests, petition drives, rallies, etc.

Additionally, Teach-Ins can be organized to bring into the schools local leaders from all walks of life (government, business, labor, police, legal, medical, civic, sports, media, etc.) to go to classes and assemblies, both talking to and listening to students. Parents can also be brought into the process.

Thursday, April 28 - "Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention"

Police, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials, as well as lawyers and bar associations, to organize activities that focus on legal issues relating to gun violence such as statistical analyses of gun crimes, enforcement of existing laws, gun buy-back and safety programs, how citizens can organize to prevent violence, the legal rights of those injured by gun violence and possible changes in the law relating to guns.

Friday, April 29 - "Heroes"

A focus on local "heroes," individuals and programs that are doing outstanding work on youth violence,

crime prevention and youth services. This day will salute the extraordinary efforts of the private sector in providing a vast array of support services and advocacy for young people. Activities could involve local award ceremonies and recognition events, the spotlighting of outstanding local organizations and service programs, and the promotion of programs and hot-lines that are available to provide counselling and guidance to kids in distress.

Saturday/Sunday, April 30-May 1 - "Prayers for Non-Violence"

Religious leaders and institutions speak out and participate through sermons and other activities such as special prayer services, issue forums, community projects and service programs.

* * * * *

Within this general national framework, each city can design its own local programs. We expect the mayors to play a leading role in convening meetings of the various organizations and constituencies involved and to coordinate planning for the week's activities. While the national organizations would endorse this thematic schedule, events would be dependent on local leadership and planning -- medical and public health for Monday; school boards, administrators, principals, and teachers for Tuesday/Wednesday along with local media (newspapers and television); police, law enforcement and legal groups for Thursday; the non-profit service sector for Friday; and religious leaders for Saturday/Sunday.



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1020 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
TELEPHONE (202) 293-7330
FAX (202) 293-2332

February 14, 1994

Dear Mayor:

Violent crime was the central theme of our Winter Meeting last month in Washington, with several panels and presentations on the seriousness of the problem and on potential solutions to it. One of the most challenging proposals was presented to us by Jay Kriegel, a CBS Senior Vice President.

CBS and FOX television networks have joined with a broad range of national organizations -- including virtually all major educational and religious groups, as well as police, business, labor, civil rights, sports, media and service organizations -- to sponsor a national week of anti-violence activities, April 25 - May 1.

While a formal public announcement of this plan is still two weeks off, mayors can play a central role in the activities and should find that the week offers an excellent opportunity to focus local resources and media attention on the problem of youth violence and on local efforts to combat it.

At the core of the week's activities will be a one-hour program on network television about the consequences of kids using guns and about the alternatives to guns that are available to them. The program, "Kids Killing Kids," will be shown at 8:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, April 26. There will be no commercial interruptions.

The week has been structured to emphasize a different theme each day (detail of schedule is attached):

Monday.....	Physicians on Violence
Tuesday.....	Families Talk About Violence
Wednesday.....	Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids
Thursday.....	Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention
Friday.....	Heroes
Saturday/Sunday.....	Prayers for Non-Violence

President
JERRY ABRAHAMSON
Mayor of Louisville

Vice President
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of New York City

President-elect
WILLIAM J. ALTMAN
Mayor of York

Mayor of Boston
RAYMOND L. FLYNN
Mayor of Boston

Mayor of Chicago
MICHAEL R. DAVIS
Mayor of Chicago

Mayor of Cincinnati
JOSEPH P. PULLEY, JR.
Mayor of Cincinnati, OH

Mayor of Cleveland
COLLEEN A. YOUNG
Mayor of Cleveland

Mayor of Dallas
TERRY L. LEE
Mayor of Dallas

Mayor of Denver
JANITA CHASE
Mayor of Denver

Mayor of Detroit
MICHAEL D. DUFFY
Mayor of Detroit

Mayor of Fort Worth
DALE MILLER
Mayor of Fort Worth

Mayor of Houston
MAURICE J. JACKSON
Mayor of Houston

Mayor of Indianapolis
BRUCE JAMES
Mayor of Indianapolis

Mayor of Jacksonville
THOMAS J. MANN
Mayor of Jacksonville

Mayor of Kansas City
ROBERT L. BERRY
Mayor of Kansas City

Mayor of Las Vegas
BENJAMIN D. HILL
Mayor of Las Vegas

Mayor of Little Rock
NORMAN S. SICK
Mayor of Little Rock

Mayor of Los Angeles
RICHARD G. GORDON
Mayor of Los Angeles

Mayor of Louisville
JERRY ABRAHAMSON
Mayor of Louisville

Mayor of Miami
MICHAEL WHITE
Mayor of Miami

Mayor of Milwaukee
JERRY ABRAHAMSON
Mayor of Milwaukee

Mayor of Minneapolis
JERRY ABRAHAMSON
Mayor of Minneapolis

Mayor of New Orleans
JERRY ABRAHAMSON
Mayor of New Orleans

Mayor of New York City
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of New York City

Mayor of Oklahoma City
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of Oklahoma City

Mayor of Omaha
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Mayor of Omaha

Mayor of Philadelphia
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Mayor of Phoenix
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Mayor of Portland
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Mayor of Richmond
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Mayor of San Antonio
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Mayor of San Diego
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Mayor of San Francisco
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Mayor of Seattle
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Mayor of Springfield
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Mayor of St. Louis
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of St. Louis

Mayor of Tampa
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Mayor of Tulsa
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of Tulsa

Mayor of Washington, D.C.
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of Washington, D.C.

Mayor of Wichita
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of Wichita

Mayor of Youngstown
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of Youngstown

Mayor of Zanesville
JOHN D. DUNN
Mayor of Zanesville

Executive Director
J. THOMAS COCHRAN

Page 2

A handbook to help your city plan the week's activities will be sent to you soon. The structure outlined above is intended to make it relatively easy for each city to participate, and the heavy involvement of both the television and newspaper industries should ensure that your efforts will be highly visible.

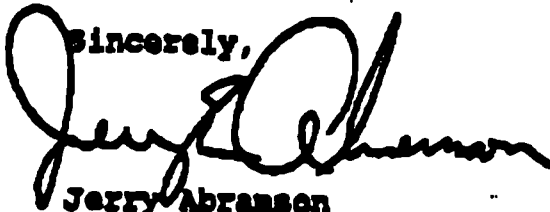
Planning for this special week's activities should involve local school officials, police and law enforcement, leaders of the medical and legal communities, religious leaders, major business, labor and civic groups, and service organizations. Members of all of these groups also are being contacted by their national organizations and encouraged to participate in the activities.

If you choose to become involved in this initiative, your office may wish to convene a planning meeting of these constituencies within the next two weeks to start discussing possible local activities.

In addition, your designation of a staff coordinator for "Kids Killing Kids" week would help us coordinate your activities with those of other cities across the nation and get information to you in a timely manner. Babetta Penton, Assistant Executive Director, will be coordinating the project for the Conference of Mayors. Please contact her by fax (202/293-2352) with your intention to participate in "Kids Killing Kids" week, together with the name of a contact in your office for this project.

I hope you can join in what could become the most highly visible national anti-violence campaign we have seen.

Sincerely,



Jerry Abramson
Mayor of Louisville
President

Enclosure

KIDS KILLING KIDS

America Focuses on Youth Violence and Its Prevention

THE WEEK'S SCHEDULE

April 25 - May 1

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Monday, April 25 | - | Physicians on Violence |
| Tuesday, April 26 | - | Families Talk About Violence |
| Wednesday, April 27 | - | Focus on Schools: Listening to Kids |
| Thursday, April 28 | - | Violence and the Law: Enforcement and Prevention |
| Friday, April 29 | - | Heroes |
| Saturday/Sunday
April 30 - May 1 | - | Prayers for Non-Violence |

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CBS Inc., 61 West 52 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 875-1515

Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

December 2, 1993

Bruce Reed
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Bruce:

As you requested, here is an outline of the Violence Project now being designed jointly by the four networks.

The keystone of the project is a one-hour primetime television special on youth violence and guns which would be broadcast in 1994. The program would be "roadblocked" by ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC -- shown simultaneously on all four networks from 8-9 p.m., the hour of high youth viewing, on a week night (school night). We believe that this has never been done before.

In addition, we would make this program available to every other broadcast station and cable network so that it would hopefully not just be on four channels, but on 10 or 20 or 30, including those with heaviest viewing by young people.

The objective of this project is to use the power of network television not just to communicate and educate, but as a catalyst to focus and mobilize the resources of the most important private sector institutions to participate in this debate.

The elements under discussion include the following:

1. Schools: The National Education Task Force on Violence (NEA, School Boards, etc.) plus the AFT and the Catholic Education Association would ask each school and each teacher in America to assign this program as "homework." (Never been done before.)

We hope to distribute more than 2 million Teacher's Guides for the program.

2. Families: More than just "student homework," we will urge that this be true "Family Viewing" -- that every family in America watch this program together.

We are talking to the Newspaper Association of America about their making available to every newspaper a full page "Parents Guide" to the program -- what parents should discuss with their children after watching the program -- and asking that it be published that day in every newspaper.

3. Teach In: The day after the broadcast, not only would every school be asked to discuss the program, but we would seek to conduct the largest Teach In in the nation's history -- hopefully led by the President and the First Lady.

We would seek to connect the schools with adults from all different segments of the community -- political and government leaders, religious leaders, sports and entertainment figures, business leaders, lawyers and doctors -- who would talk to students about violence, guns and personal responsibility.

4. Religious: That weekend the nation's major religious organizations (National Council of Churches, Catholic Bishops Conference, Baptist Joint Commission, Evangelicals, Jews) would suggest that these issues be preached from every pulpit in America.

5. Other Organizations: Other constituencies or organizations that have expressed interest in participating:

- a. American Bar Association
- b. American Medical Association
- c. the major sports leagues
- d. the Hollywood production community led by the MPAA
- e. minority music and entertainment community (coordinated by HBO)
- f. minority media

6. Local Support/"Grassroots": We are simultaneously working from "the streets up" to design locally-based private sector anti-violence campaigns in major cities.

This effort has started in New York and Miami as a partnership of business executives and community leaders ("New Yorkers Against Violence"). The focus is on ways that the private sector can stimulate and support

community-based anti-violence efforts through both enforcement and prevention programs.

In each city, in cooperation with the key government officials and agencies, we will be focusing on such efforts as placed-based safety programs in schools and housing projects; gun buy-backs; youth programs; self-help and advocacy groups (block associations, Mothers Against Violence, etc.) and job and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth.

Next week Miami and New York leaders are meeting with representatives of Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and Philadelphia -- as well as other private sector groups and the President's Task Force to discuss how to coordinate and expand these local efforts. Peter Edelman has graciously offered to host the meeting at HSS (Tuesday, December 7, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.).

The grassroots piece will parallel the national effort and help to ensure ongoing local efforts in major cities.

There are also other follow-up pieces to the national campaign, such as PSAs and special programming planned by each of the networks as well as our collaboration with the Harvard Project on Violence.

I hope this is helpful.

Sincerely,

Jay L. Kriegel

cc: Rick Cotton, NBC
George Vradenburg, FOX
Steve Weiswasser, ABC

CBS

CBS Inc., 51 West 52 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 875-1515

Jay L. Kriegel
Senior Vice President

To: Bruce Reed

FROM: Jay L. Kriegel

12/02/93

Jay Winsten of the Harvard School of Public Health would very much like the President to include in his remarks on Saturday something like the following:

The television industry working with Harvard on the Designated Driver campaign demonstrated how the media can exert a positive influence on behavior with the result of actually saving lives. A similar collaboration regarding youth violence is now in development for launch next year and holds great promise for using the power of the television to encourage young people to withdraw from violent conflicts.

The New York Times

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1993

+

Despite Clinton, Hollywood Is Still Trading in Violence

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

HOLLYWOOD, Dec. 26 — Within hours of President Clinton's highly publicized speech here imploring entertainment industry leaders to curb depictions of murder and mayhem in movies and television, a number of studio executives who praised Mr. Clinton for what they called his inspiring words were in a bidding war for a movie script in which 11 people are killed in the first seven pages.

"A studio has a genuine responsibility in this issue," said Peter Chernin, the chairman of 20th Century Fox, referring to violence in the movies, "but we'd be a pretty impoverished society if we were to also say that in all of the arts we must remove violence." Mr. Chernin's studio eventually landed the script, titled "Overkill," for a price that may run as high as \$1 million.

He is not alone. Executives of Warner Brothers, Columbia and New Line Cinema, who praised Mr. Clinton when he gave his speech several weeks ago, also bid on the script, by a young writer named Reed Steiner.

In the intensifying debate over the nation's violence, the movie and tele-

vision industries say they face a difficult, if not unsolvable, problem: how to reflect the violence in the United States without exploiting it.

But critics of violence, who include groups that monitor violence in films and television and even some movie industry executives, say that while Hollywood studios pay lip service to their responsibilities as outlined by Mr. Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno, they are in fact churning out movies that seem to be becoming more violent, not less.

"The violence in movies is powerful and terrifying; we've become addicted to it," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, a Los Angeles psychiatrist and a former chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence. "Violence sells. And the movie industry

Continued on Page B2, Column 3

FRONT PAGE STORY!

Despite Clinton, Hollywood Is Still Trading in Violence

Continued From Page A1

is, to my mind, taking it far less seriously than television."

But Joel Silver, perhaps Hollywood's most successful producer of action films, insists that the current debate over violence is absurd. The threat by the Administration and Congress to move for the first time into some vague legislation to control violent content is essentially an easy way of avoiding the core issues of crime, poverty and gun control, Mr. Silver said. His credits include the "Lethal Weapon" and "Die Hard" series, as well as "Demolition Man," and "The Last Boy Scout."

"All week long I've been looking at the James Bond films on television," Mr. Silver said in an interview. "My films are a direct descendant of those films. They're fun. When Bond throws a bad guy into a pool of piranhas and says, 'Bon appétit,' the audience loves it. Is that violence? Yes. Is it a fantasy? Yes. It's not meant to be taken seriously."

Diverging Trends

Even critics of violence acknowledge that the television networks, unlike major film studios, have generally curbed violent programs in the last decade, although the expansion of cable, with its freewheeling use of language, violence and sex, has appeared to dilute television's efforts to keep a lid on violence.

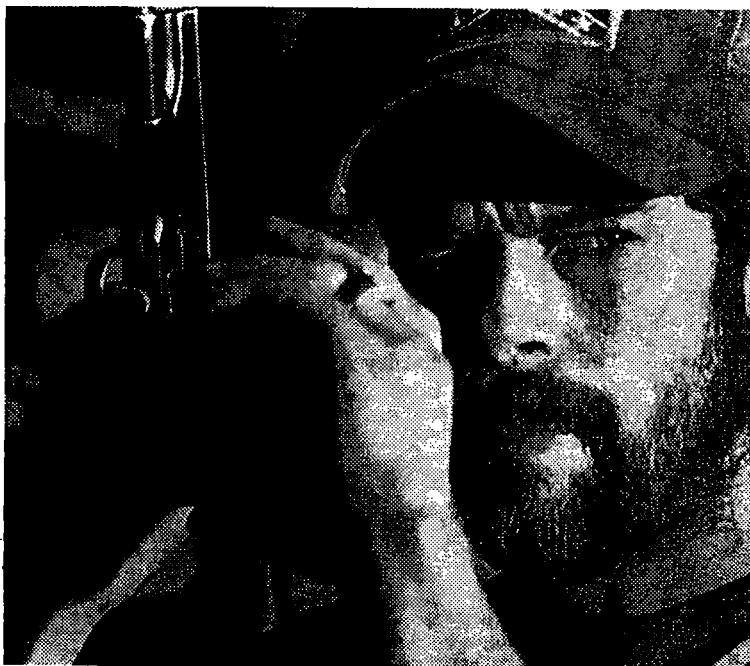
In the 1970's and 80's, such popular shows as "Miami Vice," "Magnum P.I.," "CHiPs," "T.J. Hooker" and "Matt Houston" were far heavier on gunplay than such acclaimed shows of today as "Law and Order," "N.Y.P.D. Blue" and "Homicide." These newer programs have grittier language and more sexual situations than their predecessors but are rarely as violent.

Violence in films, however, seems to have gone in the opposite direction. Of course, movie violence is nothing new. The 1960's produced such classic examples as "Bonnie and Clyde," "The Wild Bunch" and "In Cold Blood," followed in the next decade by "Taxi Driver," "A Clockwork Orange" and "The Godfather." The pain and damage wrought by violence are intrinsic to these films.

Shocking the Masters

Now, however, they have given way to the almost cartoonish violence of such 1990's movies as "True Romance," "Kalifornia" and "Reservoir Dogs." In these films, the motivations for killings are often unclear; often, the violence is seen as a lark. "The end result is violence inflicted by sexy young renegades in a highly stylized fashion with little or no conflict to show for it," said a recent article in The Hollywood Reporter titled "Killer Chic." The film makers Tony Scott, Quentin Tarantino, Walter Hill, John Woo and Abel Ferrara are part of this new wave of hip violence, with scarcely a hint of remorse.

In the coming months, Mr. Taran-



Brad Pitt portrays a psychopathic killer in "Kalifornia," one of the recent Hollywood film releases that are dominated by violence.

Today's screen murderers are young, sexy and not a bit sorry.

tino's "Pulp Fiction," a violent drama, and Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers," about two mass murderers, will most certainly fuel the debate about films whose sexy murderers show little remorse.

"Which came first, the violent society or the violence depicted in films that society patronizes?" asked Robert Shaye, the chairman of New Line Cinema, which has produced the successful "Nightmare on Elm Street," horror films, as well as this year's "Menace 2 Society," an extremely violent, though acclaimed, film about ghetto youths.

"There is an extremely gray area where artistic integrity and pandering can get mixed up," Mr. Shaye said. "'Nightmare' is a series of horror films, fantasy, comic-book vio-

lence, like 'Batman' or 'Superman.' Audiences love it."

In "Menace 2 Society," though, an especially horrific opening sequence in which Korean shop owners are gratuitously murdered, was toned because Mr. Shaye found it too shocking.

"When something shocks my sensibilities, I ask the question, 'Is this what I want to be associated with?'" he said. "That's what I often base decisions on. It's an issue that goes beyond violence. It's question of censorship. It can be sexual censorship or political censorship, too. At the end of the day, it's a subjective judgment. Some people find Picasso or Francis Bacon or Robert Mapplethorpe just as shocking."

The Foreign Market

One reason for the scale of violence in American films is that violence, which needs no translation, sells well abroad. "Violence travels well; violent movies frequently do well in foreign markets," said Laurence Mark, a producer. "Hence, the resistance to doing away with violence in movies."

Nearly half of all film revenue now comes from abroad, compared with about 30 percent in 1980. The most

popular international film stars are Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone. The overseas success of Mr. Douglas in "Basic Instinct" has at least doubled his salary demands, to about \$15 million a film.

What leaves many critics in Hollywood dismayed is the kind of double-speak involved in the violence issue. After Mr. Clinton's speech, Larry Gordon, a prominent producer, observed: "It was very inspiring. We all have a lot of thinking to do." Mr. Gordon helped produce the violent "Die Hard" series.

Mark Canton, the chairman of Columbia Pictures, said: "It causes me to feel like I have to take note. I'm going to really take Sunday to put things in perspective." (Mr. Clinton made his comments on Dec. 11, a Saturday. By the following Monday, the studios, including Columbia, were actively bidding on "Overkill.")

Little Help in Ratings

Hollywood's tolerance of violent films is nurtured by its rating system, which by all accounts is far more concerned with sex than with violence. Louis Malle's elegant "Damage" (1992), about an obsessive love affair, had far more trouble getting an R rating than did "Basic Instinct."

"If a man touches a woman's breast in a movie, it's an R rating, but if he cuts off a limb with a chain saw, it's a PG-13," said Martin Shafer, a top executive at Castle Rock Entertainment, which has produced films including "In the Line of Fire" and "When Harry Met Sally."

"It speaks to the extreme in the way violence seems to be O.K. in ratings, but sexual situations are targeted," he added.

(An R rating carries the notation "Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian." The PG-13 advisory is "Parents strongly cautioned.")

In response to the violence issue, the Motion Picture Association of America, which represents the major studios, has held half a dozen meetings with network and movie executives since September. But there has been no resolution on how to monitor violence, and the only point of agreement seems to be that no one wants government intervention.

As Dr. Lieberman, the former chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, said: "All there is is lip service in the movie business on this issue. Are they taking this issue seriously? Of course not."

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1993

TV officials say industry taking criticism seriously

By Paul Hefner
Daily News Staff Writer

Call it "Sixty Days to Appease Congress" — a drama that casts television industry officials in roles they hoped wouldn't be scripted.

The networks kept their parts under wraps Tuesday. But some television officials said the industry must take seriously a 60-day deadline to begin seeking ways to curb television violence — or Congress will enter the picture.

"I think it's a fair amount of

time. I'd rather have 90 days, but 60 days will do. We'll have to work within it," said Gerald Isenberg, chief executive officer of Hearst Entertainment Productions.

Isenberg said moves within the industry are preferable to government intervention, which many fear would bring unprecedented restrictions on programming.

"Unless there are some standards, moral standards, industry-accepted ground rules that encour-

See VIOLENCE / Page 11

VIOLENCE / From Page 1

age being responsible, we're going to get things that taste very bad in your mouth," said Isenberg, whose company produces television movies, series and miniseries.

But industry critics said they doubted television executives would make much progress by early October.

"They're going to try to get away with doing as little as possible," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, chairwoman of the National Coalition on Television Violence.

The deadline was issued Monday by Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., in a blunt speech to more than 600 television executives, producers and directors attending a daylong industry conference on television violence in Beverly Hills.

Though he said he personally opposes government intervention, Simon said that to stave off proposals from other lawmakers the industry must demonstrate self-restraint in the depiction of violence and a will-

ingness to permanently monitor the problem.

Isenberg, who also heads the industry's Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors, said he expected the group to outline ground rules for producing television movies based on real-life murders, a genre frequently targeted by critics.

But Isenberg and others said they doubted that an industry watchdog group proposed by Simon could be established within the two-month deadline.

"It'll take us years to get that together," he said. "That's just not a 60-day job."

Officials for NBC, ABC and Fox would not discuss Simon's 60-day deadline, except to say that the issue was being discussed in meetings of network executives. CBS officials did not return calls for comment.

Isenberg said the conference, which marked the first industry-wide attempt to address the issue, left many concerned about the prospect of government interfer-

ence.

"People got there fearful. If they weren't, they wouldn't have come," he said. "There's great concern that legislation is going to be introduced that will be simple-minded, and that's going to hurt our medium."

Network executives had said they hoped that the conference and other recent steps might be enough to appease critics of TV violence.

The event was organized after television executives came under heavy criticism in a series of congressional hearings into the effects of television violence.

The hearings served as a platform for psychologists and other academics, who cited a mounting body of research that blames television violence for desensitizing viewers and spawning aggression among children.

In response, the networks agreed in June to broadcast warnings to parents before showing their most violent programs.

Though several network executives have conceded that television

violence plays a role in real-life mayhem, directors, producers and others at Monday's conference were clearly on the defensive.

Industry officials who suggested that Congress should focus on other problems won applause from the audience, while statements by critics of media violence sometimes drew hisses.

Lieberman said she was surprised at the angry reactions she drew during an afternoon panel discussion.

"When it comes to their own work, they're just incredibly defensive," she said. "I think a lot of people were just fighting for their jobs."

Lieberman, whose comments at one point drew angry shouts from a producer in the audience, said the conference left her discouraged.

"They're so caught up right now in their defensive positions, I don't know if they are open to solutions."

Lieberman said she had been asked to take part in a panel discussion on the issue today for the Fox network, but the session was abruptly canceled.

A Fox spokeswoman said she did not know about the session.

The conference left many within the industry dissatisfied as well. Several said the discussions paid too little attention to children's programming, and that the researchers who participated didn't offer enough specifics.

Violence

Continued from page 4—

Former NBC chairman Grant Tinker seconded that point of view. "If someone wanted to introduce an MPAA-style rating system," he said, "that would create more problems than it solves. The purveyors of programming should be in charge of regulating themselves."

Most industry producers and executives interviewed identified three problems in introducing any rating system: (1) it would largely be ignored by the public, and might even make younger viewers want to tune into programs labeled with an adult rating; (2) it would make no distinction between valuable documentary footage, as in the Rodney King trial, and exploitive material; and (3) it would ultimately lead to government intervention.

Malcolm Barbour, executive producer of Fox's "Cops," observed: "The problem with that approach is, the moment you start rating things, someone starts censoring."

Barbour's partner, John Langley, added: "We already have standards and practices (divisions) and they're extremely sensitive to violence. Our programs also have viewer discretion advised, and a right-minded parent can do anything he wants to block what his children see. Every new TV now has a channel blocker, so there is an inherent technological solution to the problem."

Former FBC Entertainment president Garth Ancier was one of the few industry figures to seem at all ambivalent on the issue. "It's a sword that cuts both ways," he said. "There are First Amendment issues that say we shouldn't have this; but it's worked very well in the movie industry."

Ancier noted that the system could have an up side for the networks: "Some advertisers look at the content of a television show and dot every 'i' and cross every 't' before they advertise. With this they might say, 'It has a PG-rating, and so we'll advertise.'"

For Ancier, one of the more serious problems is the inherent complexity of administering a rating system. "There's a lot more material to review than in film," he said. "And then there's the argument sociologists make of the movie-rating system: if it's based on what average men and women find offensive, which is usually sexual content more than violent behavior, the problem remains that it's the violent behavior that is

more harmful socially."

Almost all of those interviewed for this article acknowledged that, whatever the disadvantages of a rating system, television violence has gone too far.

"I don't see any improvement (in the level of TV violence)," said Tinker. "What I really deplore is reality programming — not just 'Hard Copy' and shows like that, but also local news, which traffics

shamelessly in sex and violence like the worst (fictional programming)."

Dr. Carole Lieberman, president of the National Coalition on TV Violence, a lobbying group that strongly favors the proposed rating system and which organized Thursday's protest against advertising "Last Action Hero" on a NASA booster rocket, said: "I've been working on this for the past

10 years, and there hasn't been any significant improvement. We don't advocate censorship, but what this would do is increase awareness on the part of viewers and also producers."

LeMasters questioned even that, however, arguing that television has already marked a turning point away from the worst level of violence. "I believe TV goes in ebbs and flows," he said. "What we're seeing now with (programs like) 'Dr. Quinn — Medicine Woman' is a movement away from that."

He added: "It's irresponsible to tie societal ills to television. When they say there's a correlation between what's put on television and society, there is a correlation between everything. Should there be a rating system for how government does on welfare? Because that contributes too."

A rating system, he said, could only hurt. "Australia does have a rating system, but it just identifies programs intended for adults and for children. I'm a lot more suspicious about this." □



Photo by Glenn Wagner

Rocket ad ignites protest

Protesting an ad to be painted on a NASA rocket for Columbia Pictures' "Last Action Hero," Carole Lieberman addresses a group outside the Sony Pictures' gate in Culver City. Lieberman, who chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence, wants Columbia to replace the ad with children's drawings about peace. "We do not want 85 million taxpayer dollars to fund a rocket which advertises violence," she said.

TV rating idea 'outrageous,' executives say

By Stephen Galloway

Television industry producers and executives reacted angrily Thursday to congressional suggestions that an MPAA-like rating system be adopted for television.

"I think it's outrageous," said Kim LeMasters, president of Stephen J. Cannell Prods., about remarks by House telecommunications subcommittee chairman Ed Markey, D-Mass., that the medium should introduce a code similar to that operated by the MPAA. "Isn't there the implication that if the industry doesn't do it, the government will?"

See **VIOLENCE** on page 33

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Los Angeles Times

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1993
ENTERTAINMENT / THE ARTS / TV LISTINGS

CALENDAR

Counterpunch

COUNTERPUNCH
CAROLE LIEBERMAN: The talk-show host writes that selling a movie ad on the side of a NASA rocket "summarizes at once what is wrong with America." F3

Ad Says Worlds About Us

By DR. CAROLE LIEBERMAN

Is nothing sacred anymore? Apparently not. Even exclusive billing on a NASA rocket can be bought for the right amount of money and political connections ("Action' Promotion Is Out of This World," Calendar, March 3).

Putting an ad on a rocket, most particularly the logo for Arnold Schwarzenegger's upcoming movie "Last Action Hero," summarizes at once what is wrong with America: its descent into commercialization run amok and primitive violence.

Whether or not you believe that extraterrestrial beings exist, would this ad be the introductory



Lieberman

message you would want to send them . . . in case they do? Shouldn't we be searching for something more meaningful and substantive to communicate? What has become of the storehouses of American intellect, creativity and spirituality? Have they crumbled under the weight of billboards proclaiming we're

worthless (unless we buy product X) and graffiti rage screaming back that we know we are? There have been hints that America has turned into a "vast wasteland," satisfied to be the "lowest common denominator." When communism fell and all America had to offer people starving for the cultural fruits of freedom were hamburger stands and pizza take-outs to dot their landscape, the hints became a certainty.

Now we are traveling to even farther destinations. And it is becoming ever more painfully clear that too many of us have succumbed to "battle-fatigue" in our struggle for survival and run out of anything meaningful to say, forgetting why meaningfulness was ever important in the first place.

How else can we explain the insanity that led to the choice of an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie logo as our first message to any life forms that may exist in outer space? Arnold Schwarzenegger has become an American icon, worshiped as the God Violent Power by the disenfranchised and powerless masses. His movies are orgies of mayhem that average more than 100 acts of glamorized violence per hour.

Publicity promoting the "Last Action Hero" touts it as an anti-violence movie, but that's what they claimed about "Terminator 2," which contained more than 180 acts of violence. Just because "Terminator 2" implied that nuclear war is bad and Arnold refrained from killing most of his victims—only maiming them instead so that they contorted on the ground like bugs with some of their legs pulled off—doesn't make it a statement of anti-violence.

The fact that the giant Schwarzenegger balloon launched over New York City had to trade its dynamite sticks for a police badge after life-imitated-art at the World Trade Center even before the movie was released, does not bode well for the "Last Action Hero."

America, as the No. 1 exporter of violent films, is now reaching new heights, literally. Who knows, we may get to see an extraterrestrial sooner than we thought, as they flock to Earth to see the latest Schwarzenegger flick, hooked by the glitzy rocket ad to come to the theater nearest them.

Of course, Columbia isn't paying half-a-million dollars to attract beings from outer space—not unless they can pay for their tickets with U.S. currency and like to eat popcorn. The media coverage of the rocket launching will pay for the ad many times over as it brings earthlings into theaters in record numbers.

One can only hope that any life forms in outer

'Action' Promotion Is

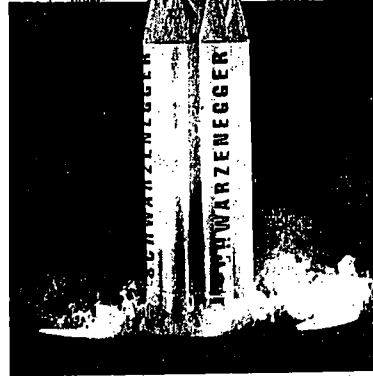
■ **Movies:** Sources said the stunt, in which the movie's logo will be painted on a NASA rocket, will cost Columbia about \$500,000.

By DAVID J. FOX
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The movie industry's passion for splashy advertising gimmicks is about to go to new heights. Outer-space to be in the first known effort in space, Columbia will promote "Last Action Hero" Arnold Schwarzenegger painting the title main fuselage of rocket that will be May by NASA. The is a first for the program's COO.

\$500,000—somewhat the cost of a 30-sec TV prime-time commercial. "We could have as ads," said Mike Law, president of Space Marketing, the private Houston-based firm that COMET for promotion. But Lawson said COI for one ad, because want the rocket to space car at the Indy 500. One space developer at the University of Houston, Dr. Alex Ignatiev, who is not surprised by of space advertising right into the de space and that me sation of space. . . ing find ways of using space."

Ignatiev, who w iversity depart part supported by such efforts as the bia and other b help defer some



space are highly evolved enough to recognize the Schwarzenegger movie ad for what it really is—a warning: Unless they are more careful than we have been not to abuse the power of media, then they, too, will find the riches of their galaxies depleted until made barren by greed and violence.

Meanwhile, we here on Earth need to wake up from our media-induced passive slumber and protest this travesty! We need to rediscover, nurture and protect our storehouses of American intellect, creativity and spirituality before they are razed and the ground sold to the highest bidder—just like the NASA rockets.

We must not allow an icon of destruction to mock and besmirch our rockets, once symbols of idealistic challenges met. If we do, not only our rockets—but our souls—will never soar again. . . .

Lieberman is a media psychiatrist, script consultant and talk-show host based in Beverly Hills. She also chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence.

CALENDAR

MONDAY, MAY 25, 1992

HIGHLIGHTS

DR. CAROLE LIEBERMAN: The "reel" violence Hollywood manufactures kills "real" people in the streets, the psychiatrist charges. F3

Counterpunch

Soul-Searching on Violence by the Industry
 ■ Hollywood: Do heavy doses of movie and TV violence affect public behavior? Complex issue has no easy answers.
 By TERRY PRISTIN
 TIMES STAFF WRITER
 As soon as the Los Angeles entertainment industry pledges to help with

Studies Indicate Screen Mayhem Shapes Lives

By DR. CAROLE LIEBERMAN

'Soul-Searching on Violence by the Industry" (Calendar, May 18) doesn't "search" deeply enough.

What transformed wide-eyed babies into L.A. rioters? Close to 1,000 studies in recent decades would indicate that it was the steady diet of violent media they ingested from cartoons to video games to slasher films.

If parents cared as much about what children feed their brains as they do about what they feed their stomachs, they wouldn't abdicate their parental roles to the media. Each generation of children is being increasingly raised by TV sets and movie screens and coming to believe in the values media tout.

We readily accept that children learn the alphabet from "Sesame Street," why can't we accept that they learn the ABCs of murder and mayhem from gratuitously violent entertainment?

Daily, I hear writers, producers and other industry people say, "It's only entertainment!" meaning no one believes or acts upon what they see on-screen. Yet these same people sell product-placement

spots and commercial time for billions of dollars per year. If a 30-second commercial can sell soap, then surely years of glamorized murder, rape and mutilation can sell violence.

Why does Hollywood continue to generate violent entertainment quicker than you can say, "'Kill' the lights, we're ready to 'shoot'"?

• Violence sells. Just like a drug, violence makes people high by stimulating the neuropsychological components of their inborn aggressive drive. If a child is raised in a loving atmosphere, the aggressive drive becomes socialized into normal ambition and competitiveness, but in an atmosphere of graphic media violence, the aggressive drive becomes distorted into real-life violence. And, just like a drug, people need ever-increasing doses to achieve the same high. Violence sells. So does crack cocaine. Does that make it OK?

• With the recession hurting Hollywood pocketbooks more than anticipated, exportation of films and TV shows has taken on greater importance. Consequently, studios have turned to violence even more, since it is translated without words. It's sadly ironic that just as the Cold War ended and we could begin to hope for global peace, America is exporting products that will cause global warfare.

• Individual writers, producers and executives feel overwhelmed by the concept that what they write, produce or choose to air could change the lives of millions

of people, so they deny the power of their work to avoid a responsibility they often feel ill-equipped to handle.

• All scripts require dramatic conflict but to take that literally and plug in gratuitous violence is laziness. In the rush to create more product, artistry is lost.

• In every creative work, the unconscious minds of the creators are reflected. There is clearly a lot of anger coming from the unconscious minds of Hollywood and being reflected on the screen. At least some of this unconscious anger is generated by the brutal logic Hollywood inflicts upon its own.

• Money, money and more money.

The answer is not censorship but the industry is long overdue in taking responsibility for what it feeds society. Whether one argues that "life imitates art" or "art imitates life," it is indisputable that the increasing violence in our streets is paralleling the increasing violence in our media.

Do the riots have to invade the studios and homes of the industry for this awareness to penetrate? This time it was close. How much closer does it need to get before the industry acknowledges that the "reel" violence it manufactures is killing "real" people in the streets?

Lieberman is a media psychiatrist, script consultant and talk-show host based in Beverly Hills. She also chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence.



Lieberman



HIGHLIGHTS

CAROLE LIEBERMAN: The psychiatrist takes issue with the Motion Picture Assn.'s rating system. What needs to be considered, she says, is the psychological effects of film imagery, and new categories to reflect those concerns. **F3**

LOS ANGELES TIMES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1990

Counterpunch

A Psychological Approach to Rating Movies

By CAROLE LIEBERMAN

Parading by us is Jack Valenti and his Motion Picture Assn. of America rating change: NC-17 (Sept. 27). It's time someone cried out, "The emperor is wearing no clothes!" Right now there seems to be an unconscious collusion between the MPAA and the parents its rating system is allegedly trying to inform. Children are the victims of that unwritten pact.

By continuing to patch up an obsolete muddle of categories (G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17), the MPAA is pretending to communicate something and parents are pretending to understand that something. Neither gets the picture. The rating system is not logical, not quantifiable and certainly not easy to utilize. By perpetrating this charade, the MPAA retains its power and parents remain blissfully ignorant, as they shirk responsibility to be more involved in their children's viewing choices.

Another reason the MPAA lacks credibility is its overwhelming preoccupation with seeing sex as more threatening than violence. The latest change does not directly address this.

Only in our male-dominated society and entertainment industry would films be rated more harshly for sex, not violence. Men feel more



Carole Lieberman

NEWS ANALYSIS

What Change in Film Rating System Means

■ **Movies:** Adult-tl marketed without t

By JACK MATHEWS
TIMES FILM EDITOR

When pornography the Motion Assn. of Ac adults-only X rating, mul by three ("XXX") and the beacon for fans of lov without love, they President. In la-

X Film Rating Dropped and Replaced by NC-17

■ **Movies:** Designation would bar children under 17. Move expected to clear the way for strong adult themes.

By DAVID J. FOX
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Responding to complaints of undue censorship from movie makers and film critics, the Motion Picture Assn. of America abolished its X movie rating on Wednesday and replaced it with a new adults-only classification.

The MPAA, in a bid

last 15 years, few distributors—or mainstream movie makers—have attempted to buck the public perception of the X as pornography. The new rating was a mixture of skepticism.

uncomfortable about sex scenes than violent ones because sex scenes evoke men's unconscious conflicts, including castration anxiety, homophobia, fears of inadequacy and impotence. Violent scenes, on the other hand, enhance men's feelings of power. So whether one wants to attribute it to performance anxiety or testosterone, the male predilection for violence has been affecting the rating system for years.

If the movie industry wants to retain the privilege of self-regulation and stem the dangerous tide of censorship that is menacing any vestiges of creativity left in America, it needs to be more responsible.

Just as the regulation of air and water shouldn't be turned over without ongoing scrutiny to

industries that pollute these resources, similar scrutiny should be given to the entertainment industry, which affects an even more precious resource—our minds. Unfortunately, the creative freedom of all artists risks extinction because too many have greedily polluted viewers' minds with psychologically destructive imagery. In this era of save the Earth, save the whales fervor, we must begin by saving our minds, and especially our children's minds, from those who would exploit them for personal profit.

To address all of these problems, I propose the following new movie rating system, called MIND (Movies Influence Neuropsychological Development). It focuses on the psychological effects of imagery,

simplifies the categories and removes the bias toward acceptance of violence over sex.

1. Movies should be rated in three categories: Child-Safe, Teen-Safe and Adult-Only.

2. Movies should be rated for the quality and quantity of their sexual content (S) and violent content (V), each on a scale of 0-10, with 10 the most psychologically harmful. Gratuitous acts of sex or violence would count more heavily than those necessary to the artistic integrity of the work.

3. In order to be categorized as Child-Safe, a movie would have to qualify as 0-2 in sexual and violent content ratings. Similarly, content would be rated 0-5 to qualify as Teen-Safe and 0-10 to qualify as Adult-Only.

4. Psychotherapists should make up at least 10% of the rating board to give expert opinion regarding psychologically damaging content.

5. To be rated, a movie would need a psychotherapist script consultant/technical adviser on staff to deal with psychological accuracy and suggest alternatives to psychologically damaging content.

Long ago, Freud discovered that our basic drives are sex and aggression. Today, the movie industry is capitalizing on them to hook audiences and sell popcorn. Now we need a rating system that acknowledges the extraordinary influence movies have on our minds.

Lieberman is a Beverly Hills-based psychiatrist who specializes in the effects of media on society. She has been a script consultant on more than 100 TV and film projects.

TV

Grassroots efforts needed to curb broadcast violence

By Susan E. Reynolds, M.D.



PHOTO BY TONI DAVEY

Early one evening my son, then 2 years old, became very excited while standing in front of our television set, pointing to the screen saying, "Man fall down, Mommy, man fall down." I found myself confronted with the impossible task of explaining to a toddler why the good guy had just shot and killed the bad guy on the police series *Hunter*.

My son did not understand why the bad guy did not get up. He had no concept of death, nor enough language skills to understand my explanation that it was only make-believe, not reality, and that the man who "fell down" might reappear later on another show, perhaps on another network. I saw that my son was very upset, and feared that the episode would trigger nightmares, which it did.

From that moment on I began researching how many acts of violence my son would be exposed to on television, and whether TV violence has any

- By the time my son is 7, he will have witnessed 7,000 murders on TV.¹
- By the time he graduates from elementary school, he will have seen 100,000 acts of violence on television.²
- In a single day, a TV monitoring group counted 1,846 violent scenes on TV.³
- One-fourth of the fall 1992 prime-time shows contained “very violent” material.⁴
- Children’s programs in 1992 contained 32 violent acts per hour, compared with prime-time shows, which contained 4 violent acts per hour.⁵

With such alarming statistics, it is imperative to know whether children are influenced by the violence they see on TV. Approximately 3,000 studies during the past 40 years have tried to correlate increasing TV violence with increasing violence in our society. Until recently, almost all of the studies were

However, the public has become more aware of violence in our society with the increase in gang activities, drive-by shootings, and carjackings. Kids are killing kids on a regular basis, and patients are killing physicians. Metal detectors have become a routine part of security measures at many schools and hospitals. Recent statistics show that in Los Angeles the murder of teenagers rose 20 percent in 5 years, accounting for 64 percent of all preventable teenage deaths in 1991.

Dr. Eron admits there are many causative factors for violence in our society, including education, poverty, drugs and alcohol, and access to guns. However, he estimates that TV violence accounts for approximately 10 percent of all violent behavior in our society. He states that one way children learn violent behavior is by watching it on television. Television's incessant repetition gives them a "script" to follow in their real lives.⁷ Researchers now believe that interactive video games might have an even more pronounced effect on societal violence, but more studies need to be done.⁶

Harvard University School of Public Health associate dean Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D., observed that a

The *El Centro* has been on the front lines of our country's hospital and emergency care for 28 years. For most of that time, with our *Manuel Gea* Hospital, we've seen more and more gunshot victims and domestic violence patients, victims of a society that has become increasingly violent and accustomed to using guns to solve problems.

Many of my colleagues remember fighting them when they were teenagers.

young gunshot-wound victim in a Boston emergency room was *surprised* that his wound actually hurt. She reminds us there is no pain associated with violence observed on TV.⁶

Dr. Eron says that some children might be more susceptible to TV violence, especially inner-city children because what they watch on TV is reinforced as normal behavior every time they step out their front door.⁶ Also, children up to age 8 have difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality.⁷

George Gerbner, Ph.D., dean emeritus and professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, says that much TV violence is what he calls "happy violence": it "shows no pain or tragic consequences," quickly solves many problems, and always produces a happy ending.⁶ According to Dr. Gerbner, happy violence can be especially damaging because it causes viewers to laugh and feel good about violent behavior.⁷

What kids are saying

What do children think about the

amount of violence shown on television? A recent nationwide survey of children conducted by Nickelodeon showed that kids think the worst thing on TV is violence. The network, which has one-third of the children's TV-viewing market, found that:

- 80 percent of respondents thought there was too much violence on TV
- 91 percent thought violence involving real people was particularly upsetting, more so than cartoon violence
- The children thought the worst type of violence was violence involving kids
- 80 percent of the respondents thought there should be more parental control over TV violence
- 89 percent endorsed warning labels for violent shows

The kids' message to television executives was that they should show less violence and teach kids other ways to resolve disputes.

Reducing TV violence

What is being done to decrease the amount of violence our children watch on television? In 1990, Sen. Paul Simon

(D-IL) sponsored legislation that gave the TV networks an antitrust exemption for three years so they could work together to decrease the amount of violence they broadcast. In their defense, industry executives say there has been a decrease in violent programming since the mid-1980s, when they broadcast an average of 6.9 violent crimes per hour. In 1992, the average fell to 2.9 violent crimes per hour.⁸

However, a March 1993 Times Mirror poll showed that 72 percent of Americans say there is still too much violence on TV. With public opinion demanding a decrease in TV violence, Congress is now debating numerous bills that propose lock boxes, 800 numbers, FCC license-renewal changes, and other innovative approaches to curb TV violence.

Cloaking itself in the First Amendment, the television industry has repeatedly asked for a definition of violence. Dr. Gerbner suggests that TV violence is "clear-cut, unambiguous, and overt episodes of physical violence—hurting or killing or the threat of hurting and/or killing—in any context."⁶ The



but they use broomsticks and fists," Dr. Talianero says. "Now, 4-year-olds just pick up a handgun, squeeze it once,

and it goes off repeatedly. We have this whole generation of kids who don't know how to resolve conflicts verbally.

Dr. Talianero says that children's exposure to violence on television is a major factor in their behavior. He says that children who watch a lot of violent TV are more likely to be aggressive and to have trouble getting along with others.

Dr. Talianero is not alone in his concerns. Many other experts, including psychologists and sociologists, have found a link between TV violence and real-world aggression. In 1993, a report from the American Psychological Association found that children who watch a lot of violent TV are more likely to be aggressive and to have trouble getting along with others. The report also found that children who watch a lot of violent TV are more likely to have problems in school and at home.

At the same time, however, some experts argue that TV violence is not the cause of real-world aggression. They say that children who are aggressive are more likely to watch violent TV, and that the violence on TV is simply a reflection of the violence in the real world.

Center for Media and Public Affairs in Washington, DC, defines it as "any deliberate act involving physical force or the use of a weapon in an attempt to achieve a goal, further a cause, stop the action of another, act out an angry impulse, defend oneself from attack, secure a material reward, or intimidate others."⁶

Despite such working definitions, the TV industry did little to change until faced with Congressional hearings in December 1992. During the hearings, the three major networks issued "Standards for the Depiction of Violence in Television Programs," a joint statement in which the networks vowed to limit gratuitous violence and said that "all depictions of violence should be relevant and necessary to the development of character, or to the advancement of theme or plot."

At the same hearings, the National Coalition on Television Violence, chaired by Beverly Hills psychiatrist Carole Lieberman, M.D., presented its "Ten Point Plan to Sweep Violence Off TV and Off Our Streets." The plan included:

- a ratings system for violence
- ingredients-type labels stating the quantity and quality of violence in the show
- warning labels on TV shows and TV ads
- violence advisors on television executives' staffs
- anti-violence public service announcements
- no violent TV in jails, psychiatric hospitals, or other government institutions
- tax breaks for research and education on TV violence's effects and for development of non-violent TV programming
- a media literacy public health campaign similar to media campaigns against drunk driving

Dr. Lieberman calls TV violence an addiction like any other: It leaves the viewer needing an ever-increasing dose of violence for stimulation. TV violence is America's number-one public health problem, she says, and physicians must treat it like any other public health issue.

At the Congressional hearings, Senator Simon challenged the TV

industry to clean up its act or else face Congressional regulation. In response, NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox, and 15 cable networks recently agreed to endorse a 2-year testing of an advance parental advisory that states: "Due to some violent content, parental discretion advised."

In addition, TV industry leaders held an unprecedented summit meeting in Los Angeles in August. Experts presented their data at the conference, while network executives defended free speech and asked for a clarification of what is too much violence. Senator Simon reiterated his threat about legislative mandates and made seven proposals to decrease TV violence:

- Self-restraint is essential. "Stop the arms race on TV," he said.
- Involve the entire industry.
- Create an Advisory Office on TV Violence, which would ensure continuity of concern and effort by publishing data and standards on an annual basis.
- Avoid glamorized violence, portray consequences, and encourage non-violent problem solving.

of both sides," Dr. Taliaterro says. Dr. Taliaterro and others co-authored many of the 1992 CMAA House of Delegates' anti-violence resolutions, which led to the national coalition called Physicians for a Violence-Free Society.

The project was so important to Dr. Taliaterro that she decided to take a sabbatical in March to devote all of her time to it and she has officially resigned from her full-time slot at San Francisco General—although she remains on the UCSF San Francisco faculty. The hospital's Trauma Foundation donated an office for the not-for-profit coalition.

"I know that there are a lot of physicians out there who are saying, 'What can I do to stop the violence?'" Dr. Taliaterro says. "Until now, a coal-

ition of health care providers working toward violence prevention was missing. Our goals are to engage physicians and other health care providers in addressing violence as a public health issue, to raise public awareness, and to secure commitment for a violence-free society."

Dr. Taliaterro adds that another coalition purpose is to support physicians who care for violence victims and who themselves may be at risk.

"The way the news is reading these days, that is increasingly important," she says, referring to the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center shooting of three doctors in February and the July killing of a Tulare physician at the hands of a disgruntled patient. "It used to be that people put down their guns when they saw

Red Cross workers or health care professionals coming to help victims. Now, they'd just as soon shoot us, whether they are angry for waiting or because of lack of pain medication."

The coalition is working on an educational textbook for practicing physicians that will serve as a study guide for dealing with violent patients and violence victims.

"It's easy for physicians to fall into the doldrums and believe the issue is too big for us, that we can't do anything about it," Dr. Taliaterro says. "But this is an opportunity to use our knowledge and have an active voice in violence prevention."

Information: Physicians for a Violence-Free Society, 415/821-5686

—Donna Grubb

- Eliminate violent promos, especially during children's viewing hours.
- Use TV to warn the public about the harmful effects of TV violence.
- Recognize TV violence's international impact: Violence is easier to translate abroad than humor, and American television is three times as violent as international TV.

Physicians can help

What can we as physicians do to decrease the amount of violence our children are exposed to on television? The American Medical Association has been active on this issue since the mid-1970s, when its House of Delegates adopted policy to vigorously oppose TV violence. Although AMA's voice was heard, the TV industry's response has been slow and inconsistent.

This year, AMA endorsed the "Parental Empowerment and Television Violence Reduction Act of 1993," intro-

duced by Congressmen Edward Markey (D-MA) and Jack Fields (R-TX), which would allow parents to use microchip technology to block out violent TV shows. AMA has also endorsed the parental advisories agreed to by the networks and the cable industry. However, AMA president-elect Robert McAfee, M.D., says much more needs to be done to combat television violence, such as a violence rating system for TV and prime-time programming guidelines.

Individual physicians must recognize the causative effect TV violence has on societal violence; violence is an epidemic in our society. We must educate ourselves, and then our patients, about the harmful effects caused by watching too much violent TV.

Throughout the nation organized medicine is now waging campaigns against different aspects of violence in our society including domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, and child

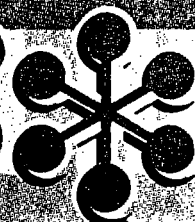
abuse. It is imperative that media violence be included in our concerted efforts to curb societal violence. CP

Dr. Reynolds is a Malibu emergency physician.

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The Detroit News

Tuesday

DECEMBER 7,
1993

Page 14D

BUTTING
HEADS

BY FANNIE WEINSTEIN

Friends and foes of MTV's bad boys clash over the popular show's violence

1993 was a roller-coaster year for *Beavis and Butt-head*.

At the same time the MTV series was becoming one of the most-talked-about shows on television, anti-violence crusaders were blaming it for encouraging a 5-year-old Moraine, Ohio, boy to set a fire that resulted in his younger sister's death.

Well, if two leading television watchdog groups have their way, 1993-94 will have just as many ups and downs for the animated pair that make Wayne and Garth look like MacNeil and Lehrer.

Bloomfield Hills' Terry Rakolta, founder of Americans for Responsible Television, says her group will gear up for a campaign to convince advertisers to pull their commercials from the show if MTV airs it during daytime hours as it once did. (Back-to-back episodes of B&B currently air from 10:30 to 11:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.)

"There's room for a *Beavis and Butt-head*," she says. "But it's not when you're purposely engaging a young audience. They have this infatuation with fire, they're cruel to animals, they inhale paint thinner and stove gas, they call authority figures a--wipes. It's like a parents' nightmare."

Meanwhile, Carole Lieberman, former chairwoman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, says her agenda for the coming year includes fighting to have

Beavis and Butt-head taken off the air altogether.

"I'd like to see MTV and every other station put on positive programming that gives us a greater appreciation for life rather than things that just tear it down," says Lieberman, who's in the process of forming a new group, HOPE (Hollywood Organizes for Positive Entertainment.)

Despite all the negative publicity surrounding the show, MTV has stood solidly behind it. In a statement released after the fatal October fire, MTV spokeswoman Carole Robinson argued that "*Beavis and Butt-head* is made for teen-agers and young adults who make up the overwhelming majority of its audience."

"These viewers see the cartoon for what it is — an exaggerated parody of two teen-age misfits whose antics take place in a cartoon world . . . antics they know are obviously unacceptable and not to be emulated in real life."

Ann Arbor psychotherapist Patricia Haber echoes Robinson, adding that critics should be more concerned about society at large than about a single program.

Says Haber, "I think looking at the values underneath is much more important than just trying to take the show off the air."

■ Fannie Weinstein is a Detroit News staff writer.

In the

L i n e

of Fire

Emmy
The Magazine of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences

By Jennifer Pendleton

The furor over TV violence is bringing a chill to Hollywood. During the month-long production of a telefilm about domestic violence to air on a

Will the First Amendment take the fall in the war over TV violence?

major network this season, veteran TV writer Stephanie Liss was bombarded with daily memos from a broadcast standards-and-practices executive demanding changes. She was ordered to cut an on-screen beating scene, which is not surprising, considering the current climate.

But the demands didn't stop there. Liss was also told to take out lines blasting the courts for failing to protect abused women and told to rewrite a scene in which the lead character, a battered wife, goes underground — it was thought to be too critical of “the system.” And to Liss's consternation, broadcast standards forced her to inject what she considered stilted legal language into scenes.

Liss's credits include high-profile, fact-based TV movies such as *David*, the ABC movie about a boy whose father set him on fire during a trip to Disneyland, and *Second Serve*, the CBS movie about transsexual tennis player Renee Richards. She says she's never before encountered this kind of network interference and believes these events have deep ramifications. “It isn't about violence,” Liss says. “This is about freedom of speech.”

Many in Hollywood believe there's a potentially dangerous mentality taking hold as the networks face the threat of congressional intervention in the war against on-screen murder and mayhem. Sources at the Writers Guild of America say TV writers are expressing uncertainty about what to pitch and feel it's a waste of time to present certain topics. This self-censorship is an unfortunate by-product of

the current pressure. For ultimately, it may limit programming choices as the free flow of ideas dries up. “The worst censorship of all is self-censorship,” says Del Reisman, immediate past president of WGA West. “Writers are spooked right now.”

More than two months have passed since the National Council for Families & Television (NCFT) held its high-profile, daylong meeting in Beverly Hills on the incendiary topic. Since then, several bills aiming to limit TV violence, including one that would require TV manufacturers to install a so-called V chip to block programming designated as violent, have been introduced. The upshot for Hollywood's creative community is nervousness about what tomorrow may bring.

“No one wants to do the wrong thing, but it's hard to know how to respond,” says Kenneth Kaufman, president and COO of Patchett Kaufman Entertainment, producers of the fact-based *In the Line of Duty* movies for NBC. Some, such as producer Frank von Zerneck, speak of a new conservatism. “There's clearly a knee-jerk reaction going on, with the pendulum swinging to the extreme right,” says von Zerneck, a partner in the consortium of independent production firms known as ACI. “It's limiting the creative flow.”

Dick Wolf, executive pro-

ducer of NBC's *Law & Order* is similarly worried. "This is having a chilling effect on potentially the most important part of the TV schedule —

Kaufman describes as "the big unknown no one wants to talk about" — the possibility of advertisers pulling their support from pro-

gramming that carries advisories.

So how intensely is Hollywood moving to eliminate, or at least tone down, TV violence? With the exception of Liss, few in Hollywood will cite instances of heavy-handedness bordering on censorship. But the comments of network execs and producers show changes are taking place. Some examples:

—Warner Bros. Television Productions presi-

dent Leslie Moonves reports the studio has altered at least two of its shows to reduce violence. In an episode of the new ABC show *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*, gang members fight with stun guns instead of bullets, the direct result of concerns expressed by Moonves and ABC Entertainment president Ted Harbert. Warner's syndicated action show *Kung Fu* is focusing more on the spirituality of

martial arts than fighting in the current season, also as a result of the pressure, according to Moonves.

—ABC's Harbert said at the TV critics' tour this past summer that there would be fewer violent TV movies on ABC this season. He's become personally disenchanted with the "families killing families" genre of stories, he added. If he had it to do again, he wouldn't have bought *Murder in the Heartland*, the highly rated telefilm about notorious serial killer Charles Starkweather. That said, ABC is looking to do a telefilm about the Menendez murders.

—CBS Entertainment president Jeff Sagansky has predicted that the debate over values will change what viewers see on TV. At the critics' tour he said his network's Tuesday movie will feature fewer productions based on true crime stories. And *Walker, Texas Ranger*, the Chuck Norris series that aired in the spring, will be considerably less violent this season than it was in its first incarnation, Sagansky said.

—Glenda Grant, president of movies and miniseries at Hearst Entertainment, says her company has had projects in development dropped because they were tales of true crime. "Unless you have a true crime story involving a page-one news story, such as Menendez, the networks aren't interested," she



adult dramas," he says. Dramatic series have been among TV's most heralded programs, Wolf points out, citing *Playhouse 90* of the fifties, *The Defenders* of the sixties, and *Hill Street Blues* of the eighties.

Most predict Congress and the public will continue to blast TV in the months ahead, particularly as new shows and TV movies, many completed months ago, come to the air. That could lead to what

Most predict Congress and the public will continue to blast TV in the months ahead, particularly as new shows and TV movies, many completed months ago, come to the air. That could lead to what

In the Line of Fire

says. "A lot of the bidding wars that would have gone on six months ago aren't happening."

After congressional hearings brought the subject of violence into the forefront, the broadcast networks and certain cable nets responded by voluntarily adopting parental advisory labels on programs that might be considered offensive. ABC set up an 800-number for viewers looking for guidance on the handful of shows that carry the warnings. The timing of the decision to place advisories on shows — just a few months before the December 1 expiration of the Television Violence Act — makes some question the networks' sincerity to the cause. Following the August 2 NCFT conference, leaders in the communications industry held a flurry of meetings to review the recommendations of Senator Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and plan a course of action.

The hope is that the entertainment industry can regulate itself sufficiently to prevent Congress from doing it. Simon stunned the more than 650 attendees of the conference when he dished out the blunt warning — some say threat — that the TV industry must reduce on-screen violence or Congress will step in. He proposed the formation of a so-called Advisory Office on Television Violence that would establish standards and report annually to the public. It's an idea that has been universally blasted by the Hollywood community, who liken it to the Hays Code, an industry-imposed set of moral guidelines followed from 1934 to 1968.

Edgar Scherick was among those who didn't like what he heard at the conference, and the producer

and former network executive became a newsmaker himself when he shouted from the floor at Carole Lieberman, chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence. "You can watch the diminution of our democracy when a U.S. senator comes and threatens us," he said later.

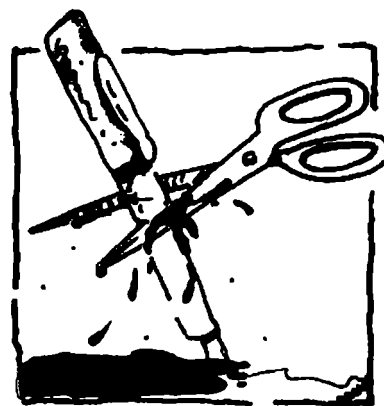
As Hollywood rails about the dangers of possible censorship, the networks are trying to defend themselves against critics. Network execs point to research showing a decline in the incidence of TV violence. The University of Pennsylvania recently issued a report stating that violent scenes on TV have dropped by half since 1990. The report, issued by a team headed by noted communications professor George Gerbner, said that the number of violent scenes fell to fewer than three per hour in 1992-93, from six per hour in 1988-89.

The networks have also cried out that TV has become a scapegoat for deep social problems. Rather than attack the challenges of crime, the breakdown of the family, and the lack of gun control in this country, Congress is taking an easy swipe at TV, they say. As conference moderator Jeff

Greenfield noted, TV violence is an issue that has no constituency. "TV cannot take the place of parents," Fox Broadcasting chairman Lucie Salhany told attendees at the critics' tour. "You can't just blame the ills of society on television."

Meanwhile, NBC's West Coast president, Don Ohlmeyer, pointed to the networks' self-imposed programming content guidelines as evidence of network responsibility. "There're an awful lot of safeguards in television right now," he said. "You know, these are not just a bunch of maniacs running around. You have the taste of the people making decisions on the programs. Then there're the checks and balances with program broadcast standards, which has no loyalty to programming whatsoever."

Despite the networks' best efforts to present themselves as responsible, there's a widespread public perception to the contrary.



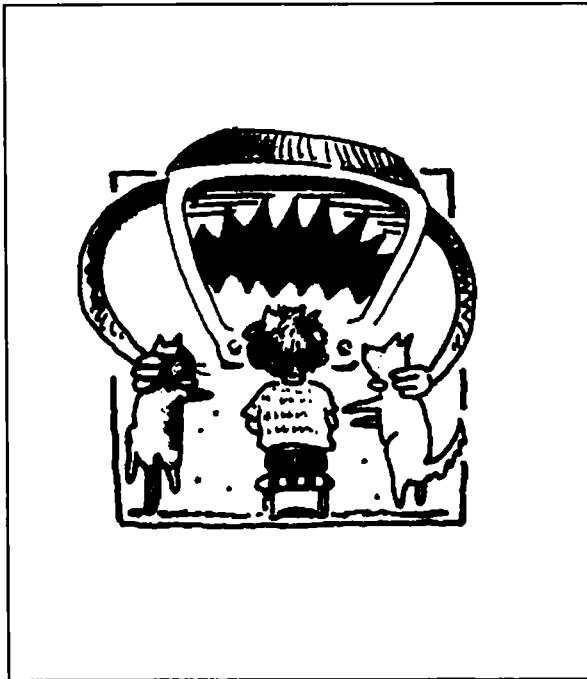
Even some in the industry seem to hold that opinion. During the TV violence hearings in Washington, Ted Turner topped the medium's harshest critics when he told Congressman Edward Markey's House telecommunications subcom-

mittee that program execs are "guilty of murder as far as I can see." He also said that if Hollywood and the networks didn't adopt an MPAA-like ratings system for TV shows on their own, then Congress should "ram it down their throats."

Network and cable TV leaders apparently recognize that they must take the initiative or face the consequences. Motion Picture Association of America president Jack Valenti, who's become the TV industry's champion in Washington, is staging get-togethers for producers, writers, and directors to address the issue. The Entertainment Industries Council, the non-profit organization that's worked for a decade to deglamorize depictions of drugs on TV and in the movies, is also turning its attention to the violence issue. It's assembled a group of TV veterans, including George Dessart, former head of standards and practices at CBS, to express their opinions on what needs to be done. Ultimately, the organization will publish and distribute their views to entertainment industry members.

One of EIC's primary goals is to come up with suggestions as to how writers can rethink ways of resolving conflict in stories. To that end, the group has drawn up a list of questions that are supposed to challenge writers to consider dramatic alternatives to gun blasts and fistfights. It is also holding small group meetings — attended by producers, writers, agents, and network execs — and hopes the discussions will lead to the discovery of new

programming genres or revive dormant ones. The council also hopes to include a discussion of possible alternatives to on-screen violence in its guidebook *Spotlight on Depiction of Health and Social Issues*. The book suggests ways writers might reflect prosocial values in scenes



involving such issues as drug abuse, smoking, and AIDS.

Whether these actions will stop the government from imposing restrictions is an open question. But there's an even more influential group that may ultimately have greater say in the shape of what's on the tube — advertisers. Bill Croasdale, president of the national broadcast division of Western International Media in Los Angeles, believes some advertisers will pull out of programming carrying the advisories. Some advertisers have strict policies about not participating in programs with gratuitous sex or

violence, he points out, while others impose a blanket prohibition against appearing in any program carrying a warning label.

NBC's Ohlmeyer alluded at the critics' tour to his past experience as owner of an advertising agency when he said half of his former clients had a standard clause withholding support if a show carried an advisory. "Now if that starts happening, and the networks start to blame themselves, what the public will ultimately be deprived of on broadcast television are movies like *Burning Bed*, *I Know My First Name Is Steven*, and *Adam*. As long as advertisers continue to make their decisions on a case-by-case basis, that's fine. But if you start to get blank pullouts, then that's going to start to affect the decision on what films are and aren't made." The situation, he said, is "dangerous."

So Hollywood anxiously waits to see how this will be resolved. In a worst-case scenario, the networks will cave in to pressure and flood future prime-time schedules with bland programming designed not to offend. If that happens, the thought police will have won.

JENNIFER PENDLETON is a freelance writer.

Plugged into violence

Video game mayhem sounds adult alarms

By Christine Little and Phil Jurik
Staff Writers

"Come play with me," pleaded the silly voice from the Hop-a-Tic-Tac-Toe game at Brentmentowne Mall's video arcade.

But no one was listening, least of all Neal Fornek, whose character in Mortal Kombat had just punched and kicked his opponent into wooziness.

"Finish her," the machine commanded, and the 16-year-old from Tinley Park complied, tapping the buttons and joystick in the right combination to decapitate Sonya with one deft uppercut, sending her bloody head reeling.

Fatality — 100,000 points.

This is child's play in the almost-21st century world of video entertainment available at your local arcade, or in your living room if yours

SLOW HAND: A self-described rank amateur tries his luck at video games. **Page A17.**

is one of the estimated 48 million households with a video game machine (or "platform," as the initiated call them).

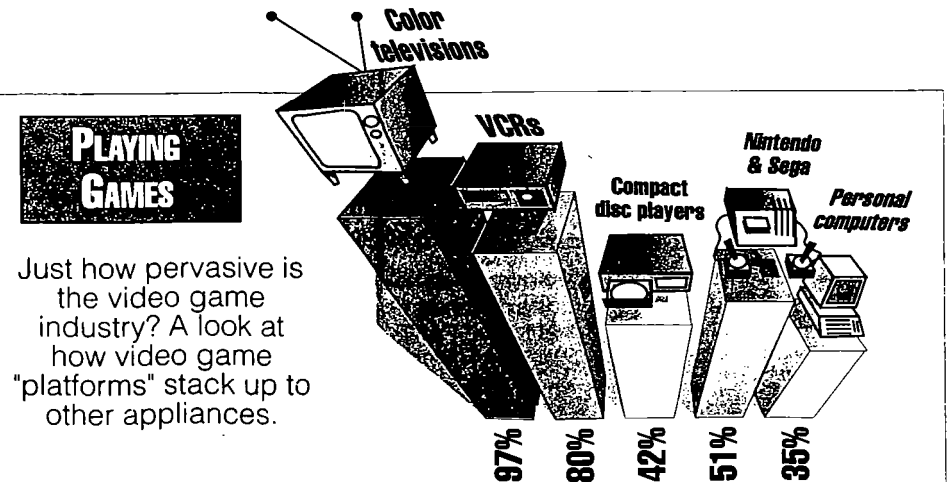
As the technology for video games has improved from the little blip bouncing across the screen in Pong to the bone-against-bone sound effects and digitized bloody decapitations in Mortal Kombat, adult alarm about video violence also has increased.

Many violence watchdogs say video game technology has advanced so rapidly that they can't begin to say what effect all that kicking and shooting will have on the predominantly young boys who play. But they are wor-



Bill Korway/Daily Southtown

George Kleopa (front) and Dan Shields play Mortal Kombat at the Just for Fun, 159th Street and Oak Park Avenue.



Source: Nintendo, Sega

Greg Good/Daily Southtown

See Video games page 16

ried.

"It is clearly another area where abuses are taking place," said U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who is still in the trenches with television honchos over excessive violence. "This one Mortal Kombat, that's designed for 8- to 13-year-olds, where you can remove a spine of somebody. It just seems to me that it goes clearly beyond what common sense and good taste would permit."

Simon plans to hold a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing later this month on video game violence to look into whether it constitutes a serious problem. He said he did not foresee getting as involved in the issue as he has with television violence.

"It is not hour after hour after hour in the homes like television," Simon said in an interview with the Daily Southtown. "I don't think it represents the same dimension of threat."

Video games do not yet have the reach of television, but they're not all that far off.

It was a \$5.3 billion industry last year, according to industry officials. A game-playing machine is in one out of every three North American homes, according to industry leader Nintendo.

The ballyhooed "information superhighway" means that within a few years, kids might be able to tune to the Sega channel to play video games.

In New York, a pay-per-view Sega channel, where cable users will be able to dial up any game into their living room, is scheduled to be launched this spring, according to a Sega spokeswoman.

There was a time when kids ran around outside killing off the neighbor kids by pointing sticks and yelling "bang bang."

Now kids can kill each other in increasingly graphic, high-tech fashion on their home and arcade video screens.

They can point guns at their screens to kill robbers and the occasional unlucky bystander at the arcade. On the Sega CD-ROM home system, they can battle vampires who stalk scantily clad women, drilling holes in their necks to drain the blood.

In the top-selling game for the past six weeks, Mortal Kombat, they can decapitate opponents and send the bloody head reeling over a precipice onto a bed of spikes. In Street Fighter, some blows can make the opponent vomit.

They can even go to the virtual reality arcades (if they have the money) to stalk other players in a free-for-all firefight where life's value is measured in points scored for kills.

Peggy Charren, a founder of

called the video boy courts "depressing."

"The sorrow is that it is possible to use this game technology for all sorts of games that enhance your imagination and storytelling activity," said Charren, a visiting scholar at Harvard University's graduate school of education. "It's a shame that instead, we enable you to kill, maim and murder."

Perrin Kaplan, a spokeswoman for Nintendo, said those comments gave video games a bad rap. Most of the games for sale are adventure games, learning games and games with cute little characters like Sonic the Hedgehog and the Mario brothers, Kaplan said.

Only 10 percent of the games in Nintendo's library are fighting games, she said. She said she couldn't say what proportion of the games sold are fighting games.

But there is little doubt that violent video has found an audience among young boys. The top-selling video games last month at the Babbage's Software chain were Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter II Turbo. Visit an arcade and you'll find row upon row of fighting games, where opponents kick and karate chop each other, and shooting games where players shoot at bad guys with plastic guns aimed at the screen (you lose points for offing the innocent bystanders).

As to whether those games are marketed toward children, just ask Acclaim Entertainment Inc., the maker of Mortal Kombat, which announced Tuesday that it had sold 3 million of the games since home sales were launched Sept. 13.

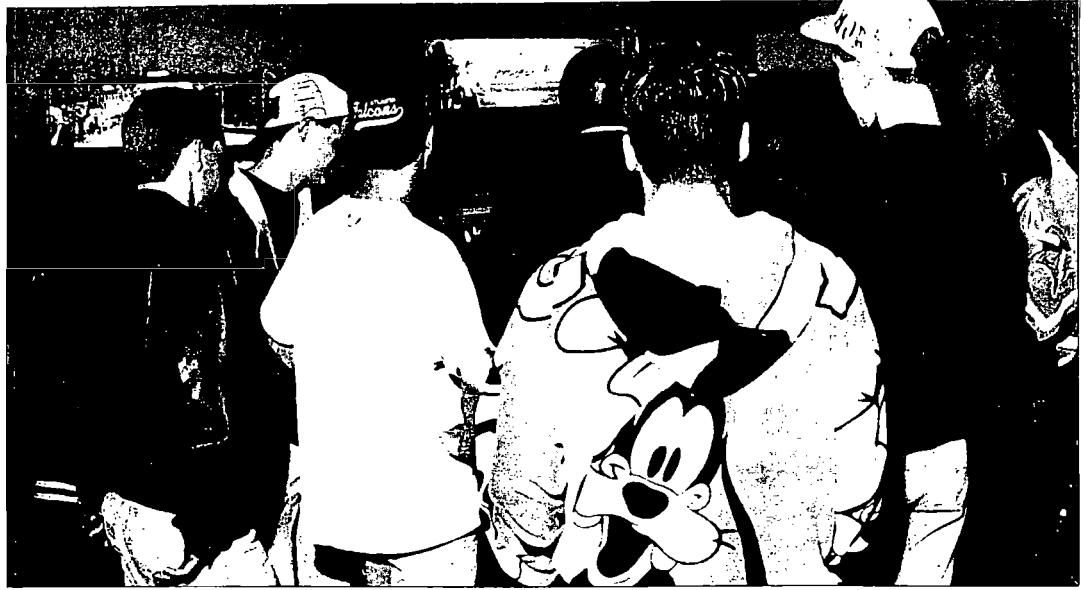
In a news release, the company touts the next generation of "MK," the television series, the movie rights, and — yes, parents — the action figures.

Groups that have formed to battle violence on television say unhesitatingly that such violence in a video game also is harmful to children. They say it may frighten the younger ones, make them more aggressive, and that it may deaden the older ones to violence.

"There is no doubt that video game violence affects children," said Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist and former head of the National Coalition on Television Violence. She is now a script consultant in Hollywood.

Lieberman said she believed that, hour for hour, video games can have a greater impact on children than television. Kids are more involved in the action, and the games are getting more realistic.

But there is scant research to back that up. Lieberman and other anti-violence groups frequent-



Bill Kowway/Daily Southtown

Young boys gather around the popular video game Street Fighter II at Just For Fun, a video arcade in Tinley Park.

lycite a 5-year-old study that showed children played more aggressively after playing violent video games.

But that study involved 5-year-olds playing Space Invaders, UCLA psychology professor Patricia Greenfield said. Space Invaders is Sunday school by today's standards. And the study's conclusions were ambiguous, she said.

"I don't think the research really exists in terms of games like Mortal Kombat," said Greenfield, who has studied the cognitive effects of video games.

Greenfield sees such mayhem as a reflection of our society, rather than an aberration.

"The fact there is such a tremendous availability of firearms, that there are so many violent homicides, and that this is the most violent society in the world, it would be very surprising if we didn't have violent games," she said.

As to whether violent video games are more dangerous to young boys' minds than yesterday's games of army or cowboys and Indians, Greenfield said, "Probably not."

Neal, the Tinley Park MK virtuoso, gives that a hearty "amen." "I like all the blood and stuff," said Neal, who has a Sega Genesis machine at home, but still gets to the arcade two or three times a week. "It's pretty cool."

Dan Shields, 15, of Oak Forest, says Mortal Kombat is "awesome."

"This one is probably the most violent arcade game," he said. "But I'm not going to go around killing people because of it."

Greenfield and some others say violent video games might actually serve as a release for youngsters, a good, safe way to blow off steam.

As Mike Walker, assistant manager at Just For Fun Video Arcade in Brentwood, put it: "I'd rather see them take out their aggressions with joysticks than baseball bats."

Simon has threatened television with regulation if the medium isn't cleaned up. He steered away from such threats about video games.

"I do not know that we will do anything on it," he said. "The hearing is a good idea to expose — and show that we are sensitive to — the problem. It's one of these areas where we really are open to answers."

Industry officials do not think government regulation is the answer.

"We need to regulate ourselves," says Nintendo's Kaplan. She says Nintendo has done that with company guidelines setting limits on graphic violence, sexually explicit material and language.

Sega has dealt with the violence issue with a rating system, which puts the responsibility squarely in the lap of the consumer.

Mortal Kombat, which was released for home video use by Sega and Nintendo last month, set up a

high-profile test of the two companies' techniques.

Nintendo cut out the blood. It also took out the decapitating, spine-ripping, spike-impaling finishes in Mortal Kombat, replacing them with less grotesque deaths. It is still violent, Kaplan acknowledges, but "within reason."

Sega's version is the same as the arcade version, and to ward off the squeamish they gave it an MA-13 rating, meaning it is not suitable for children under the age of 13. Ratings are not enforced by the store clerks. A 6-year-old with \$60 could buy Mortal Kombat. Sega says the ratings are for parents, to let them know that a 6-year-old probably shouldn't buy it.

Nintendo's Kaplan said she doubted rating systems would do much good.

"The fact that it has a rating that says they're too young makes it that much more titillating."

Some anti-violence critics say Sega's rating system is really a cynical marketing ploy.

A Sega spokeswoman said an independent board of child psychologists and sociologists rated the games, and that the rating system was designed as a buying guide for parents, who are usually the ones who can afford the high-priced games.

Whatever its motives, Sega apparently is not above using the rating system to appeal to youthful bloodlust.

A blood-speckled ad for Sega's Splatterhouse 3 in "Gameplay"

magazine boasts that it's "the kind of game rating systems were invented for."

Parker Page, president of the Children's Television Resource and Education Center, said he thought Sega's labeling and Nintendo's in-house ethics codes were steps in the right direction, but were not enough.

"We don't want to see censorship. We would like to see more detailed labeling in terms of the contents. We also would like to see an across-the-board rating system by an independent agency," Page said.

As the technology improves, Page said, the game designers are going to have to show some restraint.

"I think at some point the industry has got to voluntarily decide to put a cap on the mayhem and violence, to say, 'Regardless of profit margins, we've got to put a cap on the gratuitous violence.'"

In the meantime, psychiatrists, sociologists and industry officials suggest that the best method for making sure children aren't playing the wrong videos is for parents to control the machines.

Dan Shields, the Oak Forest 15-year-old, thinks that's "a bad idea."

"Little kids, I think it probably would (affect)," he said of Mortal Kombat, the game he was learning to master. "If I had a little delinquent, no way. They would be copying every move. If it's a young kid, the parents should check it out first."

Should free expression suffer because of viewers' bad judgment?

By Bob Strauss

Daily News Film Writer

I never thought I'd be defending artistic integrity over a movie as junky as "The Program," but these are strange times.

By now you've probably heard the story. Some teen-agers in Pennsylvania and New York copied one of many dumb scenes in the hokey college football drama. They lay down in the middle of a road — just like Craig Sheffer's drunk quarterback leads several teammates to do in the movie — to test their bravery.

Unlike the unscathed movie characters, three of the young men were hit by vehicles; one was killed instantly.

Senseless tragedies, to be sure. But the reaction by the film's distributor, Disney's Touchstone Pictures division, may prove even more tragic. The victim: This year's designated media demon, free expression.

As of Friday, the offending scene was supposed to have been cut out of all "The Program's" prints still in circulation. This was done, according to a Touchstone press release, with the cooperation of the film's director and co-writer, David S. Ward.

Depending on how you want to look at it, the move was either a

responsible one on the company's part that will prevent further injuries, a self-serving one to head off future lawsuits, or a cynical one that could drum up new commercial interest in a fast-fading, mediocre movie.

None of which are stupid rationales. The last one even appears to have paid off. "The Program" grossed \$106,879 last Tuesday, but shot up to \$143,338 Wednesday, the first day of widespread reports that the film would soon be altered. Thursday's gross of \$177,502 topped the previous Thursday's \$173,085, a small uptick that nonetheless rarely happens to played-out films.

It's hard to imagine how removing the scene could actually damage the picture, which still bears other examples of the Sheffer character's recklessness and, anyway, is so fakey that just about any scene could be pulled out with little noticeable effect.

Indeed, that very contempt for reality makes excising the scene at least a reasonable, if not entirely justifiable, option.

"I can see why that scene would have inspired people to copy it," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist and longtime critic of film and television violence, who supports the Touchstone decision.

"It seems like a ride at Magic Mountain, not a real street. The players seem totally untouchable, as if they were protected by a magic shield. If one of the characters had something happen to them, even a piece of clothing that got pulled by the wheel of a car, there

could at least be a real effect and they could realize that they weren't invincible."

But teen-agers aren't the only ones who undergo bouts of deep insecurity and imagined invincibility. Despite their bluster, Hollywood egos are already inhibited by amorphous commercial considerations and the rating board's concerns about sex, violence, nudity and language.

"The Program" precedent widens that realm of worry to just about any act someone could be hurt emulating. Since it's impossible to second guess what a movie image will trigger in every individual's mind, a pre-emptive cautiousness bordering on the ridiculous could infect our filmed arts and entertainment. We already know that movie and television talents precensor themselves on a wide range of hot-button subjects; now they'll be afraid of getting burned by many more tepid thoughts.

"People do foolish things in the movies and in life," observed "Siskel & Ebert" film critic Roger Ebert. "If you took all of the foolish things people do out of the movies, you wouldn't have much left."

Risk is vital to dramatic conflict — and just about all comedy, too. Something has got to be at stake for a story to be worth telling, and since time immemorial, fictional characters have only earned our interest by taking foolish or dangerous steps.

Such as that jerk, Oedipus. If ancient Greece were like '90s America, Sophocles would have to worry about getting sued if some wacko blinded himself after seeing it — and untold millions would be denied some of mankind's greatest psychological insights.

Insights which "The Program" does not offer. But a movie need not be great art to deserve a democratic measure of creative freedom. The potential list of themes that should be avoided for fear of dangerous copycatting is, essentially, what the movies are all about. Can you imagine a cinema with no more car chases? No cliffhangers? No Dennis the Menace switching the contents of medicine bottles (an incident which, evidently, no aspiring Beavis has yet chosen to repeat)?

And what about post-censoring? While we've acknowledged the logical arguments for Touchstone's "Program" pruning, the logic falters when taken a step further. By this line of thinking, the most toxic movie ever made was "Taxi Driver." It definitely inspired John Hinkley to shoot President Reagan and James Brady.

You simply can't cut Travis Bickle's politician-stalking, Jodie Foster-obsessing scenes out of "Taxi Driver" without ruining the movie — unlike "The Program," it's a passionate work of art in

Continued from Page 5

which every component counts. So how do we prevent it from inspiring another loon? Destroy all copies of the movie? Exile Jodie to the North Pole until all memory of her performance has faded?

Well, of course not. But don't forget, we live in strange times. Well, of course not. But don't forget, we live in strange times. Not any stranger than the climactic

moments of the Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley and Kennedy administrations, when presidents were assassinated without any inspiration from Martin Scorsese or Jodie Foster at all. But stranger in their own, frightening way — when kids actually copy the Three Stooges-equivalent behavior our parents convinced us not to try.

While we should never forget that nothing is more precious than an individual human life, we can

likewise never forget that millions have sacrificed their lives in the battle for our precarious freedom. It's not worth compromising that freedom now because some kids did something stupid. If you're going to have children, teach them that filmed entertainment is not real and not to be copied.

And not to play in the street. I never thought I'd have to point out something so obvious. But these are strange times.

The Living Arts

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1993

The New York Times

Reno's Warning Shot Has Hollywood Circling the Wagons

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

The Talk of Hollywood HOLLYWOOD, Oct. 21 — Attorney General Janet Reno's threat on Wednesday that the Government will take action unless the television industry curbs violent programs has left television and movie executives rushing for cover. A number of these executives said they were puzzled by Ms. Reno's warning, which came in the aftermath of several tragedies apparently linked to a movie and a television program. In one group of incidents, a teenager died and several other teen-agers were injured as they imitated a scene in "The

Program," a current Walt Disney Company film about football, in which some players lie in the middle of a busy road to prove their toughness. As soon as the real-life incidents occurred, the Disney Company took the unusual step of saying it would remove the scene from all 1,222 prints of the film and would recall the coming-attractions trailer for the film.

In what seems like a particularly perverse twist, the film, which has not done well at the box office, has been seen by relatively few people in theaters. But now the excised scene has been viewed by millions because television news programs have reproduced it.

"It's absolutely insane to show this now on television," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist and a former chairman of the

National Coalition on Television Violence, a group of doctors, parents and other who seek to diminish mayhem on television. "It's this kind of unthinking attitude that causes so many problems."

Earlier this week, MTV moved the hit cartoon program "Beavis and Butt-head" to a later hour, after saying last week that the two title characters would no longer set things on fire for fun. That was after an Ohio woman blamed the program for the death of her 2-year-old daughter in a fire set by her 5-year-old son.

The question that emerged here today after Ms. Reno's comments was this: What are the responsibilities of film makers and television executives in terms of violence? The answer, in a town where huge sums of money

are involved, was that social responsibility goes just so far.

Within the movie industry, the mood seemed to be totally defensive. Executives felt strongly that the Government should not involve itself in legislating the content of television programs or films. On the other hand, most of them sidestepped the question of who should take responsibility for excessively violent movies that may be commercially successful.

Jack Valenti, the chairman of the Motion Picture Association of America, which represents the major studios, said in an interview: "I am utterly opposed to the Government getting involved in anything to do with content. Any legislation like that would inevitably allow them to graze the outer edge of the

First Amendment. This gives a lot of Maox moments to people in the creative community."

But asked about who should take the responsibility for violent films, Mr. Valenti said: "There were 616 films we rated. Some of them were atrocious. There are movie makers out there who are profane, tawdry, lousy. But a lot of good stuff gets made."

Some studios, such as Warner Brothers, seem to be moving away from plans for big-budget, violent action movies, but largely because these films seem to be getting more expensive and are not luring audiences as they did a decade ago. Andrew Davis, the director of "The Fugitive" and "Under

Continued on Page B10

Continued From Page B1

Siege," who shaped his early career with action films, said: "It would be very nice if we could portray the world without violence. But what goes on in Bosnia or Somalia is far worse than what we depict."

Michael Mann — who directed the film "Last of the Mohicans," and who was often a target of complaints for his television shows, "Crime Story" and "Miami Vice" — said: "As far as this issue goes, television is very vulnerable. It's a scapegoat because it's so visible. It's much easier to attack than the imponderables of why there's so much violence in this culture. It's crude and simple to attack television in that way."

Howard Stringer, the president of the CBS Broadcast Group, who came under attack at Wednesday's Senate Commerce Committee hearing after he defended television programming,

said today: "It was one thing to go down there and to be used as a punching bag. All's fair in love and war. But a day later, I feel a sense of sadness that in testimony on both sides there was a certain elitism, because too many people began by saying they don't watch television. This is a mass medium and it's popular culture. And there's nothing intrinsically wrong with that."

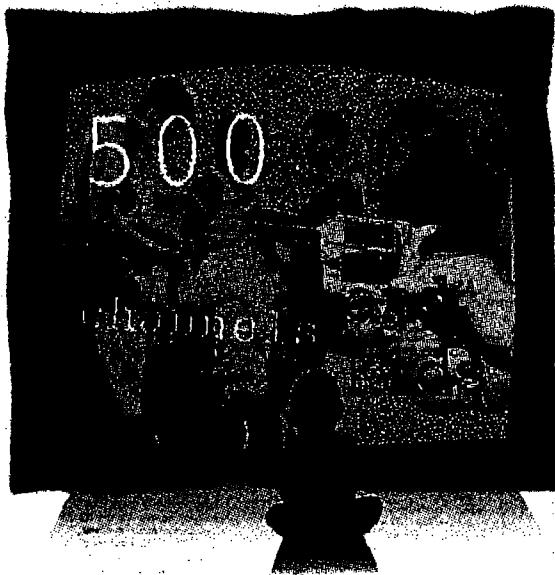
"We took seriously our responsibilities," said Mr. Stringer. "Network television has changed its attitude. We have accepted that there is a crisis on the streets."

But Dr. Lieberman, and others, strongly disagree. "You can push the envelope of violence in movies, and they certainly do, but the difference is that TV comes into the home, and violence on the small screen in your home can have a more powerful effect because it is in your home," she said.

The Atlanta Journal

COVERS DIXIE LIKE THE DEW

VIEWER CAUTION ADVISED



JOHN AMOSS / Staff

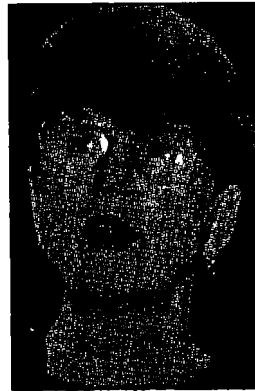
TV industry warned to clean up violence in programming or face a crackdown through legislation

By Drew Jubera
STAFF WRITER

With pressure from Congress and the Clinton administration, television executives are facing a new sense of urgency to tone down violence on television or have someone else do it for them.

That someone else could be Congress, passing new laws that require television programming to take on a kinder, gentler tone.

"If significant voluntary steps are not taken soon, government action will be imperative," Attorney General Janet Reno warned Wednesday during a Senate hearing.



"If significant voluntary steps are not taken soon, government action will be imperative."

JANET RENO
Attorney General

A recent death allegedly linked to MTV's "Beavis & Butt-head" illustrates the danger, officials said. A 5-year-old, after watching the characters' encouragement to play with matches, set a fire that killed his younger sister.

All of this comes as the ballyhooed "500-channel" TV universe moves closer to reality. Many experts warn that if steps aren't taken now to monitor the onslaught of TV images inappropriate for children, TV could become an utterly unmanageable medium — an information highway as potentially dangerous as it is free-flowing.

"There's been vague talk about how overwhelming the 500-channel universe will be on adults, but I haven't heard a word about how it will affect children — it will be even more overwhelming for them," says Carole Lieberman, a Los Angeles psychiatrist who has served as script consultant for a number of TV shows.

"Now, the majority of shows on TV are inappropriate for children, and if you increase the universe of channels, the proportion that will be OK for children will get even more skewed," she adds. "There is going to be an increase in the number of copycat behaviors [like that blamed on 'Beavis & Butt-head'] that people are going to be able to attribute to TV."

An increasing number of parents are as fearful of current programming as they are of the future, and say that recent incidents — involving not only the MTV cartoon but a death and injuries in the wake of teenagers imitating a highway stunt in the theatrical film "The Program" — could finally make their voices heard.

"This should be an alarm or red light that signals us as parents to be more careful and discriminating about the type of TV we allow our children to watch," says Alpharetta resident Peggy Dunkerly, the mother of 9- and 3-year-old girls. "The TV industry needs to realize there are unsupervised children out there."

"It's a very frustrating time to be a parent," Dunkerly adds. "Your values are not being rein-

Please see **VIOLENCE, A8** ▶

Violence: Reno warns TV of possible crackdown

► Continued from A1

forced by the media in the culture. A lot of times you hear people in the TV industry say, 'It's not my job to be the parent.' But why do something to make society worse? It's bad enough."

The TV violence issue is nothing new. Just this summer it became a kind of mock opera as Congress and broadcasters made a loud show of concern that resulted in parental advisories airing before a total of two network shows in the entire fall lineup.

Still, it was a public wake-up call, and progress appeared to be made. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who has led congressional efforts to calm the murder and mayhem in TV dramas, urged his colleagues on Wednesday to hold off on legislative measures to curb violence until the TV industry has had its chance to police itself.

"This fall we have less violence on TV than we've had in the past; some people would say less than we've had in 25 years," he said of the broadcast networks ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox.

Simon says any further legislative action should be delayed until January to give Hollywood time to implement his proposal for a self-regulating, monitoring group that would keep track of violence on television.

Reno supported Simon's plan Wednesday before the Senate committee on TV violence, emphasizing the need for a deadline.

The issue, however, remains sticky. Few want out-and-out censorship. But monitoring violence and tracking its impact on children has so far led only to an endless parade of highly debated, often contradictory studies.

Yet much of the gridlock might finally be breaking. A general consensus seems to be forming that no matter how contradictory the studies, common sense tells most people that enough violence is enough.

"If you say TV has no effect, you're just deceiving yourself," says David Silverman, supervising director of "The Simpsons," a show that once came under attack as demeaning family values but now is considered an artfully executed satire on American family life.

"In the same breath, you have people in Hollywood saying they make movies to uplift people, and on the other hand that violence has no impact. Which part

A child's letter to Janet Reno

"Dear Miss Reno, I don't like violence on TV. It makes me feel rotten. How can you help me? Your friend, Amber-Lynn M. Manning, First Grade Park School."

of the sentence do you want to believe?

"It's a difficult question to address," Silverman adds of measures that would curb some programming. "The good news is, we have the First Amendment. The bad news is, we have the First Amendment."

Many experts believe the necessary controls already are in place. The Children's Television Act of 1990 mandated that TV stations provide programming to meet the "educational and information needs of children" — an act that stations have often cynically sidestepped through legal maneuvering. It also set up a national endowment to back children's programming, but the endowment has never been well-funded.

But attention to the tragedy surrounding "Beavis & Butt-head" and Reno's appearance before the Senate committee, which signaled the Clinton administration's concern, have children's television advocates optimistic.

"The fact that all this came at the same time has to send a message to the industry to get its act together," says Peggy Charren, a longtime advocate largely re-

sponsible for the Children's Television Act. "Otherwise, they'll be creating a situation where the right wing and censorship forces can take over the issue."

"We have the framework to guide kids in the children's act," says John Murray, head of Human Development and Family Studies at Kansas State University. "But it's getting more complex [as the TV universe expands]. Unless whoever sets a national policy starts from the framework that we're going to be more concerned about the consumer than the investor, the impact of the 'information highway' is going to land us in a deeper quagmire than we're in now."

"If we have policymakers who either don't care or haven't thought about these issues, then we'll really be in trouble. We'll be awash in technology with no constraints on how it will play out in the future."

Some observers, however, see the issue as a red herring floated by politicians and advocates unwilling to face the larger causes of the violence in American society. They compare the damning oratory about TV to satanic influences originally attrib-

uted to other media, such as rock 'n' roll.

"There's a huge contradiction," says Rolling Stone media writer and former network executive Jon Katz. "The culture says you shouldn't put 'Beavis & Butt-head' on TV, but you can buy an AK-47 legally. There are 60 million handguns in America, but they blame 'Beavis.' That's lunacy right off the bat. Why are we singling out TV? Because it's easier."

Katz and others say the real solution lies not in curbing programming, but in putting programs on at appropriate times and educating children in how to sort through the avalanche of images they see.

"When I was growing up, it was enough to learn to read and write. Now kids need to learn to be media-literate," says Linda Ellerbee, who produces children's news shows for Nickelodeon. "The schools and parents have an obligation to teach children about this technology — to teach them that it's not always there for their benefit but for someone's profit."

"We have this monster that speaks with many voices and with many images, and on the other side we have a 7-year-old with a remote who doesn't distinguish between cable and network, what's appropriate and what's not."

"There's a lot of good TV out there, and we need to direct the argument to what kids *should* be watching instead of what they *shouldn't*."

OUR VIEWS

Get to heart of TV violence

Regulation may be required

Two recent comments about the tragic effects of television violence cut to the heart of the debate.

Dr. Carole Lieberman, a Los Angeles psychiatrist who is trying to curb TV violence, said this week: "If we assume that children learn from 'Sesame Street,' why do we not assume they are learning from everything else they see on TV? 'Beavis and Butt-Head' is a 'Sesame Street' for psychopaths."

Testifying before a Senate committee on the same subject, Attorney General Janet Reno warned that the television industry's continued failure to air responsible programming almost guarantees the heavy hand of government regulation.

They're both right.

Congress is clamoring to lean on the television networks to demonstrate its concern for the millions of unsupervised children who each day watch murder, mayhem and various mating dances on the tube.

AT ISSUE:

Should Congress step in to regulate violence aired on television networks?

The prospect of federal intervention already has prompted MTV to tone down the cretinous cartoon duo of "Beavis and Butt-Head." The program's glorification of setting fires may have caused a 5-year-old boy to ignite his bed with a cigarette lighter, resulting in the death of his 2-year-old sister. The youth-oriented network has pushed the program from its 7 p.m. time slot to 10:30 p.m. when, presumably, fewer kids will be influenced by the moronic musings of these misfits.

Meantime, the Disney company has just snipped a scene from its movie "The Program" in which several drunken college football players lie down in the middle of a busy road to prove their manliness. Disney's decision came a day after one teen-ager was killed and two others were seriously injured while imitating the scene.

As life increasingly imitates the sleazier side of art, the entertainment industry should take care not to encourage impressionable youngsters to indulge their darker impulses.

TV, film violence under attack as strife imitates art

By TOM CARTER

HERALD-LEADER STAFF WRITER

From *The Great Train Robbery* to *The Silence of the Lambs*, the entertainment industry has long peddled entertainment rooted in stories of horror, violence and death.

Some of their ideas have come back to haunt them.

In the last 10 days, a few teenagers have emulated an act of reckless behavior seen in *The Program* — lying in the road while traffic whizzes past. Some of them were killed.

The movie industry did not let the incident pass without notice, and the film's producer has deleted

the scene from all prints in release.

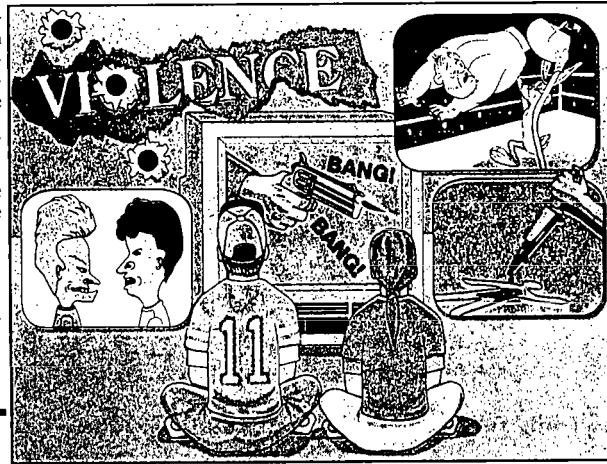
Also in the last 10 days, a five-year-old who allegedly was on a steady diet of "Beavis and Butt-head" — MTV's fire-loving, animated teen-agers — set a blaze that killed his sister.

In a similar reaction, MTV rescheduled the show to late night.

These events came at a time when movies and television are coming under fire as fierce as in any modern period.

The motion picture industry continues to cling to a self-imposed ratings system adopted in the 1960s.

SEE TV, A12



ENRIQUE RODRIGUEZ/HERALD-LEADER

Although WDKY picked up ABC's controversial "NYPD Blue" when WTVQ-TV (Channel 36) decided not to, Smith said his station is working to set up guidelines for what is appropriate during certain time slots.

Next fall, the station might even "take a closer look at whether or not we want to air certain programs at all." Smith is not planning on pulling the plug on the programs the station now airs, but he said concerns about violence will be more of a consideration when the station buys programs. Immediate changes in programming are not expected.

Some local affiliate managers are quick to point out that cable companies, rather than networks, should be the focus of anti-violence campaigns.

"There is violence on network television, but it doesn't even compare with what is on cable," said Gray Communications president Ralph Gabbard, who testified in Washington last summer before the hearings on TV violence conducted by Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill.

People often confuse the networks and cable, and networks "get blamed for everything that is out there," Gabbard said. And WKYT-TV (Channel 27), a Gray Communications station, has done its part by airing "shows with morals," such as "Scott's World" and "The Andy Griffith Show," he said.

John Duvall, general manager for WLEX-TV (Channel 18), said he and other affiliate managers are constantly "in NBC's face to take into account community feelings about issues such as violence." But any real change has to come from a network level, he said.

In July, the four main networks adopted a two-year experiment to air voluntary parental advisories before and during certain shows. The warnings, which began airing this fall, are designed to alert parents that violent material is included in the program. NBC said that the warnings will be used when it decides an episode or movie warrants parental notification.



"There is violence on network television, but it doesn't even compare with what is on cable."

RALPH GABBARO
president of Gray
Communications,
which owns
WKYT-TV
(Channel 27)



Next fall, WDKY-TV might "take a closer look at whether or not we want to air certain programs at all."

TY SMITH,
vice president
and general
manager of WDKY-
TV (Channel 56)



WLEX-TV and other affiliates are constantly "in NBC's face to take into account community feelings about issues such as violence."

JOHN DUVALL,
general
manager for
WLEX-TV
(Channel 18)



"It is a subject that we have always taken seriously, and we will continue to be sensitive to the issue."

CHRIS ALDRIDGE,
vice president
and general
manager of WTVQ
(Channel 36).

take violence off television all together. (The networks) are just trying to say the right things, but it is mostly smoke and mirrors."

Lieberman said that by not seeking outside consultation before placing labels on their programs, networks are simply skirting the issue. And she argued that if warning labels were used to fully notify parents of a show's violence, "most cartoons would have to have these labels. And that would be hypocritical; how can they say parental caution should be exercised when the program is supposed to be for children?"

That is a question local station managers say they will continue to ask themselves, but most contend that the networks and their affiliates have always treated the issue of violence with caution.

"It is a subject that we have always taken seriously, and we will continue to be sensitive to the issue," said Chris Aldridge, vice president and general manager of WTVQ. But Aldridge echoes the argument of many in the television industry that what children watch is ultimately their parents' responsibility.

"We have a responsibility to be concerned," he said. "But it is wrong for television to assume the role of surrogate parent. We are on the verge of a great communication revolution where there will be even more choices for viewers at home, but parents will still have to exercise their responsibility to filter out what shows they don't want their kids to see."

And NBC said no matter what is on television, "we must be realistic about what network efforts can achieve. Curbing violence on television won't take guns out of the hands of criminals, solve unemployment or eliminate poverty and despair."

"Which is not enough," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, director of the Hollywood Organization for Positive Entertainment. "They should

CALENDAR

'Beavis' Move Not Enough, Its Critics Say

■ **Television:** Some say that MTV made the decision based on fear of legal liability. MTV officials deny that allegation and also the suggestion that it was influenced by Senate hearings scheduled today on TV violence.

By JANE HALL
TIMES STAFF WRITER

NEW YORK—Children's advocates on Tuesday applauded MTV's decision to eliminate the 7 p.m. airing of "Beavis and Butt-head" but said that the cable network's decision did not go far enough to answer criticisms of the controversial cartoon show.

"I applaud MTV for eliminating the earlier showing, but I have a very jaundiced view of why they're doing it," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, a Los Angeles psychiatrist who has been active in the movement to curb violence on television. "I think the main reason why they're doing this is fear of legal liability rather than a real sense of responsibility to America's children."

MTV officials denied that allegation and also the suggestion by other critics that the decision to move "Beavis and Butt-head" to weeknights at 10:30 was influenced by Senate hearings scheduled today on TV violence. Among those scheduled to testify is U.S. Atty. Gen. Janet Reno. A spokesman for Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who has been leading the congressional push to reduce television violence, said the "Beavis and Butt-head" controversy is likely to come up "as a timely example" of the connection that Simon and other lawmakers believe exists between televised mayhem and real-life violence.

MTV had said last week that it was deleting all references to fire in its most popular series, about two teen-age metal-heads. Earlier this month, a 2-year-old Ohio girl was killed after her 5-year-old brother set fire to his bed with a cigarette lighter. The mother said the boy had been inspired to play with fire after watching Beavis and Butt-head having fun that way.

"We just felt that eliminating the fire references and eliminating the 7 p.m. airing was the right thing to do," MTV senior vice president Carole Robinson said Tuesday.

"I think MTV did the right thing by eliminating all references to fire, and it certainly makes sense to put a show based on irresponsible behavior on at as late an hour as possible," said Peggy Charren, founder of Action for Children's Television. "But this move ignores the fact that, according to

Please see 'BEAVIS,' F4



'BEAVIS'

Continued from F1

Nielsen data, there are a lot of very young children watching TV till midnight."

Supporters of the show argue that it is intended as humor for the MTV audience, most of which is in the 18-to-34 age range—and that it is, after all, a cartoon. But Charren maintains that young children are all the more susceptible to imitating the characters because of the animation.

"'Beavis and Butt-head' is obviously antisocial and outrageous on purpose, for humor," she said. "But kids and parents have been taught by television that a cartoon is one kind of programming on TV that is intended for kids. Young children do not get the message that 'Beavis and Butt-head' is intended as satire."

Charren said that she was not in favor of censoring the series, but she expressed hope that MTV and creator Mike Judge would watch for other kinds of behavior that children might copy, such as hurting animals.

Lieberman was even stronger in her criticism. "I'd be in favor of eliminating the show altogether," she declared. "If we assume that children learn from 'Sesame Street,' why do we not assume they're learning from everything else they see on TV? 'Beavis and Butt-head' is a 'Sesame Street' for psychopaths."

MTV's Robinson said the network had been evaluating the content of "Beavis and Butt-head" over the past several months. "By moving the show to a later time period, we believe that we can preserve it creatively and have the show watched by the audience it is intended to reach," she said.

For the time being, videos will air at 7 p.m., she said, but MTV and Judge plan to develop ideas for a new "Beavis and Butt-head" show there "that is suitable."

The SUNDAY Times

The Washington Times

cents

MUSIC

No longer the stranger
Pop juggernaut Billy Joel rolls
into Landover's US-Ar Arena
Monday and Tuesday, buoyed
by his latest, "River of
Dreams." Waxing
philosophical in middle age,
the former angry young man
turns his gift for melodic
rocking to the preoccupations
of mortality and other
introspective themes.

Baroque revisited
Gervase de Peyer's Melos
Sinfonia celebrates the 16th
century — with a nod to
today's music — in "A
Baroque Evening" Saturday
at the Warner Theatre. A lot
is promised. John Wallace is
flying in from London to play
Telemann's Concerto for
Trumpets and Strings, and a
world premiere fills the
evening's second half.
Scenes from "The Petticoat,"
a new opera by Christos
Tsiltsaros and Patricia
Dureska inspired by baroque
fashion.

The Washington Times

By Rod Dreher
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

It's hard being Beavis and Butt-head these days.

MTV's hapless cartoon teenagers are skinny, ugly and dumb as posts. Girls won't come near them. And now this Delinquent Duo, the Damon and Pythias of the Black Generation, the Heckle and Jeckle of the chucklehead set, are being blamed for inspiring acts of animal cruelty and arson, including a trailer fire in Ohio that killed a toddler and is blamed on another child playing with matches.

MTV is feeling the heat from critics. Following a flurry of news media reports last weekend about the Ohio fire, "Beavis and Butt-head" creator Mike Judge canceled a scheduled appearance on David Letterman's show. MTV postponed a special episode in which Beavis and Butt-head participate in a town meeting with President Clinton (the music-video network now says it will air tomorrow night).

Though MTV denied responsibility for the deadly fire, the network promised to re-examine the content of "Beavis and Butt-head" episodes in light of the incident. Five days later, MTV announced it would remove all references to fire in future "B&B" broadcasts.

Neither Mr. Judge nor "B&B" executive producer Abby Terkuhle agreed to be interviewed for this article, and an MTV spokeswoman would not comment on Mr. Judge's personal reaction to the Ohio child's death. Privately, one source acquainted with Mr. Judge says the 30-year-old "B&B" creator, who has been described as sensitive and intelligent, was upset.

MTV's goodwill gestures probably won't be enough to douse the ire of the show's most vocal opponents. Here's what Dr. Carol Lieberman, a psychiatrist who recently stepped down as head of the National Coalition on Television Violence, has to say about the cartoon:

"The problem with our society is that we're growing generations of psychopaths who are destroying our society. This show is the ultimate in creating the downfall of our society through its impact upon the minds not only of children, but teenagers and adults."

Beavis and Butt-head as harbingers of the apocalypse? Read on.

see MTV, page D7

MTV's
moronic
duo
fills
America
with fear
and
loathing

Beavis
and
Butt-head
backlash

MTV

From page D1

"My concern is born out of looking out of my window and watching my country burn with violence, watching violence proliferate at a rate that's unprecedented," says Dick Zimmermann, America's leading anti-Beavis crusader. "There is more than just the future of this generation and the following generations hanging in the balance here. If you take the longer view, the future of this country hangs in the balance."

■ ■ ■

The Washington office of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the radical animal rights organization, has been swamped with calls from people across the country concerned about Beavis and Butt-head's twisted merrymaking at the expense of insects, amphibians ("Frog Baseball" was the "B&B" pilot) and other animals.

Kim Roberts, a PETA cruelty caseworker, helpfully reminds us.

"Psychiatrists will tell you that almost every major serial killer has animal abuse in their background. Beavis and Butt-head not only torture animals, but they are preoccupied with fire, and those are two of the three predictors of adult criminal behavior."

Bundy, Berkowitz, Beavis and Butt-head. Really?

The boys have fans in high places. No less a hipster than David Letterman has praised the "purity" of their idiocy. Cartoonist Bill Griffith characterizes much of the Beavis backlash as "the absurd reactions of limited brains."

"What this does, of course, is promote that which it attacks," says Mr. Griffith, creator of the "Zippy the Pinhead" strip. "What these people never understand when they take a puritanical point of view about something is that it makes the thing a thousand times more attractive to kids. Sometimes, I wish they would attack my work."

A thirtysomething social worker and closet "B&B" fan, who asks that his name not be used in this story, describes the show as "not fiction, not fact, [but] the truth."

"I think it's an accurate reflection of the mindlessness of some of the youth in America today," he says. "If parents are going to blame that show for kids' misbehavior, they should take a good, hard look in the mirror first. All the show does is parody the actualities of life for many kids in this country."

Dr. Joan Kinlan, a Washington psychiatrist who specializes in child and adolescent therapy, tends to agree. Dr. Kinlan, who knows nothing of "Beavis and Butt-head" but much about 14-year-old boys, reacts to a detailed description of the pair's behavior thusly:

"It sounds like they are typical teen-age caricatures, the kind of thing no boy would ever admit to resembling, but in watching it would really like. My guess is that girls would go berserk and say it was



The mother of a 5-year-old who started a fire that killed his younger sister blames the cartoon "Beavis and Butt-head" for promoting burning as fun.

'gross.'

But Dr. Kinlan says that before spending 15 minutes in the company of "Beavis and Butt-head."

■ ■ ■

Beavis and Butt-head are not real. They are stupid cartoon people made up by this Texas guy who we hardly even know. Beavis and Butt-head are dumb, crude, thoughtless, ugly, sexist, self-destructive fools. But for some reason, the little wienerheads make us laugh. — MTV disclaimer that runs before certain "B&B" episodes.

What's so funny about "Beavis and Butt-head"? For starters, the guys are the most honest music-video critics in the world. "What is this crap?" is a standard Butt-head broadside. Beavis always agrees. They sit on a sofa channel-surfing through videos, classifying them with uncompromisingly Manichaean instincts: A video is either "cool" or it "sucks."

What's "cool"? Heavy metal. Chesty babes. Explosions. Fire. What "sucks" is anything tainted by intelligence, sensitivity or pretensions.

Between sessions of Siskel-and-Eberting in front of the TV, Beavis and Butt-head roam the suburban streets, laughing idiotically ("huh-huh-huh-huh" — you've heard it by now) and looking for adventures in half-witdom. Among other anti-social acts, they set fires, steal a car, mow down a botanical garden, read dirty magazines in a convenience store, destroy the 8-track tape collection of their hippie schoolteacher and bedevil Stuart, the dorky younger kid in the neighborhood.

And, famously, they're really mean to animals. In one episode they execute a grasshopper with a chainsaw. In another they put a wet poodle in a clothes dryer. Once Butt-head suggested that they put a firecracker up Stuart's cat's rectum.

All of which can be a laugh riot if you take it ironically, realizing that this is exactly the sort of dark thoughts that go through the minds of many, and perhaps most, teen-age boys at some point, though few act

on their destructive impulses.

It's not at all funny when kids do the same things in real life. California lottery millionaire Dick Zimmermann began his anti-"B&B" crusade when, two days after the firecracker-in-the-cat's-behind episode aired, some unknown pranksters in his town did just that to an unfortunate feline.

"My main complaint is the unchecked, irresponsible way that MTV and [parent company] Viacom allow these two little cartoon characters to commit major felonies without any consequences," Mr. Zimmermann says in a telephone interview.

He accurately charges Beavis and Butt-head with credit card fraud, vandalism, auto theft, arson and the killing of animals. "These are the kinds of things people in real life go to jail for, big-time," the activist says.

■ ■ ■

Mr. Zimmermann, a former radio and television broadcaster, sees "Beavis and Butt-head" as part of TV's ongoing contribution to the fraying of America's social fabric.

"The desensitization [to violence] that has occurred, particularly among youngsters, has been very effective. It's unbelievable the brainwashing that has gone on in this country," he says. "I have to ask myself why in God's name when we see this country burn in violence we put on anything that could turn any young person to a life of violence."

"Beavis and Butt-head," Mr. Zimmermann charges, is helping unleash a torrent of anger, violence and cruelty that "threatens to turn the United States into Bosnia." This may be an overstatement, discussing, a la Beavis, monkey-spanking and chicken-choking with his henchmen.

Mr. Griffith takes a less single-minded view of the program. The creator of "Zippy the Pinhead" says "Beavis and Butt-head" treads a thin line between pandering to the basest instincts of teen-age boys and parodying them. Still, many people fail to see any satire at work.

"The ironically challenged of America are legion. I come across

Doc senses cartoon pair's 'pain'

Can modern psychiatry save Beavis and Butt-head? We asked Dr. Carole Lieberman, a prominent psychiatrist and passionate Beavophobe, what she would do if Beavis and Butt-head showed up in her Beverly Hills office one day seeking therapy.

"First of all, I would show them that I'm not shocked by anything they say or do," Dr. Lieberman says. "That would take away the gratification they get in shocking me as their therapist, just as the writers are probably getting from shocking the world."

After much give and take, the pair would calm down, the doctor says.

"You would see the facade drop," Dr. Lieberman predicts. "At that point, what I would try to do would be to let them know in a non-threatening manner that I realize that the reason they're behaving like this and talking like this is because, deep down, they have low self-esteem, and really feel bad about themselves, and feel like the only way to get the attention and love that they want is by being outrageous."

Once Beavis and Butt-head are able to accept that and show their "vulnerability," the psychiatrist says, she would have them talk about how life has been for them up to this point.

Most likely, she says, they'd talk about fathers who have been extremely critical and probably physically abusive. Also mothers who abuse drugs and alcohol, and have been lost in their own worlds.

The bottom line: that they grew up with parents who made them feel unloved, who did not give them any sense of being special and loved. So they try to feel special and loved by being outrageous.

"That's what this show's all about," Dr. Lieberman continues. "Beavis and Butt-head are in a lot of pain, and have been all their lives. What they're expressing is pain. They're taking out their pain on the rest of society, and that's what's happening in real life with the rest of the world."

— Rod Dreher

them constantly," Mr. Griffith says. "They're in such ruts, and all they can see is the most simple kind of humor. Any subtle point is completely missed, and not only missed but taken literally."

Mr. Zimmermann responds rhetorically: "Will you bring me a 12-year-old who can give me an analytical report of the concept of parody?"

Mr. Griffith concedes the point, sort of.

"I suppose there are 12-year-old boys who are so disturbed that something as removed from their personal experience as a cartoon can trigger a murderous impulse," he says. "But if that is possible, any number of things could have triggered that impulse. 'Beavis and Butt-head' just happened to be the thing they were looking at at that moment."

In the spirit of open-mindedness, does it not behoove us to seek to understand Beavis and Butt-head (and their fans) before reading them out of the human race?

Mr. Griffith describes Beavis and Butt-head in Freudian terms, calling them "pure id, without any mediating ego or superego. That's frightening for people who don't get it."

In Freudian theory, the id is the mental representation of a person's most basic biological impulses. The ego and superego are the parts of the mind that mediate between the id and external reality. They make civilization possible. Several psychiatrists say characterizing Beavis and Butt-head as id in sneakers is right on target.

"Freud said the purpose of the ego and superego is to hide the id, and

showing this id very naked, without any controls at all, would make most people uncomfortable," explains Dr. Joyce Brothers.

Dr. Kinlan, the District psychiatrist, says the ego and superego, which stabilize the human personality, are strong in boys age 10 to 12. But when hormones begin gushing through a teen male's system, the id goes kablooeey.

"It sounds like poor Beavis and Butt-head are struggling through this, and showing us how hard it is," she says. "Some of the things they do sound really crazy, but for their age it's just normal."

Because boys at this age typically feel a loss of control, Dr. Kinlan says, they often react with contempt, anger and rebellion against authority figures. This stage of development also is marked by a strong interest in scatological topics.

Says Dr. Brothers, suppressing a giggle: "A lot of boys are still dealing with the *Sturm und Drang* of toilet training."

Girls, the psychiatrists say, are more mature than boys at this age, and are likely to find "Beavis and Butt-head"-type behavior disgusting. MTV confirms that "B&B" viewership skews heavily male.

Dr. Lieberman agrees that it's normal for adolescent males to be fascinated with boogers and rebellion, but "Beavis and Butt-head" takes the depiction of such much too far, she says. She points to the dreaded triumvirate of childhood behaviors that frequently indicate sociopathic behavior in adulthood: Bed-wetting, a fascination with fire and a compulsion to torture animals.

"What's particularly relevant

about this is that 'Beavis and Butt-head' is primarily about fire-setting, excretory functions and cruelty to animals," Dr. Lieberman contends. "In a sense, 'Beavis and Butt-head' is a 'Sesame Street' for sociopaths."

Both Dr. Brothers and Dr. Kinlan agree that fire-setting and cruelty to animals have no business in a cartoon show watched by children. Dr. Brothers believes, as does "B&B" creator Mike Judge, that the program should be pulled from its 7 p.m. weeknights time slot and shown only late at night.

As the highest-rated show on MTV, this would cost the cable channel millions in advertising revenue. But with "B&B" T-shirts, key chains and other merchandise bringing in money by the cartload, and Hollywood studios scrambling to secure feature film rights, it's probably a risk the network can afford to take.

As long as "Beavis and Butt-head" continues to be wildly popular and wildly profitable, the public will have to learn to live with the little wienerheads. If you can't ban 'em, join 'em, some argue. Watching the show can help adults get in touch with their inner Beavises.

"I think that Beavis is in there," Dr. Kinlan says. "Generally, people don't remember the stages of development they went through, so it's kind of painful and shocking to see it depicted."

Then there's the social worker who insists his name not appear in print approving of "Beavis and Butt-head." He confesses that he relives parts of his childhood whenever he watches the show.

A postscript: One day after speaking to a reporter, Dr. Kinlan leaves frantic messages on voice mail. Seeing half of the previous night's "Beavis and Butt-head" episode has made the D.C. shrink desperate to revise her comments.

"I totally condemn this program. I do not see any shred of normal adolescent behavior here," Dr. Kinlan says. "I only saw 15 minutes, but it's one of the most sadistic, pathological programs I've ever seen."

The good doctor got her baptism-by-Beavis by tuning in to "Naked Colony," an episode in which the boys sneak into a nudist camp to watch the jiggles, and literally are paralyzed with fear and fascination. Forty years later, a news reporter asks a shrunken Beavis and a bloated Butt-head what the most memorable part of their lives was.

"Huh-huh. We saw naked people," says Butt-head.

Dr. Kinlan's diagnosis? "'Beavis and Butt-head' is pure evil portrayed in the form of two sadomasochistic cartoon robots who represent the total failure of civilization. One sees pure animal instincts in two meaningless creatures who know nothing about human love, the capacity to care for another, nor any respect for authority. This is civilization's worst nightmare."

Whoa! And that, reader, is why teen-age boys think "Beavis and Butt-head" most definitely does not "suck."

TV VIOLENCE

.....
It's out there. And for concerned parents, here's how to deal with it.

by **RICHARD CHARTERIS**

Elmer Fudd's shotgun pursuit of "that wassally wabbit." The Three Stooges' eye-poking slapstick. Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator, loaded down with automatic weaponry, roaming the streets. To TV-watching kids, they're common images, and to many social scientists, even the most seemingly benign of them has an effect, as study after study suggests a link between watching TV programming containing "violent" action and subsequent imitative behavior.

Now, that doesn't necessarily mean that any kid, after watching Wile E. Coyote tumble over yet another cliff at the hands of the Road Runner, is going to start luring his buddies off the top of the jungle gym—or worse. Let's give credit where credit is due: Most children aren't so divorced from the norms of accept-

able social behavior that they're going to imitate all of what they see on TV.

But opponents of violence on television argue that repeated viewing of mayhem leads, at the very least, to desensitization toward it. And so, beginning this fall, the four U.S. commercial networks and some American pay-TV outfits—faced with the threat of government-legislated directives—have voluntarily agreed to air warnings that certain programming contains scenes of violence (Canadian broadcasters have been doing it for years, in some instances). If you're satisfied with someone else determining what's appropriate viewing for your kids, you'll listen for those messages. If you want to take control of your kids' TV time and what they watch, here are a few ways to approach the issue of violent programming that we got from some experts on the subject.

To start, know what your kids are watching. Regard their TV-viewing time in the same manner as you might in determining whether you'd leave them with a complete stranger for, say, three hours. And watch with them. If something on television seems violent and scares them, talk it out.

Dr. George Gerbner, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication who's designed a violence index for TV programming, stresses the importance of establishing a sense of what's real and what isn't with kids. Children are swamped with what Gerbner calls "happy violence. In cartoon violence there's no pain or permanent damage to the characters, just swift, sanitized entertainment leading to happy endings. It's not real. It doesn't put the acts of violence in a real-life context by

demonstrating the consequence of the act and how hurtful it might be. If kids don't see the consequence of the violent act, how can you make them understand that violence causes serious harm?"

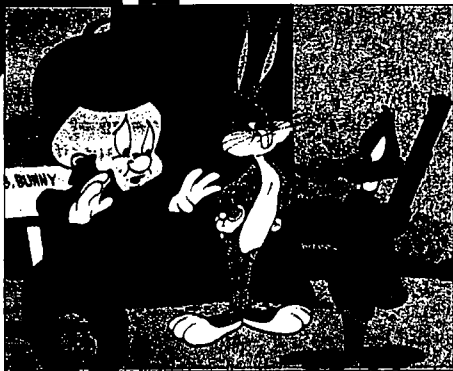
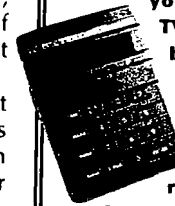
Parents can put the acts in context, says psychiatrist Carole Lieberman, chair of the U.S.-based National Coalition on Television Violence, by sitting down with their children and discussing—in language appropriate for their age, or even by using drawings—how they think they might feel if, for example, they fell to the ground or were thrown around like a rag doll. "Asking the child to identify with the characters in a violent scene makes them think about what they've viewed, because children have a hard time distinguishing between what's reenactment on

MANAGING KIDS' TV TIME

If you can't always monitor what your kids are watching on TV, some new devices have been developed to help.

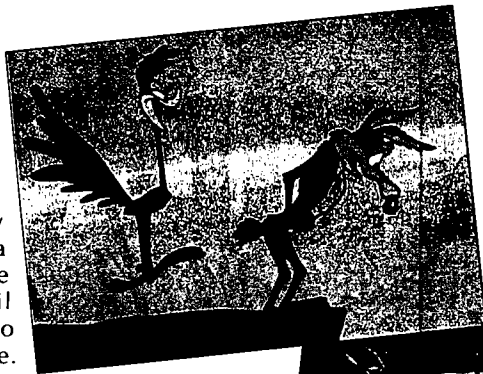
Most high-end TV sets now have a lockout function that, operated through the unit's remote control, prevents the viewing of the selected channels during a specified period.

Or, if you're confident that your kids are making the right choices but just don't want them to turn into couch potatoes, you might consider something like the TV Allowance (above). Developed by Miami photographer Randall Levenson, the paper-



television and what's real. Kids, for example, don't really understand a concept like death until they're close to 8 years of age. They can't form,

on their own, a feeling for the profound sense of loss that death brings on. Nor do they really understand that getting shot hurts a lot. You have to ask them questions like, 'How do you think it would feel to be shot?,' and explain that it hurts. You need to ask them about how they view characters' actions: 'Was that person mad?' 'Why?' 'Besides shooting that man, was there another way in which that character might have dealt with his



Happy violence: Afternoon offerings like Roadrunner (left) and Batman (below) don't present the consequences of violent action, say some experts



anger or resolved the situation?"

Also, make some firm decisions about what kids can and can't watch—from action/adventure series to newscasts—based on their emotional maturity. YTV president Kevin Shea, for example, doesn't consider any of his network's programs violent, and says his opinion is based on "asking kids what *they* consider to be violent. So many people talk *for* kids; too few talk *to* them, as we do, and what a majority tell us is that they consider newscasts to have the most violent and frightening content." END

What constitutes TV violence to you? Is there a show that you simply won't let your kids watch? Should broadcasters be forced to air messages warning of content that some might find offensive? We'd like to hear from readers on the subject of TV and violence. Write TV Violence, c/o TV GUIDE, 50 Holly St., Toronto, Ont., M4S 3B3

back-sized gadget (priced around \$130 Cdn) sits on the TV set and—after being programmed by a parent—limits the amount of time a child can watch.

"It was painful to see when my kids first got put on an allowance," says Levenson. "But out of that pain, they started exploring their environment. They were outside shooting hoops, riding their bikes, building treehouses...you name it."

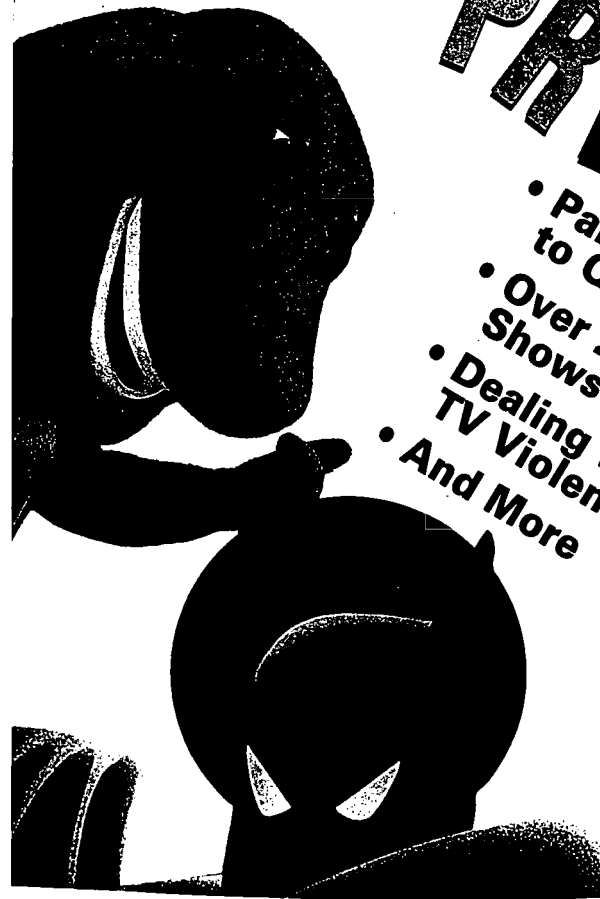
For more information on TV Allowance, call 1-800-387-8288. Similar gadgets available only in the U.S. for the time being include TV Manager (around \$50 US) and TimeSlot (\$130 US).—Paul Welsby



Sept. 4-10

KIDS PREVIEW

- Parents Guide to Quality TV Shows
- Over 25 New Shows
- Dealing With TV Violence
- And More



WARNER BROS. TV (2) TV ALLOWANCE, MIAMI

NEWS BUSINESS POLITICS VIEWS

VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION

It's not getting any better, folks!

BY CHUCK FELLERS

Editor's note: Due to explicit language and photo, reader discretion is advised.

A son murders his father... the theme of *The Billionaire Boys Club*, a made-for-TV movie aired on NBC July 30-31, 1989.

Two sons murder their father and mother three weeks later ... August 20, 1989.

Eric and Lyle Menendez confess the killings to their therapist Oct. 31 and Nov. 2, 1989 ... and reveal they were inspired to destroy their parents as they viewed *The Billionaire Boys Club* on TV. Their trial for the murders is now under way.

This is only one of a long string of atrocities being attributed to violence on TV. Their are doubters, of course, but one expert, Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist and chairwoman of the non-profit watchdog National Coalition on Television Violence, is convinced. She has no doubt that "every act of violence ... has been influenced at least in part by violent media."

While "every" may be overstating it a bit, it doesn't take a genius to make the connection.

Rather curiously, networks have sold billions of dollars in advertising by trumpeting the impact of their seconds-long commercials, but only belatedly and reluctantly admit the impact of long, excessively violent programs.

The big guns of the broadcasting industry seem to be finally getting the message. And they're figuring how to paper over that problem and evade another-- gratuitous sex-- altogether: At least for now.

After years of denial that TV's graphic brutality was a factor in the ever increasing mayhem in homes and on the street, overwhelming evidence has finally brought the TV moguls to the negotiating table.

Just how frequently is violence portrayed on TV? A recent study by *TV Guide* showed 1,846 such acts in a single day. But now we're told how much things have improved. For example, in kid shows some time ago there averaged 32 violent scenes per hour. Today, the average is only 18 per hour.

Impressive ... right? Right. Now a child

will only see "physical action that hurts, kills or threatens to do so" every three minutes.

Adults are not likely to be so lucky. Producer Steven Bochco gained a measure of fame as the first to say "goddamn" on network TV. He added to his dubious laurels by telling complaining *Nightline*



viewers if they didn't like it to "turn the goddamn thing off." He is now pushing "R" rated TV.

ABC has scheduled Bochco's new *NYPD Blue* for a September start and it's a mix of blood, guts, chases, crashes and sleazy sex.

It's also littered with contemporary terms like "pissy little bitch," "tits," "fat ass," "douche bag," "dick head," and a few others that modesty forbids *Forum* to print.

So, how do the TV elitists plan to allay public concerns with this "family" programming without hurting rating numbers and ad dollars? Band-Aid it with a "viewer warning." This provides the networks a facade of virtue, but they know it will attract rather than repel the viewers it is supposedly designed to discourage.

Certainly it offers little consolidation to those who've been scornfully told, "If you don't like it, turn it off." They know they are the likely victims of those who will see "Due to Some Violent Content Parental

Discretion Advised" not as a warning, but as an invitation to view the violence or mature themed programming.

A variation of the "turn it off" theme is that such programs be preceded by an electronic signal that would activate a special chip (to be required in all new TV sets) to reject the programs on parental command.

Of course, it would be years before such a Band-Aid solution could have any effect, and it would do nothing to reduce the violence there for the watching.

ABC's Ted Harbert told his affiliates that this fall ABC would "work to keep violence to an absolute minimum." No word about gratuitous sex, but Bochco's "R" rated *NYPD Blue* may have to be reworked a bit. Some affiliates, perhaps more sensitive than the New York-based executives, are saying not only "no" but "hell no" to carrying it as is.

To show how sincere ABC is, the program will *not* carry the violence warning. Instead to assure maximum titillation there will be this advisory: "This police drama contains adult language and scenes of partial nudity. Viewer discretion is advised."

Of course, the major networks are not the only culprits. Cable TV channels are as bad or worse. So far, they have made no gesture toward cleaning up their act. But it may be that finally viewers have had enough and "aren't going to take it any more." Maybe they'll realize that after all, father *did* know best, and that airwaves crowded with crap won't cut it in Mayberry any more.

FORUM
magazine

National Coalition on Television Violence Reports

"Media violence is the number one health problem in America today," according to Dr. Carole Lieberman, Chair of National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV).

"Violent programs are inextricably connected with the increased violence in our country—in our lives," says Dr. Robert Gould, psychiatrist.

"This Fall season's homicide rate on TV was 27% higher than last year's rate. Last year, an average of one person was killed every 107 minutes in prime time. This year, murder occurs once every 78 minutes in prime time."

"Violence levels are still significantly greater than the levels recorded in 1980,... and violence is portrayed in a much more intense and callous manner," according to the report from the NCTV.

HOW TO SAY NO TO VIOLENCE

NCTV 10-Point Plan to Sweep Violence Off TV and Off Our Streets (Presented by Dr. Carole Lieberman before the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice on December 15, 1992.)

1. No Censorship

There should be no Government censorship of the media. It must be recognized that upholding the separation of government and media (as well as religion and media) is even more vital to the citizens of the United States, than curbing violence.

2. Ratings System for Violence

A ratings system which describes the violent content of TV shows should be agreed upon by the networks and cable channels. Ratings would delineate the quantity of violence (in terms of violent acts per show) and the quality of violence (in terms of how graphic and lethal the violence is, whether the overall message is pro- or anti-violence and how gratuitous the violence is). Ratings would be determined by an independent review board comprised of experts in the field of media violence.

3. Ingredient labels

Using the precedent of requiring labels on food products which detail the ingredients contained inside, TV shows should be required to broadcast ingredient labels and use them in TV publicity/listings. Such labels would reflect the results of the ratings system: the quantity and quality of the violence contained in the show.

4. Warning labels on TV shows

Using the precedent established for products such as cigarettes, TV shows should be required to flash a warning label before those shows rated high in violence. The warning label should read: "The TV show you are about to watch may be hazardous to your psychological and/or physical health due to its highly violent content."

5. Warning labels on TV Ads

Commercials for war toys (including, but not limited to: action figures, videogames, guns and other weapons) and other violent-themed products, would need to carry appropriate warning labels. These would read: "The toy you have just seen advertised may be hazardous to the psychological and/or physical health of a child due to its theme which inspires violent play."

6. Violence Advisors On Staff

At least one psychiatrist and/or researcher on TV violence should be on staff at each network and cable channel to review its shows and determine the psychological impact of any violence portrayed. This person would then advise the producers and TV executives of the findings and make recommendations as to how the violence can be toned down without compromising artistic integrity.

7. Public Service Announcements

Networks and cable channels should be strongly advised to carry PSA's which educate viewers about the harmful effects of media violence. Each channel would be advised to carry a number of PSA's per day which would be in proportion to how much violent programming it broadcasts.

8. 'Just Say No' in Government Institutions

No violent TV programming should be offered to residents of government institutions--such as jails and psychiatric hospitals. These residents are often exposed to countless hours of TV viewing, while in a condition which they are particularly vulnerable to its effect, instead of receiving more appropriate psychotherapy and rehabilitation. No children residing in government institutions should be exposed to TV violence.

9. Tax Breaks

Tax breaks should be given to networks and cable channels, production companies, foundations, private donors, etc. who provide money to support--

-- research and education on the effects of TV Violence.

-- development of non-violent TV programming for children.

10. Media Literacy Public Health Campaign

A public health campaign should be launched, in the same spirit as campaigns against drunk driving and against the consumption of alcohol by pregnant women, to promote awareness of the effects of media violence. Schools and TV itself would participate in this campaign to create better educated media consumers. Obviously, safeguards must be built in to disallow government and media resources from promoting self-serving agendas.

The new television season is upon us, and concern over violence ranges from the living room to the halls of Congress.

A picture of violence

Pressure to reduce TV violence mounts

By Jimmy Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

Warning: The surgeon general has determined that watching violence on television may be hazardous to your health. For the record, though, the surgeon general determined that two decades ago.

So now, 20 years and thousands of scientific studies later, the nation's current focus on TV violence amounts to little more than a rerun. "For those of us who've been around that long, this is really like reinventing the wheel," said Dr. Eli Rubinstein, who was vice chairman of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior in 1972. That committee represented the first major governmental effort to examine the effects of TV violence, and spent \$1 million in federal money to do so.

"We came out with a report then concluding that TV violence did have a negative effect on aggressive behavior in children," said Rubinstein, now an adjunct research professor at the University of North Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Rubinstein is among skeptics who don't believe the salvo being aimed at the television industry today will have a lasting impact.

Following the 1972 report, he said, the network presidents attended a congressional hearing. "They said then that while they did have some misgivings about the report, they did feel they should be responsive and that they were going to cut down on TV violence," Rubinstein recalled. "That never happened."

However, in the mid-1970s, the American Medical Association declared that TV violence was a health hazard to children. The networks took that very seriously, and they did reduce the violence some.

But that eventually passed, and I frankly think it's going to pass again this year."

The spotlight on TV violence in recent months has been glaring. Under congressional pressure, the four networks announced in June that they would issue warnings about prime-time programming that they consider particularly violent. Watchdog groups such as Americans for Responsible Television and the National Coalition on Television Violence have turned up the volume on their complaints. U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), a longtime advocate of curbing TV violence, has threatened to introduce federal legislation if the networks don't do something constructive within the next month or so.

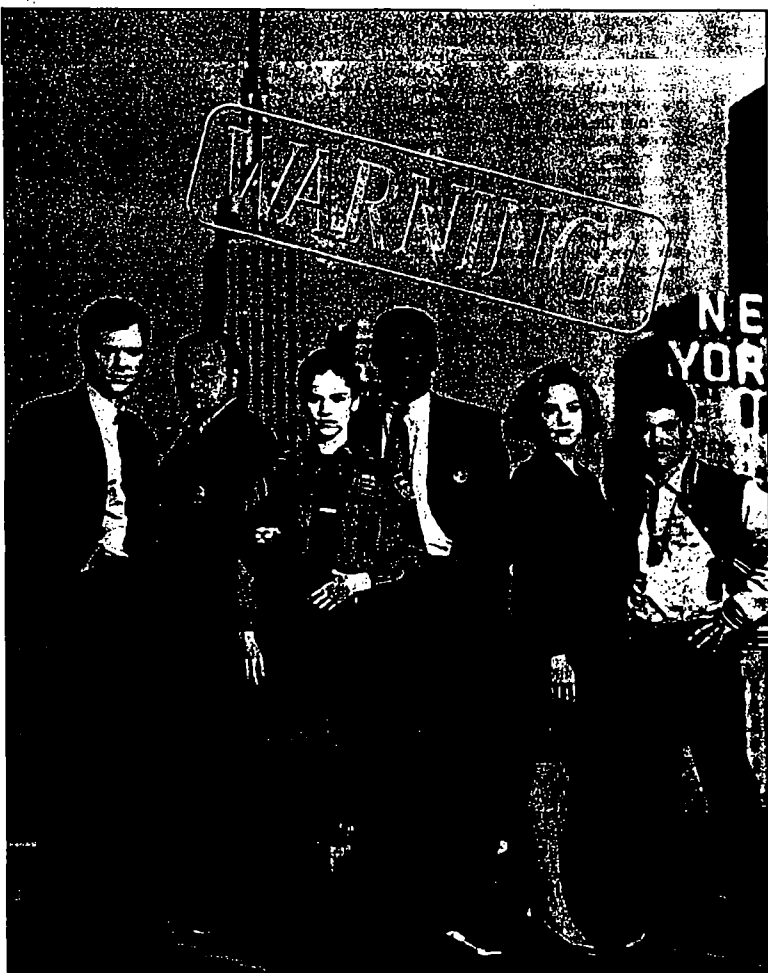
And earlier this month, network executives, activists, analysts and legislators all came together for a major conference on the issue that resulted in - well, nothing. Some of the industry's hottest hot shots acknowledged that TV violence is a problem, but made no concrete promises to reduce the violence. In fact, Hollywood isn't very likely to stop churning out violent programming anytime soon, Rubinstein said.

"It's a little bit like asking someone to learn to walk on their hands after they've been walking on their feet all their lives," he said. The industry has been making violent shows for so long - and with so much success - that making programs less violent is difficult, he said. "No one really knows how to lessen, let alone eliminate, violence," Rubinstein said. "When it gets down to the nitty-gritty of do you leave this in the show or don't you, it's a hit-or-miss proposition."

But Dr. Carole Lieberman, who chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV), thinks

(See VIOLENCE On 100)

Coming this fall



(AP Wirephoto)

'NYPD Blue,' premiering this fall on ABC Television, has raised watchdogs' concerns
Critics say the one-hour drama takes the use of violence and sex to new heights

Authorities downplay labeling

By Jimmy Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

When the major television networks announced in June that they would label violent programs with parental advisories, they did so with great fanfare.

This, they said, was the dawning of a new era in which television violence - at long last - would begin to lose its glamour. Newspapers dutifully pasted the story on their front pages, heralding the anti-violence plan.

But two months later, as a new fall TV season approaches, what do skeptics think about the warning labels?

"They're ridiculous. They're a pretense. They have no value whatsoever other than to try to get the networks off the hook," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, who chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence, a nonprofit watchdog group.

Lieberman's main beef with the parental advisories is that the networks will be making their own decisions about which shows deserve the advisories, a situation she likens to the fox guarding the hen house.

"As it stands now, the people making the decisions about which shows get labels have no background in psychology or psychiatry," she explained. "They are people whose main goal is to lose as few viewers as possible."

"And they're not putting labels on any children's programming, so it's totally hypocritical," she said.

Dr. Eli Rubinstein of Chapel Hill, who co-authored "Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society," sees another drawback to the parental advisories.

"There's also the unfortunate potential that advisories may themselves actually induce people to watch those programs simply because they carry the advisories," Rubinstein said. "It's just like the forbidden fruit."

Still, Lieberman says she favors the idea of warning labels, if handled appropriately.

Last December, speaking before the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice, she presented a 10-point plan for sweeping violence off TV, and it included warning labels on TV shows. The plan also called for ingredient labels, which would detail the quantity and quality of the violence.

The warning labels, which would flash on the screen before a show deemed to be violent, would read: "The TV show you are about to watch may be hazardous to your psychological and/or physical health due to its highly violent content."

The good...

The National Coalition on Television Violence, in its study of violence in prime-time programming during the 1992-93 season, praised the following programs for having consistently pro-social themes or educational content and for avoiding glamorized violence, alcohol or tobacco use, and degrading stereotypes:

- "60 Minutes," CBS.
- "20/20," ABC.
- "I'll Fly Away," NBC.
- "Life Goes On," ABC.
- "Brooklyn Bridge," CBS.
- "Full House," ABC.
- "48 Hours," CBS.
- "PrimeTime Live," ABC.
- "Dateline NBC," NBC.
- "Family Matters," ABC.
- "Wonder Years," ABC.
- "Homefront," ABC.
- "Hangin' With Mr. Cooper," ABC.
- "Street Stories," CBS.
- "Here and Now," NBC.
- "Laurie Hill," ABC.
- "Coach," ABC.
- "Home Improvement," ABC.

...and the bad

These were the most violent prime-time television programs during the 1992 fall season, according to research by the nonprofit National Coalition on Television Violence (information includes program, network and number of acts of violence per hour):

- "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles," ABC, 60.
- "Covington Cross," ABC, 45.
- "The Hat Squad," CBS, 42.
- "Raven," CBS, 42.
- "Angel Street," CBS, 41.
- "Top Cops," CBS, 38.
- "The Edge," Fox, 33.
- "FBI: The Untold Stories," ABC, 28.
- "Final Appeal," NBC, 27.
- "Secret Service," NBC, 24.
- Fox movies (average), Fox, 23.
- "America's Most Wanted," Fox, 20.
- "The Commish," ABC, 17.
- "American Detective," ABC, 17.
- "In the Heat of the Night," CBS, 13.
- "Likely Suspects," Fox, 13.

Violence pervades children's cartoons

Researchers say kids are harmed

By Jimmy Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

Remember how Bugs Bunny used to twist the barrel of Elmer Fudd's rifle back toward the inept hunter's face, and then Elmer would get blasted?

Remember how funny that used to be?

Well, researchers don't find the "wascally wabbit" quite so amusing. They say such animated animosity promotes violence among children.

"In cartoons, after characters get shot or assaulted, they pick themselves up and appear totally intact, showing no scars," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, a California psychiatrist who chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence.

"This gives children from a very early age on the impression that shooting someone or punching someone really wouldn't leave any permanent injury."

Parents who don't want their children to see the violent programming of prime time also would be wise to keep an eye on the cartoons their kids are watching, Lieberman said.

"The first thing parents should realize is that cartoons have more acts of violence per hour than prime time, on the average," she said. "Cartoons have an average of 26 acts of violence per hour, whereas the network prime

time ranges between seven and 11 acts of violence per hour."

Critics - among them network TV executives - scoff at such warnings.

When researchers compare cartoon violence with movies such as "I Spit On Your Grave," a movie reeking with gory violence, "credibility goes out the window," said Christine Hikawa, vice president of standards and practices for ABC, at a conference on TV violence earlier this month.

Other network executives have expressed similar sentiment. And Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, has flatly rejected any sort of violence standards for animation.

Researchers, however, hold fast to their findings about cartoon violence.

"A lot of people tend to downplay the importance of cartoons because they try to say that pushing and shoving or even shooting cartoon characters doesn't count," Lieberman said. "Well, in fact, they do count because children relate to these characters."

"Even though cartoons may not use real weapons - although some of them do - it still is very powerful because these characters are absorbed more by the children," she said. "They identify with (cartoon characters) more than they identify with a middle-aged man



(Photo courtesy of Turner Network Television)

Yosemite Sam and Bugs Bunny provide plenty of slam-bang action

shooting somebody."

Until society recognizes the aggressive behavior that cartoon violence can trigger in children, Lieberman will continue harping on the danger of violent cartoons, she said.

"We have to realize that the violence in 'Tom and Jerry' or 'Roadrunner' ... is just as violent to young children as the violence in 'Terminator 2' might be for older children," she said.

Violence

(FROM PAGE 1D)

the problem is more of a dollars-and-cents nature.

"We haven't gotten anywhere mainly because the (violent) shows continue to make money. And as long as there is money to be made, the producers and stations want to keep airing these shows," said Lieberman, a California psychiatrist.

And viewers will continue watching such shows because they are addicted to them, Lieberman said.

"In order for things to change, society has to break its addiction to media violence," she said. "Once people stop tuning in, they won't make these things anymore. ... We need to vote with our television sets."

Some of the statistics are alarming. While violence on TV has actually decreased slightly, the level of the violence depicted has become much more intense and callous, researchers

"Seeing all that violence desensitizes children and those who watch, so that they don't feel a moral obligation to avoid this kind of behavior."

- Eli Rubinstein

say.

For example, the fall homicide rate on TV last season was 27 percent higher than the previous year's rate, according to NCTV research. Last year, murder occurred once every 78 minutes in prime time, compared to once every 107 minutes the previous year.

Figures such as those worry behavioral experts.

"Violent programs are inextricably connected with the increased violence in our country, in our lives," said Dr. Robert Gould, a New York psychiatrist and NCTV board

member. "The shows glamorize violence and portray it as commonplace. We as individuals become desensitized to violence, more accepting of it, and alas more prone to practice it as a way of solving life's problems."

Rubinstein agreed. "Seeing all that violence desensitizes children and those who watch, so that they don't feel a moral obligation to avoid this kind of behavior," he said.

And unfortunately, he doesn't see any sort of resolution to the dilemma anytime in the near future.

"It's clear there's a lot of talking going on, but implementation is something else altogether," he said. "Just in terms of the sheer set of circumstances, there's a lot of existing violent programming in the pipeline, and you simply can't turn that monster around as fast as people would like to see it take place."

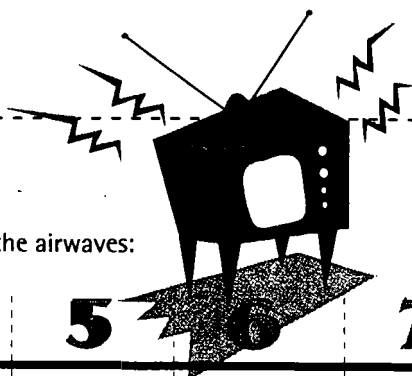
Rubinstein compared the effort to curb TV violence to the battle against smoking, noting that it's taken 30 years of education to really make the public aware of the dangers of smoking.

"And we've had nowhere near that kind of public education in the area of televised violence and its effect on children," he said.

"Until parents take the whole thing more seriously, until children take the whole thing more seriously, and until the networks and the industry make a long-term commitment, I don't think very much is going to take place."

Simon Says

Sen. Paul Simon offered TV execs seven ways to clean up the airwaves:



1

Exercise your freedom with wisdom. 'The gauge of civilization is not to what extremes we indulge ourselves.'

2

Stop pointing fingers at more violent segments of the entertainment industry and other causes of violence.

3

Sustain continuity of concern and effort toward reducing TV violence.

4

Stop glamorizing violence. Show more nonviolent alternatives.

5

Stop airing 30-second promos for violent shows during children's viewing hours.

6

Help educate the public, perhaps by airing a warning label that TV violence 'may be dangerous to your child's health.'

7

Recognize that by glamorizing violent solutions to conflict, the industry may be contributing to a more violent world.

Turning off the violence

By Claudia Morain
AMNEWS CORRESPONDENT

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Top TV executives, producers and writers, meeting to demonstrate concern about media violence, discounted arguments that TV gore is a public health issue.

They did, however, invoke their First Amendment right to free expression, decried the "chilling effect" of pressure to tone down violence and suggested that politicians pursue gun control if they're serious about reducing violence.

"There's no such thing as a little censorship," complained Dick Wolf, creator of "Crime & Punishment," "Miami Vice" and "Hill Street Blues." "People are going to turn around in three years, and all that's going to be on at 9 p.m. is Mr. Rogers."

A push for tougher curbs

No concrete resolutions were expected from the day-long conference, held Aug. 2, and none emerged. But attendees heard an ultimatum from Sen. Paul Simon (D, Ill.), who said industry leaders must come up with a plan to reduce television violence through self-regulation within 60 days.

"The evidence that television violence does harm is now just as overwhelming as the evidence that cigarettes do harm," Simon said.

He noted that the TV industry had cut back voluntarily on glamorous depictions of cigarette smok-

ing. Yet "when the surgeon general warns us about the harmful effects of television violence, the industry is oddly silent. That should change. There is no similar heavily documented threat to public health which television has so studiously ignored."

If the industry has taken no action by Simon's deadline, the senator pledged he and his colleagues will "push hard" for federal legislation to do the job.

The conference was sponsored by the National Council for Families & Television, a nonprofit educational group that enjoys broad entertainment industry support. About 650 people attended, including the heads of ABC, NBC and CBS; 300 others were turned away for lack of space, according to NCFT president Marian Rees.

Both houses of Congress held hearings on TV violence this spring, and politicians ranging from Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D, Ohio) to Sen. Jesse Helms (R, N.C.) have called for reform. Reps. Edward Markey (D, Mass.) and Jack Fields (R, Texas) introduced a bill Aug. 5 to require that new TV sets feature a computer chip that permits parents to lock out programs unsuitable for children.

The typical American child spends 27 hours a week watching TV, and will witness 40,000 murders and 200,000 other violent acts on television by age 18, according to a 1992 JAMA study. The AMA

has testified at several congressional hearings on TV violence and announced its support of the Markey-Fields bill.

In response to the congressional activities and other pressure, the ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox television networks in June agreed to broadcast parental advisory warnings before their bloodiest programs; in late July, 15 leading cable networks followed suit.

TV effects disputed

Since 1970, at least five distinguished national scientific panels have reviewed more than 3,000 studies conducted over the past 30 years, and concluded there is a direct, causal relationship between TV brutality and aggressive behavior, several psychologists told the industry gathering.

The social scientists didn't appear to persuade the TV folks. But the talk show-style formats used for the presentations didn't lead to a serious exchange of ideas.

For example, Leonard Eron, PhD, chairman of the American Psychological Assn.'s Commission on Violence and Youth, discussed his 22-year prospective study of a group of children. It found that the single greatest predictor of violence at age 30, over economic status, parents' marital status, IQ or race, was the amount of television a child watched at age 8. Dr. Eron estimated that 10% of the violence

See VIOLENCE, page 9

Violence

Continued from page 2

in the United States can be attributed to television brutality.

In the next session, Stephen J. Cannell, originator of "The A-Team" and 30 other action series, referred to Dr. Eron's estimate and asked, "Where did *that* figure come from?" Cannell, a writer, producer and studio owner, also disputed Dr. Eron's assertion that children younger than 8 have difficulty differentiating fantasy from reality. "I don't think we give kids enough credit," Cannell said.

Dr. Eron had no chance to respond.

Similarly, George Gerbner, PhD, professor and dean emeritus of The Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, argued that cartoon violence, because it is "sugar-coated" and aimed at small children, is one of the most insidious forms of televised violence.

Dr. Gerbner wasn't able to respond when Christine Hikawa, vice president of standards and practices for ABC, declared at the next session, "When [researchers] equate 'Tom & Jerry' with 'I Spit On Your Grave,' their credibility goes right out the window."

Edward Donnerstein, PhD, a social psychologist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, discussed his research suggesting that emotionally healthy young men demonstrate less sympathy and empathy for crime victims after watching violent TV.

But Dr. Donnerstein was no longer on stage when, in a subsequent session, debate arose over whether certain depictions of violence might increase sympathy and empathy for victims.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Carole Lieberman, MD, a psychiatrist who chairs the National Coalition on Television Violence, an Illinois-based advocacy group. "People who have spent 30 years of their lives researching this question come on stage and present their findings, and then the television industry comes on stage and rejects the research wholesale, not based on any research of their own, but just because they don't like it."

Dr. Lieberman was heckled by the audience during a panel discussion when she urged TV leaders to create new genres of entertainment that inspire viewers and demonstrate alternatives to violence. The 15-member panel's only other physician, William Dietz, MD, PhD, was given little opportunity to speak by moderator Arthur R. Miller of Harvard Law School, who directed questions to specific panelists. To frame the discussion, Miller posed as a scriptwriter trying to sell a gruesome story about patricide.

"The industry responded with a paranoia that isn't warranted," said Dr. Dietz, a pediatrics professor at Tufts University School of Medicine and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics's Subcommittee on Children and Television. "They failed to acknowledge that the buck has to stop with them."

Numerous groups have called for curbing TV violence over the years, starting with the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1969. The AMA has called TV brutality an "environmental hazard."

Despite their resistance, television leaders indicated they may be willing to work harder on the problem.

"No matter what you believe about the studies, we've got to be part of the solution and in no way part of the problem," said Jeff Sagansky, president of the CBS entertainment division.

Added Wolf: "We can't have three Amy Fisher stories and claim we're cleaner than Caesar's wife."

Los Angeles Times

MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 1993

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By GARY LIBMAN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Ruth Taggart worried that her children, Christian, 12, and Justina, 16, watched too much television.

So last spring the Torrance single parent bought TV Allowance, a device resembling a desktop calculator and costing about \$100, that limits TV time to nine hours a week for each child.

Parents preset the machine, giving each child an access number and entering the number of hours of TV watching allowed. When time's up, the child's number won't turn on the set. The parent has an override code number.

"It works great," says Ruth Taggart. "I think the biggest result is that they think about something they really want to watch. They don't just turn it on to have noise in the house."

Chaining the Channels

A New Generation of Television Blocking Systems Allows More Options for Parents Seeking to Control Kids' Viewing

"It's hard to watch a whole football game because it zaps out half your time," says Christian, a TV sports fanatic who will enter seventh grade this fall. "It's hard to juggle with Sega games, sports programs and regular shows. But I managed after the first couple of weeks."

Justina, a high-school junior, is less enthused.

"I don't really like it a whole lot," she says. "A lot of times when I want to watch a certain show, I can't because I want to watch others. It's kind of good because I

have time to do other things. I've been doing a lot more reading."

TV Allowance is one version of the television blocking systems advocated in recent weeks by Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), chairman of the House telecommunications subcommittee, which is holding hearings on television violence.

Markey proposes legislation—dubbed the V-Chip Bill—that would require network and cable signals to carry a "V" code before a violent program starts; all new televisions could be equipped with a com-

puter chip that when activated would black out the show when the "V" was broadcast.

In Markey's bill, the television industry would establish criteria for rating TV violence. The chip costs less than \$1 a set, he says. (All televisions 13 inches or larger are already equipped with similar technology since Congress required, effective in June, that sets contain a microprocessor to receive closed captioning for the deaf.)

It's unclear what would happen on screen when a program was blocked, a spokesman for Markey says, but when a channel is blocked in other systems an on-screen message explains the situation.

Most existing technology can block only a whole channel, for example the Playboy Channel.

With these systems, "basically you identify a channel or a number of channels. Please see BLOCKERS, E3

BLOCKERS

Continued from E1

assign them some kind of code through the remote control, and instruct the TV not to display that channel," says Evon Beckford, head of the Consumers Union research group, which evaluated 1993 televisions for Consumer Reports. The research report lists several manufacturers that have equipped TVs with channel-blocking devices, but the equipment is available almost exclusively on expensive, large-screen models.

Like channel blockers, TV Allowance has a limited function, setting only the number of hours a child watches but not what is viewed. However, the future may hold more options for parents who want to control their televisions electronically.

Joseph N. Jackson, chairman of Protelcon, a small Marina del Rey firm, testified before the House subcommittee about his TeleCommander, a device he plans to manufacture.

"We decided to broaden areas of management for a parent," says Protelcon president Jim Brian. The TeleCommander will allow parents a number of choices in addition to limiting watching hours and blocking channels. With the free-standing device, which looks like a cable box, parents can block out specific time frames—for example home-

work hours on school nights—and block specific programs.

In addition to its "negative" use, there's a positive function, Brian says. The family can sit down together and select favorites the children are allowed to watch and program the TeleCommander to show only those programs.

The company plans to have a production model of the device in about six weeks and hopes to be ready to manufacture by December. The retail price will be in the \$79-\$89 range, Brian says.

He also points out that the

use the remote control to zap rated movies they don't want their kids to see. The system costs about \$1 a month, says company president Bruce Davis.

The technology gives rise to other issues. Carole Lieberman, an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA and chair of the National Coalition on Television Violence, says she has reservations about the "V" chip because lawmakers or special-interest groups might gain control of ratings systems and attempt to censor ideas they didn't like.

She says ratings "need to be

and unloved instead of more aware of why watching 'Ninja Turtles' is bad for him," she says.

Gary Shapiro, group vice president of the Electronic Industries Assn., a Washington trade group, says Markey's proposal "presumes that parents are smarter than their kids technologically—that parents have to put this code in there and the kids can't figure it out. But I have yet to talk to anyone who is smarter than their kids technologically."

Randal Levenson of Miami, inventor and president of TV Allowance, believes young technological wizards won't be able to overcome his system.

"It has a locking door in the bottom. You close the door, lock it and keep the key," he says.

This feature may be one reason the device is not universally popular.

Ken Gorman bought TV Allowance four months ago. Limited to 12 hours of TV a week, his son Nic, 9, is spending more time drawing, in-line skating and playing with friends.

"The inclination to plop down in front of the TV has gone down tremendously. I'm pretty happy," says Gorman, a Manhattan Beach management consultant.

Nic is less pleased.

"I hate it," he says. "It makes me do other things besides watch TV, and TV is the best thing in the world."

'I hate it. It makes me do other things besides watch TV, and TV is the best thing in the world.'

NIC GORMAN

Manhattan Beach youth limited to 12 hours of television a week

circuitry, which the company hopes to license to television and VCR manufacturers and cable companies, only costs about \$10—so installing it would not significantly increase the consumer prices of TVs or cable services.

In another system, TV Guide on Screen of Denver is test-marketing a satellite system based on Motion Picture Assn. of America ratings. The software produces a list of upcoming shows on the subscriber's TV screen, and the parent can

done with input from mental health professionals and people who have done research in violence in media. They should not be done by production companies making decisions by the seat of their pants, decisions designed to lose the fewest viewers."

Lieberman, also says if parents block out programs, they should tell children why. "If Johnny's parents are blocking out 'Ninja Turtles,' but Johnny doesn't understand why, he'll feel deprived



TV WATCH

Under the Gun

It's obvious that even if the major television networks and cable systems were to wipe all violence from their programming, actual crime would not drop magically overnight. But what's also obvious is that there is too much violence on dramatic and documentary drama shows and the sooner something is done about it the better.

Monday's so-called summit in Beverly Hills between Washington legislators and TV executives—nonviolently aired by CNN—did not solve the problem and produced no magic solutions. But the very fact that the conference took place—along with the networks' proposal, introduced earlier this summer, to rate programs according to the extent of violence—suggests that some people in the TV industry are now beginning to realize how serious the issue has become.

Just as many Americans are taking a new, harder look at the issue of gun control—with even many law enforcement groups now supporting more gun restrictions—so too is network and cable programming under new and, we would argue, welcome scrutiny. No surprise: Television is a powerful and influential mass medium. As Carole Lieberman, chairperson of the National Coalition on Television Violence, has said, "I'm dismayed and surprised that they [TV executives] don't seem to realize how strongly a lot of legislators feel about this."

It is far, far better for TV to regulate itself than to have government censors do it. But that is exactly what could happen if the industry does not take steps to cut the violence and bloodshed.

DAILY VARIETY

90 CENTS

TUESDAY

AUGUST 3, 1993

Industry is besieged, bothered and bewildered

BY BRIAN LOWRY

Put under a spotlight that included blazing TV cameras and a circuslike atmosphere — and despite the cautionary remarks of Sen. Paul Simon — it was for the most part an unrepentant television industry that convened Monday for a much-touted seminar on television violence.

More than 600 showbiz executives and more than 100 reporters attended the daylong meeting, sponsored by the National Council for Families & Television. The combative tone was set during an opening panel of four researchers quoting their findings on the issue, with questions raised by ABC News correspondent Jeff Greenfield drawing frequent smatters of applause from the audience.

The entertainment exes were beset from the start by the researchers, then lectured and warned by Simon (D-Ill.) about congressional action. Finally, they witnessed various leaders sharing the stage with TV activists during “Socratic dialogues” conducted by Harvard law professor Arthur R. Miller.

At that last afternoon session, in fact, producer Edgar J. Scherick seemed to express much of the

Turn to page 16

Continued from page 1

pent-up exasperation in the room when he rose from the audience to shout at Carole Lieberman, chair of the National Coalition on Television Violence, who in essence had called into question the conscience of the industry.

Greenfield, who moderated the two morning sessions, put the event in perspective during his opening remarks, skeptically calling it “an historic moment, or a smokescreen ... a turning point, or an anthropomorphic fig leaf” to Congress.

The ABC News media analyst also seemed to speak for many in the room when he said, “Television violence has no constituency. (So) if you are looking for a target that has no other side, you have found it.”

Producer and conference co-chair Marian Rees sought to lower expectations at the outset, saying the conference was “truly historic” and “already a success” in having merely convened to address the issue. She stressed that the ultimate goal was greater sensitivity to violence, not to carve out a set of guidelines.

“The (Hollywood) community, by your presence, is thinking about violence in its work as it never has before,” she said.

Still, the feeling of an industry under siege seemed to permeate the room, and officials in many instances took a more combative public tone than they had on Capitol Hill, questioning both studies on violence and proposals to regulate the in-

‘Parents in the home is where the first line of defense has to be.’

Jeff Sagansky, left

dusty.

During a session on children’s programming that followed the research panel, for example, both producer Stephen J. Cannell and ABC standards & practices VP Christine Hikawa expressed frustration over the academic view outlined, which included equating cartoon violence with more graphic depictions. “When I hear (that), their credibility goes out the window with me,” Hikawa said.

Cannell maintained that it was ultimately the network’s role to act as the buffer between the creative community and sources of such concerns. “I don’t know any writer who can write effectively with these sort of criteria sitting in front of them,” he said, adding that he didn’t object to networks making such judgments but didn’t believe he should “be asked to be my own critic.”

Later, the producer — defending his show “The A-Team” as cartoon-style violence that children can see for what it is — questioned the research, because “the scale is so elusive ... You’re trying to deal with this, and you can’t get your hands on it.”

Leonard Eron, the most outspoken of the researchers, maintained that there is a “definite link” between watching violence and aggression, even criminal behavior. Viewed violence, he said, affects up to 10% of violent actions.

He added that the parental advisories agreed to by the networks “won’t make a damn bit of difference,” since in his view much of the problem occurs in cartoons and



Alex Bertiner/ABSI

advisories will be limited to prime-time. In addition, parents don't supervise children's viewing habits the way they should — particularly for kids who are most at risk. "You can't say, 'Pass it off on the parents,'" he said.

The comment was directly rebutted during an afternoon session by CBS Entertainment prez Jeff Sagansky, who maintained that "parents in the home is where the first line of defense has to be."

Eron spoke at length about the danger of cartoons — which, he said, fail to demonstrate the permanence and seriousness of violence. Greenfield responded, "I wonder if (discussion of cartoons) doesn't undermine the much more serious issues we have brought up," drawing an ovation from the industry audience.

While society "can't expect television to make up for lack of parenting," Eron acknowledged, he maintained that TV had to be mindful of its effect on children via its "incessant repetition" of images.

Other researchers present, such as George Gerbner, were slightly more solicitous, calling the occasion "historic" and a discussion of cultural policy. They suggested that the industry deal with the question through expanded creativity rather than government

censorship.

Suzanne Stutman of the Institute for Mental Health Initiative, proposed pro-social approaches to dealing with the issue by "making violence unacceptable, unglamorous and an unrewarding way for dealing with conflict." Television's influence, she said, "is an opportunity. It doesn't have to be a threat."

The afternoon Socratic dialogue produced several amusing and at times heated exchanges, among them producer Dick Wolf's dialogue with NCTV's Lieberman. Responding to Lieberman, Wolf said not all movies can ennoble the human condition, nor can Congress mandate that the creative community provide "continuously happy endings."

Wolf later took strong exception to a comment by activist Terry Rakolta — that airing a movie on a hypothetical patricidal murder, discussed by moderator Arthur Miller, would inspire others to kill their parents. Wolf said such polarized positions make it difficult to engage in serious discussions of TV violence.

Sagansky also traded volleys with Lieberman, who accused industry people of "(reacting) defensively to what I'm saying," Lieberman said.

"Well, you just accused people of lacking any creativity," Sagansky responded.

Sagansky said many made-for-TV movies will carry the violence warning agreed to by the networks, despite the threat of advertiser de-

'I don't know any writer who can write effectively with these sort of criteria.'

Stephen J. Cannell, right

fections. "We're going to make them until it becomes economically impossible to do so," he said, while citing the more stately telefilms the webs put on that get overlooked in such debates.

The showbiz exek also found an ally in Action for Children's Television founder Peggy Charren, who attacked activist Rakolta and said she'd be tempted not to air advisories if she knew advertisers would pull out as a result.

"If you can do it with violence, why can't you do it with other things?" Charren said, maintaining that sex and other issues would follow. Earlier, she drew loud applause for questioning Congress' role in the debate, saying there were "lots of reasons (the media) should clean up their act," but not to mollify Congress.

"I think we're capable of making good decisions," said Phil Jones, president of Meredith Corp.'s broadcasting group. "That's what we're paid to do."

There was also some finger-pointing: Jones, a broadcaster, cited cable as a principal cause for the increase in televised violence during the past decade; producer Leonard Hill pointed to a double standard between made-for-TV movies and theatrical films.

"We're all in the same boat," countered Showtime chairman-CEO Winston (Tony) Cox.

In what might be seen as concrete suggestions to come out of the event, Cannell proposed more communication between producers and network promotion departments, so shows could be plugged based on story points rather than just violence or action scenes. Another consensus from the academics seemed to be the need both to illustrate consequences of violence and find alternate means of solving conflicts. "It's better to find ways to promote non-violent solutions," said child development psychologist Karen Hill-Scott, a consultant to NBC.

Producer Arnold Shapiro and DIC Animation City prez Andy Heyward also asked that those engaged in the debate look at all media, not just television, citing videogames, music videos and album lyrics.

Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

TV Violence Summit: A War of Words

■ **Television:** Industry resists censorship and demands a definition of 'violence,' but one executive producer claims colleagues are already feeling a 'big chill' effect.

By DANIEL CERONE
TIMES STAFF WRITER

As the TV industry's ballyhooed "summit meeting" on violence in entertainment programming wound down Monday at the Beverly Hilton, focusing on a subject that has swirled into a heated national debate, the kind of emotional moment that often crystallizes such an event finally took place.

Dr. Carole Lieberman, chair of the National Coalition on Television Violence, a citizen's watchdog group, was calling the TV industry to the carpet for not caring enough about impressionable children. Suddenly, independent producer Edgar J. Scherick jumped to his feet in the crowd and shouted angrily: "Lady, who authorized you to condemn us?"

The four experts could not agree on what TV violence is. Everyone's against TV violence. I'm against TV violence. But what is it?

Don Ohlmeyer,
President of NBC,
West Coast

WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 4, 1993

□

The audience burst into applause, and when the conference ended a few minutes later, people formed a long line to shake Scherick's hand.

"You spoke for all of us,"

one woman told him with a beaming smile.

The moment seemed to encapsulate the frustration of an industry that has been under attack for months and demonstrated the difficulty of trying to reach accord on such a volatile issue.

Although there was plenty of verbal sparring and heated dialogue throughout the day, the issues that dominated the discussion, which was meant to be educational, were nothing new to most of the 600 or so television people in attendance.

"I've heard all this stuff before," shrugged Stephen J. Cannell, producer of such action series as "Hunter," "The A-Team" and the current "Renegade."

Under pressure from Congress, which is threatening to force a reduction in TV violence if the industry does not act on its own, industry executives gathered with researchers and anti-violence activists in what was billed as an unprecedented meeting to figure out how to deal with TV violence. But when a panel of researchers finally presented their findings—the same findings Congress has been citing to press its case—there did not seem to be much impact.

"I'm afraid we're having no effect," a

Please see **VIOLENCE, F3**

I'm afraid we're having no effect. I feel people... are being very defensive.'

Dr. Leonard Eron
University of Michigan
psychology professor

VIOLENCE

Continued from F1

Frustrated Dr. Leonard Eron, research scientist and professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, said after his morning panel session with three other colleagues.

There were occasional snickers in the crowd and heads shaking in disbelief during portions of the researchers' presentation—specifically when suggestions were made that children cannot always distinguish between cartoon violence and real violence.

"I feel people [TV industry executives] are being very defensive here," Eron said with a sigh. "A number of people are denying the tremendous effect [of viewing violence]. They all agree with each other. We're not going to get anywhere if people are going to explain it away."

From the industry executives, there was a similar sense of frustration that the researchers were not distinguishing between the types of programming they were calling violent.

"I was dismayed this morning to hear researchers lump in theatrical movies like 'I Spit on Your Grave' with TV movies," said Ted Harbert, president of ABC Entertainment. Harbert maintained that the broadcast networks have already cut down on gratuitous violence. They have also adopted voluntary guidelines and agreed to affix parental advisory warnings to programs that they deem to contain a heavy dose of violence.

Citing a study released last week showing that TV violence on ABC, CBS and NBC has dropped, Harbert said: "Part of me wishes this forum were held 10 years ago, when there were so many cop dramas with chase scenes and shootouts. There's just less violent programming today."

Geraldine Laybourne, a conference panelist and president of the children's cable channel Nickelodeon, noted the challenge in bringing two such disparate groups together: "It's very difficult for academics, who spend their whole life studying an issue, to present to businessmen, who have a thousand details on their mind," she said. "It's very hard to get the academic and television community to hear each other."

Indeed, many of those expecting to learn something new at the conference said they didn't.

"The four experts could not agree on what TV violence is," said Don Ohlmeyer, president of NBC, West Coast. "Everyone's against TV violence. I'm against TV violence. But what is it?"

"For me, there's not a whole lot of new information here," said Perry McCluggage, chairman of Paramount Pictures Television Group. "But for the industry, it's the important beginning of a process."

The TV industry had regarded the violence conference, hosted by the National Council for Families & Television (NCFT), as a consciousness-raising effort.

But Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) tipped the stakes when he dropped a bombshell during his keynote luncheon speech, calling for the formation of an independent Advisory Office on Television Violence to develop a uniform set of standards on violence and report to the industry on an ongoing basis about how it is meeting those standards. He gave the industry 60 days to "show some movement" in creating such a "monitoring group," or else risk legislative action from Congress.

"This whole thing is frightening," Greg Meidel, president of Twentieth Television, said after the luncheon. "That timetable is unrealistic. It's not fair that the four networks and syndication should be forced to respond to something from the clear blue sky like that. The networks should be given credit for the changes that have been made."

Simon's announcement even came as a surprise to the event's organizers. NCFT vice chair Geoff Cowan, a public-interest lawyer and lecturer on mass media and law at UCLA, expressed skepticism over a violence monitoring group, saying that it's too reminiscent of the Hays Code, an industry-imposed set of moral guidelines that governed Hollywood filmmakers

from 1934 through 1968.

"I think a single industry panel could become too powerful and a form of censorship on its own," he said.

There was a feeling among some that Simon's strong words were merely a tactic to keep Hollywood from dropping the ball on TV violence, as critics say has happened whenever controversy about the issue has flared in the past.

"I think already a lot has been done and his concern is that now it will stop," said Howard Stringer, president of the CBS Broadcast Group. "Ultimately, Simon is telling us, 'I have come to you on your terms, now deal with it in your way.'"

When asked if his strong words Monday were meant to put a scare in Hollywood, Simon responded: "I do have a concern that this next year we'll have better programming, and then in a year we'll go back to the old ways. What I'm trying to do is see that we have a sustained effort and interest in this issue."

There were clear signs Monday that Hollywood ways are indeed changing. Executive producer Leonard Hill referred to a "big chill" effect among his peers because they have been turned down by the networks recently when pitching projects that might carry a parental advisory label. Networks executives confirmed that they are ordering fewer crime-based TV movies.

LIFE

Tuning in to VIOLENCE

Battle lines
drawn in
debate over
TV's effect on
children

By Hal Matten
The Arizona Republic

Sometimes, when they see shooting on a television show, Stacey Willman's 3- and 5-year-old children engage in their own pretend gunbattle, blazing away at each other as they scamper around the room. "It even happens when they watch cartoons in the morning," said Willman, a Gilbert resident. "Sometimes, when I get up, they are already pow-pow-ing at each other."

Her children, by the way, are little girls.

Though such pretend gunplay may seem like harmless fun, Willman said she is concerned that the increasingly violent nature of television shows — especially those aimed at kids — is prompting more aggressive behavior in her daughters.

"I definitely think that children become more violent when they are watching television," she said. "Their play fighting often gets rough. I notice the difference when they are watching shows like *Barney*. They dance around and get along better."

The majority of Arizonans apparently agree. In a recent

statewide poll commissioned by *The Arizona Republic*, more than three-fourths of the respondents said they believe that violence on television has a harmful effect on most children.

And 78 percent said there is too much violence in children's television programs.

Such opinions by no means are restricted to Arizona residents. Several national polls have reported similar results. A recent CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll, for example, found that 80 percent of Americans believe there is too much violence on television.

Nor are such concerns new. Since the early 1950s, when television was still in its infancy, there have been thousands of studies conducted in various countries concerning the suggested link between TV violence and the real thing.

Some of the more recent findings:

- In a landmark, 22-year study, a University of Michigan psychologist tracked more than 800 youngsters as they matured from age 8 to adulthood. Those who consistently viewed violent fare were more likely as adults to be more aggressive when drunk, to use violence against their children and, in some cases, to be convicted of violent crimes.

- The University of Washington's School of Public Health has found that the introduction of television into the United States, Canada and South Africa paralleled increases in the murder rate of each country.

- And last year, an American Psychological Association task-force report found that television can cause aggressive behavior and cultivate values that favor its use.

"The accumulated research clearly demonstrates a correlation between viewing violence and aggressive behavior," the psychological association's report concluded.

Yet despite such findings, the incidence of violence depicted on television has continued to increase, critics say. Statistics show that the typical American child will witness 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of televised violence before finishing elementary school.

— See TV, page H2



So why are the bullets still flying, the bodies still piling up, and the cars still crashing every day on American television?

"The main reason is that the people who produce violent shows are making a lot of money from it," said **Carole Lieberman**, a Beverly Hills psychiatrist who heads the National Coalition on Television Violence, which monitors shows for their violent content.

Groups like **Lieberman** say that for several years TV executives have done little but give lip service to the problem, promising to tone down the violence on their shows but never following through.

Many TV officials have contended that the studies claiming a link between television and real-life violence are flawed and that groups that monitor TV violence exaggerate their findings. They insist that the number of violent shows has actually decreased during prime time, a contention that is supported, in part, in a new study by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication.

But although that study did note a slight decrease in prime-time violence, it also found that violence increased on Saturday morning children's programs.

The whole issue of TV violence has been thrust into the spotlight in recent months because of increased criticism of the television industry from Congress. And the industry has taken note, indicating that it is serious about rectifying the problem.

Last month, in an effort to head off government-imposed limits on TV violence, the four major networks announced an experimental, two-year warning system of advisories that will run before and during programs whose "violent content is unexpected, graphic or pervasive."

Network officials also were instrumental in organizing an unprecedented industrywide conference on television violence and its impact on children and crime. The conference, which will be held Monday in Los Angeles, is expected to attract 500 people, including film and television officials, anti-TV-violence activists and academic researchers.

Might be a link

Such actions constitute the first time that network officials publicly have acknowledged that there might be a link between their programming and escalating violence in America.

But critics remain skeptical about the motives of TV executives.

"It certainly has been caused by the tremendous public pressure and congressional scrutiny aimed at the television industry," said David Abbott, executive director of the Boston-based Foundation to Improve Television.

"They certainly wouldn't be holding the meeting if it wasn't for all that pressure."

The congressional pressure is being spearheaded by Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., a vocal critic of televised violence. Simon drafted a 1990 law that gave broadcasters three years to collaborate on voluntarily reducing TV violence — with the implication that Congress might step in if executives failed to act.

So far, the warning system is the first voluntary action announced by TV officials. Critics of TV violence say they hope that such warnings will cause advertisers to steer clear of such programs, encouraging the networks to make less-violent shows.

'A very tepid start'

However, they say they are doubtful that the warnings will stop many children from watching.

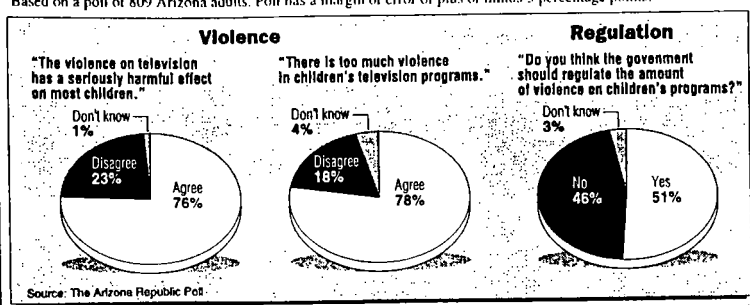
"It's a start, but it's a very tepid start," Abbott said. "The warnings presuppose that the parents are at home every night and are actively monitoring what their children are watching. They will have no effect on kids who are left alone."

In fact, he added, the warnings even may encourage children to tune in such shows, a concern shared by some parents who responded to *The Republic's* poll.

"I don't think that warnings will work," said Willman of Gilbert.

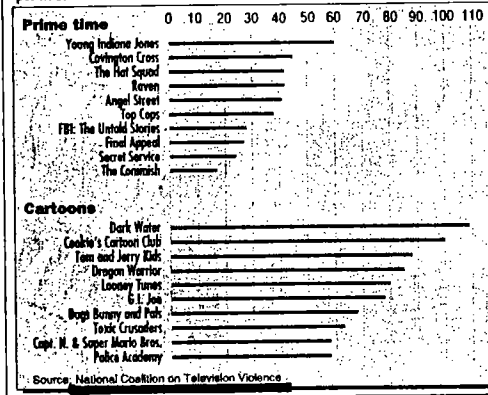
CHILDREN AND TELEVISION

Based on a poll of 809 Arizona adults. Poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.



TELEVISION VIOLENCE

In 1992, several prime-time programs registered more than 40 violent acts per hour while some children's cartoons exceeded 50 violent acts per hour.



"Teen-agers are going to see the warning and say, 'Oh yeah, there's a good show. It's got violence in it.'"

Critics also point out that the warnings will cover only prime-time programs on ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox. Cable networks and independent stations will not carry the warnings, nor will cartoons or athletic events.

"Research indicates that cartoons are six or seven times more violent than prime-time shows," Abbott said. "Plus, the violence in cartoons is couched in humor. That is particularly damaging because it sends a message that violence is fun."

Groups such as the **National Coalition on Television Violence** and the **Foundation to Improve Television**, as well as some congressmen, say that if voluntary measures fail to reduce the level of violence on TV, they are prepared to push for federal restrictions of the industry.

Among the restrictions that have been proposed is a requirement that all new television sets be equipped with special chips that would allow parents to block out violent programs.

Some groups also are proposing that no adult-oriented or violent programs be aired until after 10 p.m. Abbott said that such a system has been imposed in many European countries, with offenders facing government fines.

Complicating factors

However, television executives testifying at a congressional hearing in June were unanimous in their opposition to government restrictions, arguing that a blocking system could result in a blanket shut-off of many shows that carry socially important messages simply because they contain some violence.

"There is bad violence and good violence," Warren Littlefield, NBC Entertainment president, said at the hearing.

Bad violence is gratuitous or glamorized, he said, adding that the network would "eliminate it from our airwaves." In shows with good violence, "we take on socially relevant issues, like incest, date rape, the dangers of maniacal cult leaders," he said.

Even some anti-violence crusaders say they are hesitant to force restrictions on the TV industry, which some

people believe would be in violation of their free-speech rights.

"We are sensitive to the First Amendment," Abbott said. "We would rather see the television industry clean its own house. But the fact is, they only move when their feet are to the fire."

Many television viewers who consider violent programming to be a problem also seem hesitant to back federal restrictions. Although 76 percent of the respondents to *The Republic's* poll said they considered TV violence harmful to children, only 51 percent said that the government should regulate such violence.

Merely a scapegoat?

There also is a legitimate argument — one used often by TV officials — that the medium is being made a scapegoat for the increased incidence of violence in American society. Other factors, including poverty, the breakdown of the family, drug abuse and easy access to guns, also contribute to violence, they say.

"Networks, as you know, follow. They do not lead," Del Reisman, president of the Writers Guild of America-West, said in a panel discussion about TV last year at Harvard University.

"Networks react to social change and community standards... The violence on the home screen follows the violence in our lives."

Critics agree that television is not the sole cause of increased violence, but they contend that it is a leading one.

"TV is the No. 1 problem leading to violence in our society," said **Lieberman of the National Coalition on Television Violence**. "From the time they are babies, American children are exposed to television. Nothing is as influential as TV."

Critics also argue that if television has no effect on viewers, as some TV executives claim, then the billions of dollars spent every year on commercial advertising is being wasted.

And violence isn't the only aspect of television that upsets people. Some parents contend that the sexual content of TV is even more of a problem.

"I don't think explicit sex belongs on TV," said Lorraine Landroche of Tucson. "Even the soap operas leave

nothing to the imagination."

Landroche, a single parent, said she is convinced that the sexual content of television, especially music videos, contributed to problems she has had with her 13-year-old daughter, who sneaked out of the house one night recently and had sexual relations with older boys.

'Learning it from television'

"When I was 13, I had no clue about such things," she said. "Kids today are learning it from television."

But not all parents agree that sex and violence on television is a problem. The real problem, such parents say, lies with the viewers.

"I think it is the responsibility of the people watching TV," said Linda Nolen of Yuma.

"If you don't like what is on, turn the station."

Nolen, who has two children ages 11 and 12, said that she monitors what they watch and talks with them about the shows.

"We talk about what we have been watching, what is real and what isn't," she said. "If parents don't monitor what their children watch, then it could be a problem. But I don't think it is a problem if the parents are involved."

In reality, however, many parents either have little interest in what their children are watching, or they aren't around to monitor them because they have to work. And even parents who take pains to monitor what their children watch say they often are shocked to see previews for violent shows aired during children's programming.

Critics of TV violence say that although it appears that network officials are serious about solving such problems, a one-day meeting like the one in Los Angeles on Monday isn't enough to deal effectively with such a multifaceted issue.

"Let's face it, our society is addicted to violence," Lieberman said. "But there is hope. I have been noticing that people are much more aware that there is a link between violence on television and real-life violence."

"But it's like a drug addiction. Even though people are aware of its negative effects, it still will take time for them to withdraw from TV violence."

SECTION

F

SATURDAY

JULY 31, 1993

CALENDAR

Producers Defend Violence as 'Honest'

Television: Despite Monday's summit and threats to regulate the amount of mayhem on the airwaves, many crime- and action-oriented series executives have no plans to alter their shows.

By GREG BRAXTON
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The highly anticipated summit on television violence between Washington legislators and TV industry honchos in Beverly Hills is only two days away, but producers of police shows and action series still have murder and mayhem on the brain.

Despite Hollywood's anxiety surrounding the Monday hearing amid threats from lawmakers about possible measures to force the industry to lessen the amount of violence, viewers of all ages may be watching these incidents this fall.

- A U.S. Marshal is cut down by a gang of outlaws making a break from a hijacked train in the pilot of Fox's "The Adventures of Brisco County Jr." In the same episode, four gunmen accidentally shoot each other fatally in what is intended to be a comic moment.

- A police homicide detective is shot and critically wounded during an interrupted tryst with a prostitute on ABC's "NYPD Blue."

In addition, murders and drug busts are continuing regularly on CBS' "In the Heat of the Night." ABC's "The Commish" is not going to slow down in his war against

crime, and Jessica Fletcher is still finding plenty of murders to solve in CBS' "Murder, She Wrote."

The four broadcast networks and the major cable channels are voluntarily instituting parental advisory warnings of violence, yet as it stands now, none of the shows above is expected to be labeled as violent.

Network officials have already contended that, with a very few exceptions, none of their new or continuing series is violent enough to warrant the label, although an occasional TV movie may carry the warning.

In addition, several executives associated with crime- and action-oriented shows say they have no plans to alter their shows to cut down on the depiction of violence.

Most claim that there isn't anything to cut down on—that the violence shown on their shows is neither gratuitous nor explicit, and that the tragic consequences of a violent act are always highlighted.

"This isn't a situation where we feel we've done anything wrong and we've been caught and we're not going to do it again," said Joe Gannon, a producer on "In the Heat of the Night." Gannon added that no guidelines have been established on

what is "acceptable violence" and what isn't.

Other producers say it is impossible to do a show in a particular genre, such as a Western or a gangster drama, without showing violence.

Christopher Crowe, executive producer of the syndicated "The Untouchables," which has been attacked by some industry critics as one of the most violent programs on television, said, "If I'm forced to make changes, I will. One has to stay alive, after all."

But, he added, "There are certain milieus, which by their very nature, are violent. If you are to depict those events, then you have to depict violence. If you tell that kind of story without violence, then you're not being honest, and you're telling a tale that is being dictated by external pressures."

Such apparent reluctance by producers underscores concerns by critics of TV violence that the industry is not taking the controversy seriously enough to make significant changes in the depiction of violence.

"I'm dismayed and surprised that they don't seem to realize how strongly a lot of legislators feel about this," said Carole Lieberman, chairperson of the National Coalition on Television Violence.

Even though a just-released study by the University of Pennsylvania concluded that television violence on the three networks has decreased in the last three years,

Please see TELEVISION, F14

TELEVISION

Continued from F1

Lieberman insisted that the number of violent acts shown was still too high, and that the study did not include reality shows.

Producers said they would be monitoring the Monday hearing on violence with interest. Some said they sympathize with the concern over television violence, which lawmakers and anti-violence advocates contend is directly related to violence in society.

The daylong session at the Beverly Hilton Hotel is designed to be Hollywood's last chance to demonstrate to Washington that it is committed to cutting down on the amount of violence on television. The hearing closely coincides with the December deadline set by Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) on his challenge three years ago for the industry to voluntarily reduce violence or else the government would step in to take restrictive steps.

Despite the furor, producers said they did not expect the hearing or the controversy to dramatically affect their shows.

"I have no intention to alter the elements in regard to the current cry and hue over violence," said William Finkelstein, executive producer of NBC's "L.A. Law," which airs at 10 p.m. on Thursday.

"'L.A. Law' on the rare occasion has incorporated violence because a story line or scene required it," he said. "When the drama of a scene requires it, I will feel the same freedom I felt in the past to use it. 'L.A. Law' is an adult show and its audience should not be made up of children."

Dick Wolf, executive producer of NBC's "Law and Order," said, "This is a show that does not need changes in any facet. We deal with the consequences of violence. In



JIM MENDENHALL / Los Angeles Times

'I have no intention to alter the elements in regard to the current cry and hue over violence.'

WILLIAM FINKELSTEIN
Executive Producer of
NBC's "L.A. Law."

the strongest possible terms, we are not a violent show. Our cops in three years have never fired a weapon."

One producer already caught squarely in the center of the violence story is Steven Bochco. His upcoming fall show, ABC's "NYPD Blue," was considered to be one of the shows certain to get a parental advisory because of its use of violence, raw language and nudity.

The show will carry an advisory on its Sept. 21 premiere, but it will only warn viewers about its sexual content and language.

"I personally don't think violence will be an issue on this show," said Bochco, who said his "Hill Street Blues" series in the 1980s was a "significantly more

violent show."

Bochco said he didn't feel public pressure to stay away from violence in "NYPD Blue." "If you do, you're in the television business, not in the television art," he said.

"When you make shows that by virtue of their subject matter occasionally incorporate violence, you hope that your use of it is justifiable within the context of stories that you're telling."

Despite the fact that six people meet violent ends in the pilot of Fox's upcoming show "Brisco County Jr.," executive producers Jeffrey Boam and Carlton Cuse denied that it is a violent show. They said the show, a comic Western, is aimed at children and is appropriate for its scheduled 8 p.m. Friday time slot.

"I think we're very conscious of violence and I think we've made an effort to avoid violence in the pilot and in the future episodes," said Boam.

Cuse added, "The show is an action show as opposed to a violent show. Violence to us denotes pain and suffering and a kind of graphic depiction with blood and squibs and things like that. We don't do any of that."

But, there may be slight changes in one show that is usually not criticized for being violent.

Angela Lansbury, star and executive producer of CBS' "Murder, She Wrote," said she had notified producers and writers about depicting violence.

"I sent a memo to the effect that I was very anxious that we not show any gratuitous violence—not that we ever have," she said. "We show murder, but we don't loiter on it. The audience knows what happens. A cutaway shot with the right music can be very effective."

"However, perhaps the cutaways may come just a little bit sooner now," Lansbury said. "It will depend on the mode of death."

Chicago Tribune

Wednesday, July 28, 1993

South
Sports Final

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Under pressure, networks trim violence a bit

By Jessica Seigel
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

LOS ANGELES—Facing intense public and governmental pressure, three major TV networks have reduced the number of violent acts depicted per hour in prime time and Saturday morning programming, according to a study being released Wednesday.

The report from the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication suggests that networks have taken a first step to control the frequency of violence on television—although the number of programs with overall violent themes remains unchanged at 65 percent of all prime time shows.

The study "shows that the threat of legislation was taken seriously and seems to have had some effect. It's a good beginning," said George Gerbner, the Pennsylvania professor leading the Cultural Indicators research team, which began publishing TV violence ratings 20 years ago.

Measuring frequency, character and duration of televised violence in a single number, the study's Violence Index for the 1992-1993 prime time season for ABC, CBS and NBC registered the second lowest since the research began in 1973. One part of the index showed that the number of violent acts decreased to 2.9 per hour, the lowest in 20 years. The previous year measured 5.1 acts per hour.

Acts of violence also decreased in children's Saturday morning network programming, although the overall Violence

TV

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Index increased slightly, in part because a greater percentage of programs involved violent themes.

The research also showed that children's programs on cable television had substantially less violence than did network shows. But for adult shows, cable programming was more violent than similar fare on the networks.

Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who organized a Capitol Hill news conference Wednesday at which the research findings were to be announced, cautioned that the decrease in network television violence is a relatively small change.

"The dip is slight, I would have to add, but it is an encouraging sign," Simon said. "When you combine that with, I think, genuine concern on the part of some executives in the industry, I think it may portend something good for the future."

Researchers, activists and legislators want to reduce violence on television because of a growing body of research suggesting that such material reinforces aggres-



Sen. Paul Simon says that while a recent decrease in network television violence was slight, "it is an encouraging sign."

sive behavior and desensitizes viewers to real-life violence.

Gerbner said in a telephone interview that past periods of public pressure aimed at the networks led to significant drops in

the Violence Index, but the index typically has bounced back up as the pressure eases. The index, for example, dropped dramatically in 1973 when public pressure influenced the networks to institute "prime time" family viewing hours. But the following year, the index shot up.

The lowest point in the index was measured in the 1989-1990 season, when Simon introduced the Television Violence Act, which in 1990 waived antitrust laws for three years so the networks could devise a plan for self-regulation to avoid government intervention.

Based on their past experience with periodic reductions—then increases—in network violence, television activists said they were skeptical of the new findings.

"It's a temporary decline only because of all the pressure," said Terry Rakolta, who founded Americans for Responsible Television five years ago in Detroit. "Let's see where it is a year from now."

Carole Lieberman, national chair of the Illinois-based National Coalition on Television Violence, cautioned that Gerbner's statistics do not include Fox Broadcasting, which her organi-

zation has measured as among the highest in violent programming.

According to Gerbner, comparing the changes in violence on specific networks in the past three years was only statistically significant for ABC, which declined dramatically. NBC increased slightly.

"ABC used to be the most violent, so they had more to go down," Gerbner said.

The new numbers mean ABC is now the network with the least amount of prime-time violence.

After widely publicized congressional hearings in May and anticipating the expiration of the Television Violence act this December, the three major networks and Fox last month announced they will attach parental advisories to programs involving violent content. Activists and most researchers decried the advisories as inadequate since many children watch television unsupervised by parents.

The spotlight on the networks will intensify once again next Monday in Los Angeles when industry leaders, researchers and legislators will meet to discuss future approaches to television violence.

Networks Under the Gun

Broadcasters have promised to clean up their act. Critics say Don't believe the hype.

Seeing the heads of all four networks gathered in the same room last week was extraordinary enough. Even more intriguing, however, were the downcast eyes and somber expressions. No wonder: after 40 years of denial, despite more than 3,000 damning studies, the TV industry's biggest guns tacitly conceded that violence on television can indeed beget violence in real life. But the remedy they so proudly unveiled on Capitol Hill—aimed at shielding young eyes from video carnage—generated almost as much heat as the malady it's supposed to help cure.

Beginning this fall, the networks will broadcast parental advisories before excessively violent programs and send similar warnings to newspapers and magazines that carry TV listings. (The most likely wording: "Due to some violent content, parental discretion advised.") As a pre-emptive strike, the announcement accomplished its mission. Many in Congress, roused by the soaring tide of prime-time gore, have been threatening federally imposed reforms. Some of those restrictions, however, would surely raise howls from First Amendment guardians, which may explain the almost palpable "whew" with which lawmakers greeted the networks' voluntary action. "I welcome these moves and applaud the decision makers," gushed Sen. Paul Simon, one of the industry's sharpest critics on the Hill.

Yet as the parental-alert plan came into clearer focus, so did all its flaws. Television drama has always shied from irony, but this one seems inescapable. In selling their own reform package, the networks provided another reminder of just how unshakable TV's blood flow remains. "This problem will get

worse because people will think something has been done about it," says Dr. Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist who heads the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV). "But all they're doing is applying a Band-Aid. It's just a sham."

For openers, the networks will decide for themselves which shows require warning flags. The plan also assumes the presence of a parent both to catch the warnings and to switch the channel. That ignores the millions of children of working parents who watch TV unsupervised (not to mention the nearly 50 percent between 6 and 17 who own bedroom sets). In fact, similar warning systems—notably, the recording industry's attempt to label explicit lyrics—tend to achieve the opposite effect. "The advisories are just a faster road map to the violent material," says Terry Rakolta, founder of Americans for Responsible Television. "Kids channel surfing will stop immediately and say, 'Hey, this is it! We don't even have to look for it.'" What's more, both cable and syndicated programs, where the body counts run highest, remain exempt—

The Mayhem Is Kids' Stuff

A study of the 1991-92 television season shows that children's programming actually features more violence than prime time.

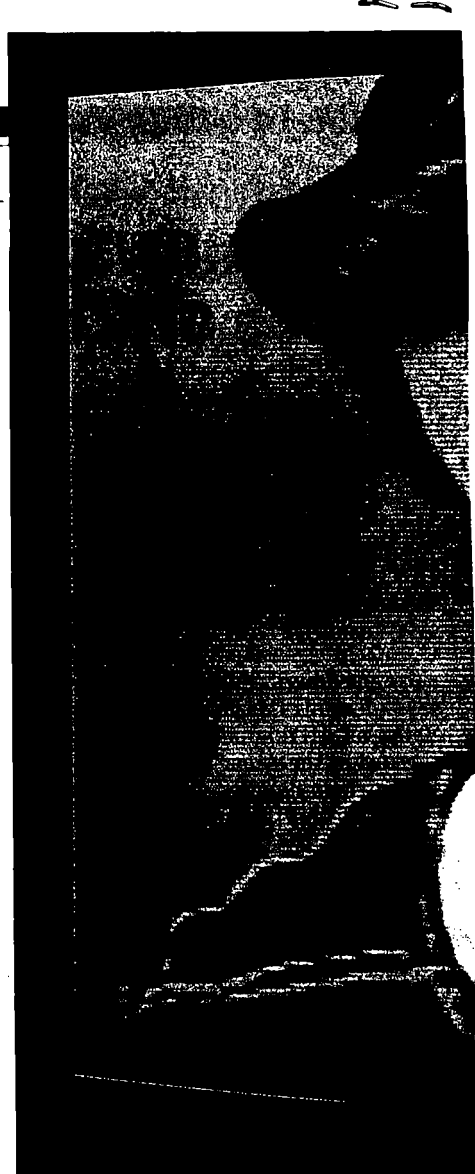
	CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS	PRIME TIME
Violent acts per hour	32	4
Violent characters	56%	34%
Characters who are victims of violence	74%	34%
Characters who are killers or who get killed	3.3%	5.7%
Characters involved in violence as perpetrators or victims	79%	47%

SOURCE: PROF. GEORGE GERBNER, ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Aiming for ratings: 'Heartland' bleeds

as do children's cartoons, indicted by some studies as TV's most violent genre. Where applied, the advisories may even make things worse. Broadcasters, proposes Boston anti-violence activist William Abbott, "could use the warning system as a license to show programs that are even more violent—just because they've warned parents."

Network executives contend that any form of violence alert will drive off gun-shy viewers and advertisers. "Some will be pleased at that," says CBS president Howard Stringer. "But then all drama will vanish from network television." Millions of other viewers, the networks maintain, will tune out if they can't satisfy their appetite for violence. "Nightmare in Columbia County," a made-for-CBS docu-drama of a serial killer, finished third in the Nielsens last month—and that was a rerun. Yet there's equally formidable evidence that video mayhem may be losing its sales appeal. At the start of the 1992 season, the NCTV compiled a list of TV's 10 "most violent" series. Today, only one (ABC's





One Day's Body Count

Between the hours of 6 a.m. and midnight on April 2, 1992, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, Fox, WDCA-Washington, Turner, USA, MTV and HBO combined aired the following carnage:

ACT	NUMBER OF SCENES	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Serious assaults (without guns)	389	20%
Gunplay	362	18%
Isolated punches	273	14%
Pushing, dragging	272	14%
Menacing threat with a weapon	226	11%
Slaps	128	6%
Deliberate destruction of property	95	5%
Simple assault	73	4%
All other types	28	1%

SOURCE: CENTER FOR MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, JUNE 1992

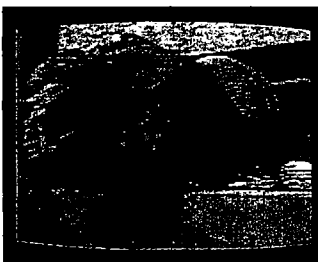
"The Commish") has survived Nielsen's verdict. A recent Times Mirror poll showed a remarkable jump—from 49 to 72 percent over the last decade—in the number of Americans who consider the tube unduly violent.

Of course, defining video violence remains as dicey as curbing it. NBC Entertainment president Warren Littlefield likes to divide it all into good violence and bad violence. "Good violence is dealing responsibly with things like substance abuse, incest, date rape, maniacal cult leaders, the Civil War and the Holocaust," he says. And the bad? "The glamorization of acts of violence."

Uh-uh; it's more than that. It's portraying violence with a total absence of consequences. It's rewarding a protagonist for violent deeds and never showing remorse. It's telling TV's most impressionable constituency that violence is clean, cool and natural. Most of all, it's sledgehammering violence into the growing-up process. According to a study by the American Psychological Association, the average child will witness 8,000 made-for-TV murders before finishing elementary school.

In adopting parental advisories, the networks have taken a modest first step—when what may be needed is a giant leap. Few agree more strongly than Rep. Edward J. Markey,

Three Ways to Earn a Warning for Violence



Reality TV on the road to ruin

AMBUSH IN WACO:

TV-movie producers now arrive on a crime scene before the bodies depart. But NBC's recent treatment of the Waco tragedy set a network speed record: the first shocku-drama about a horrific disaster filmed while the disaster was still unfolding. Critics groaned, but the film finished in Nielsen's top 10.

Shooting for cult-movie status



TIMOTHY WHITE—ABC

Bochco finds the color of money

NYPD BLUE:

Three months before its debut, Steven Bochco's ABC cop drama is already drawing broadsides for its raw language, nudity and blood-and-guts scenes. Both conservative watchdog groups and ABC affiliate managers are demanding that the show be toned down. It's the one series guaranteed a red flag.

I WITNESS VIDEO:

As the reality craze sweeps across the networks, TV's violence index has hit record highs. Perhaps the most execrable exhibit is NBC's "I Witness Video." Unleashed last fall, this weekly series showed four real-life slayings—all lovingly camcordered—just in its premiere. It's TV's first "snuff" show.

chairman of the House's powerful telecommunications subcommittee, who's pressing for the installation of a so-called "V block" computer chip in new TV sets. This would allow parents, after checking the coming week's TV listings, to block all programs carrying a V rating from the gaze of their children. While the technology is ready, not everyone is eager for it—especially if, as some propose, the chip comes programmed to automatically zap V-rated

shows. "That's getting awfully close to censorship," frets Peggy Charren, founder of Action for Children's Television.

The entire video-violence issue will be thrashed out at an unprecedented, industrywide summit conference in Los Angeles on Aug. 2. Hopefully, at least one brave voice will cite the most depressing news of all: the nation's nightly dose of gore, reports the American Academy of Pediatrics, tripled just during the 1980s. Maybe

it's finally time for the medium to heed the Terry Rakoltas. "We don't want warning labels," she fumes. "We want a reduction in television violence." That, of course, will happen only when those who control what we see turn their attention to a different form of PR: not public relations, but public responsibility.

HARRY F. WATERS with DANIEL GLICK
in Washington, CAROLYN FRIDAY in Boston and
JEANNE GORDON in Los Angeles

What's So Bad About a Little Trauma?

While the psychological community now pretty much agrees about the effects of repeated TV and film violence on kids, there's still some argument on the effects of a good scare—or a bad one, as the case may be. From the time "Jurassic Park" opened last month, some mental-health professionals have been posting warnings about the "intensity" of its excitement, especially for younger children. It's not just that the dinos emit deafening roars and demolish things, like monsters of a more innocent age. These beasts look state-of-the-art real. And they eat people—to them, kids are just appetizers. "This movie is dedicated to making you feel like food," says psychiatrist Harvey Greenberg, an authority on scare films whose own 8-year-old quipped about this one: "Those dinos should have put on bibs." (Very funny, but wouldn't you know, the little *cinéaste* had a nightmare that night.)

Children handle scare movies differently at different ages. Up to 5 or 6, they usually have trouble distinguishing between fact and fancy. Later they develop a detached "now wait a minute" voice that allows them to face up to the witch in "The Wizard of Oz" and say, "Oh, this is a movie." Younger children don't have that voice, says Dr. Scott May, co-chairman of the committee on children's television and media of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent

Psychiatry. As a result, they can incur something like the delayed reaction of posttraumatic stress disorder. "I've had numbers of children in therapy still haunted by

chiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles. Some children are also more sensitive than others," Leiken notes. "There are kids for whom scary movies are devas-



CAMPBELL LAIRD

something that they saw two years ago," he says.

Regardless of age, reactions may depend on how secure a child feels. "I don't think by themselves most of these movies can cause a terrible trauma," says Dr. Stanley Leiken, professor of child psy-

tating, and others for whom it's like falling off a log."

Some parents think the shrinks are too cautious. If most grown-ups enjoy a good scare, the argument goes, why deny it to kids? So what if they have a nightmare or two—does it warp their lives?

A part of growing up is learning to deal with stress, notes Manhattan-based child psychiatrist Gerald Dabbs. From that standpoint, getting scared out of your Nikes is not the worst thing. "It may be very painful right now, but kids will be able to come to terms with it," says Dabbs.

Dark side: In "The Uses of Enchantment," his classic study of fairy tales, psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim went so far as to suggest that parents who censor the grimmer Grimms and gorier stories can squelch their children's imagination. "The dominant culture wishes to pretend, particularly where children are concerned, that the dark side of man does not exist." But Bettelheim failed to distinguish between oral tales and today's visual media, says psychiatrist Carole Lieberman, who focuses on the psychological impact of films and TV. Images are seldom left to the child's imagination these days, she says. "Instead, they're left to the special-effects wizards—which makes them far more assaultive to the senses." So, best heed the ratings, Lieberman and other experts advise, meaning, in the case of "Jurassic Park," a PG-13, or parental guidance for children under 13.

All of which makes one nostalgic for preratings creature features like "King Kong." As Kong-era kids knew without parental guidance, the big lug never meant any harm to anyone—not even child psychologists. He was simply in love. But they don't make monsters like that anymore.

DAVID GELMAN

BABYLON REVISITED

How Our Violent Origins Resurface in Today's Media

By Walter Wink

Violence is the ethos of our times. It is the spirituality of the modern world. What is generally overlooked is that violence is accorded the status of a religion, demanding from its devotees an absolute obedience-unto-death.

Its followers are not aware that the devotion they pay to violence is a form of religious piety, however. Violence is so successful as a myth precisely because it does not appear to be mythic in the least. Violence simply appears to be the nature of things. It is what works. It seems inevitable, the last and, often, the first resort in conflicts. It is embraced with equal alacrity by people on the Left and on the Right, by religious liberals as well as religious conservatives.

The roots of this devotion to violence are deep, and we will be well rewarded if we trace them to their source. When we do, we will discover that the religion of Babylon—one of the world's oldest continuously surviving religions—is thriving as never before in contemporary life...it, and not Christianity, is the real religion of [the United States].

Jesus taught the love of enemies, but Babylonian religions taught their extermination. Violence was, for the religion of ancient Mesopotamia, what love was for Jesus: the central dynamic of existence. For this early civilization, life was as cruel as the floods and droughts and storms that swept the Fertile Crescent. Recurrent warfare between the various city-states in the region exhausted resources. Chaos threatened every achievement of humanity. The myth that enshrined that culture's sense of

life was the *Enuma Elish*, dated to around 1250 B.C.E. in the versions that have survived, but based on traditions considerably older.

In the beginning, according to this myth, Apsu and Tiamat (the sweet and saltwater oceans) bear Mummu (the mist). From them also issue the younger gods, whose frolicking makes so much noise that the elder gods resolve to kill them so they can sleep. This plot of the elder gods is discovered, the younger gods kill Apsu, and Tiamat pledges revenge.

The rebel gods in terror run for salvation to their youngest, Marduk. He exacts a

creation is an act of violence: Tiamat is murdered, dismembered, and from her cadaver the world is formed. Order is established by means of disorder...The origin of evil precedes the origin of things. Chaos (symbolized by Tiamat) is prior to order (represented by Marduk, god of Babylon). Evil is prior to good. Violence inheres in the godhead. Evil is an ineradicable constituent of ultimate reality, and possesses ontological priority over good.

Good vs. Evil

The biblical myth [we are familiar with] is diametrically opposed to all this. There, a good God creates a good creation. Chaos does not resist order. Good is...prior to evil. Neither evil nor violence is a part of the creation, but enter as a result of the first couple's sin and the machinations of the "serpent." A basically good reality is thus corrupted by free decisions reached by creatures. In this far more complex and subtle explanation of the origins of things, evil for the first time emerges as a problem requiring solution.



FROM W.H. WARD, "SEAL CYLINDERS OF WESTERN ASIA"

steep price: If he succeeds, he must be given chief and undisputed power in the assembly of the gods. Having extorted this promise, he catches Tiamat in a net, blows her full of an evil wind, shoots an arrow that bursts her distended belly and pierces her heart; he then splits her skull with a club, and scatters the blood in the out-of-the-way places. He stretches out her corpse full length, and from it creates the cosmos.

We are indebted to Paul Ricoeur for his profound commentary on this myth. He points out that in the Babylonian myth,

In the Babylonian myth, however, there is no "problem of evil." Evil is simply a primordial fact...Our very origin is violence. Killing is in our blood. Humanity is not the originator of evil, but merely finds evil already present and perpetuates it...We are the consequences of deicide. Cosmic order results from the violent suppression of the female (Tiamat) and is mirrored in the social order by the oppression of women by men...

Thus, human beings are naturally incapable of peaceful coexistence; order must

continually be imposed upon us from on high. Nor are we created to subdue the Earth and have dominion over it; we exist but to serve as slaves of the gods and of their earthly [representatives]...

Do you begin to sense where all this is leading?

The ultimate outcome of this type of myth, remarks Ricoeur, is a theology of war founded on the identification of the enemy with the powers that the god has vanquished, and continues to vanquish, in the

stroys the bad guy or prevents his reappearance, whether he is soundly trounced, jailed, drowned or shot into outer space.

The psychodynamics of the TV cartoon or comic book are marvelously simple: Children identify with the good guy so that they can think of themselves as good. This enables them to project out onto the bad guy their own repressed anger, violence, rebelliousness or lust, and then vicariously to enjoy their own evil by watching the bad guy initially prevail. (This segment of the

Thus the myth of redemptive violence has become the cornerstone of foreign policy, enshrined in the doctrine of the national security state. Might is right.

drama of creation. Every coherent theology of holy war ultimately reverts to this basic mythological type... According to this theology, the enemy is evil and war is its punishment. Unlike the biblical myth, which sees evil as an intrusion into a good creation and war as a consequence of the fall, this myth regards war as present from the beginning...

This myth is the original religion of the status quo, the first articulation of "might makes right." The gods favor those who conquer. The mass of people exists to perpetuate that power and privilege which the gods have conferred upon the king, the aristocracy, and the priesthood. Religion exists to legitimate power and privilege. Life is combat.

The Myth Today

This myth of redemptive violence inundates us on every side. We are awash in it yet seldom perceive it. Its simplest, most pervasive, and finally most influential form, where it captures the imaginations of each new generation, is children's comics and cartoon shows.

Here is how the myth of redemptive violence structures the standard comic strip or television cartoon sequence: An indestructible good guy is unalterably opposed to an irreformable and equally indestructible bad guy. Nothing can kill the good guy, though for the first three-quarters of the strip or show he (rarely she) suffers grievously, appearing hopelessly trapped, until somehow the hero breaks free, vanquishes the villain, and restores order until the next installment. Nothing finally de-

stroy actually consumes all but the closing minutes, allowing ample time for indulging the shadow side of the self. When the good guy finally wins, viewers are then able to reassert control over their own inner tendencies, repress them, and reestablish a sense of goodness. Salvation is guaranteed through identification with the hero.

Cartoon strips like *Superman* and *Dick Tracy* have been enormously successful in resolving the guilt feelings of the reader or viewer by providing totally evil, often deformed and inhuman scapegoats on whom one can externalize the evil side of one's own personality and disown it without coming to any insight or awareness of its presence within oneself. The villain's punish-

near-anarchy that fiction has misrepresented as the Wild West. The gunfighter must take matters into his own hands, just as, in the anarchic situation of the big city... (in movies such as *Dirty Harry*... and, in real life, [the violent reactions of] Bernard Goetz) a beleaguered citizen finally rises up against the crooks... and creates justice out of the barrel of a gun.

As Robert Jewett points out, this vigilantism betrays a profound distrust of democratic institutions, and of the reliance on human intelligence and civic responsibility that are basic to the democratic hope (the movie *High Noon*). It regards the general public as passive and unwise, incapable of discerning evil and making a rational response. Public resources are inadequate, so the message goes; we need a messiah, an armed redeemer, someone who has the strength of character and conviction to transcend the legal restraints of democratic institutions and save us from an evil easily identifiable in villainous persons.

These vigilantes who deliver us by taking the law into their own hands will somehow do so without encouraging lawlessness. They will kill and leave town, thus ridding us of guilt. They will show selfless and surpassing concern for the health of our communities, but they will never have to practice citizenship, or deal with the ambiguity of political decisions. They neither run for office nor vote. They will reignite in us a consuming love for impartial justice, but they will do so by means of a mission of personal vengeance that eliminates the due

"Arnold Schwarzenegger has become an American Icon, worshipped as the God Violent Power by the disenfranchised and powerless masses."

Carole Lieberman, M.D., National Coalition on Television Violence

ment provides catharsis; one forswears the villain's ways and heaps condemnation on him in a guilt-free orgy of aggression.

No premium is put on reasoning, persuasion, negotiation or diplomacy. There can be no compromise with an absolute evil. [It] must be totally annihilated or totally converted.

Lawless Solutions

The classic gunfighters of the "Western" settle old scores by shootouts, never by due process of law. The law, in fact, is suspect, too weak to prevail in the conditions of

process of law.

The possibility that an innocent person is being executed by our violent redeemers is removed by having the outlaw draw first, or shoot from ambush. The villain dresses in dark clothing, is swarthy, unshaven and filthy, and his personality is stereotyped so as to eliminate any possibility of audience sympathy. The death of such evil beings is necessary in order to cleanse society of a stain. The viewer, far from feeling remorse at another human being's death, is actually made euphoric. Some movie audiences actually stand and cheer when the villain is

blown away...

Rather than shoring up democracy, the strong-man methods of the superheroes of popular culture reflect a nostalgia for simpler solutions. They bypass constitutional guarantees of legal procedure in arrest, or an appreciation for the tenet that a person is to be regarded as innocent until proven guilty.

What we see instead is a mounting impatience with the laborious processes of civilized life and a restless eagerness to embrace violent solutions. Better to mete out instant, summary justice than risk the red tape and delays and bumbling of the courts. The yearning for a messianic redeemer who will set things right is thus, in its essence, a totalitarian fantasy...

Violent Lessons

The myth of redemptive violence is the simplest, laziest, most exciting, uncomplicated, irrational and primitive depiction of evil the world has ever known. Furthermore, its orientation toward evil is one into which virtually all modern children (boys especially) are socialized in the process of maturation...

Estimates vary widely, but the average child is reported to log roughly 36,000 hours of television by the time she or he is 18, including some 15,000 murders. In prime-time evening shows, our children are served up about 16 acts of entertaining violence (two of them lethal) every night; on the weekend the level of violent acts almost doubles (30.3). By the age of 16, the average child spends as much time watching TV as in school.

From the earliest age, children are awash in depictions of violence as the ultimate solution in human conflicts. And saturation in the myth does not end with the close of adolescence. There is no rite of passage... but rather a years-long acclimatization to adult television and movie fare. Redemptive violence gives way to violence as an end in itself [in] a religion in which violence has become the ultimate concern, an elixir, an addictive high, a substitute for relationships.

The modern individual, stripped of the values, rites and customs that give a sense of belonging to traditional cultures, is the easy victim of the fads of style, opinion and prejudice fostered by the communications media... people live under the illusion that the views and feelings they have acquired by attending to the media are their own.

Overwhelmed by the giantism of corporations, bureaucracies, universities and the military, individuals sense that the only escape from utter insignificance lies in identifying with these giants and idolizing them... one's personal well-being is tied inextricably with the fortunes of the hero-leader. Right and wrong scarcely enter the picture.

Thus the myth of redemptive violence has become the cornerstone of foreign policy, enshrined in the doctrine of the national security state. Might is right. Everything depends on victory, success, the

thrill of belonging to a nation capable of imposing its will in the heavenly council and among the nations. For the alternative—ownership of one's own evil and acknowledgement of God in the enemy—is for many simply too high a price to pay.

Walter Wink is a professor of biblical interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City. Reprinted by permission from his book Engaging the Powers, copyright © 1992, Augsburg Fortress, this selection is an edited version of an article published in Sojourners in April 1992.

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TELEVISION

Explicit show raises questions, eyebrows

By Mary Jo DiLonardo
Post staff reporter

A cop grabs his crotch and hurls obscenities at a female district attorney. A graphic sex scene exposes a woman's bare buttocks and a glimpse of her breast.

It's not the movies. It's not home video. It's prime-time network television.

Welcome to "N.Y.P.D. Blue."

Amid the pile of new fall series, ABC's "N.Y.P.D. Blue" is raising eyebrows. And some are arguing that the hour-long drama produced by Steven Bochco (Emmy-award winning creator of "Hill Street Blues," "L.A. Law.") may have crossed the line of acceptability.

His new series — scheduled to air at

10 p.m. Tuesdays — in many ways is your basic cop show. It stars Dennis Franz ("Hill Street Blues") and David Caruso ("Mad Dog and Glory") as New York City detectives.

Many television critics have praised the program for its slick cinematography, saying it is Bochco at his best. It is filled with pulsating, breathy music; rapid-fire scene changes, and interesting camera action.

But, unlike your everyday police show, this one has gutter talk, flashes of nudity and graphic sex scenes, earning it the moniker of television's first "R-rated" series.

About a third of ABC's affiliate stations have expressed reservations about the program, saying they may be reluctant to air it without editing.

"I don't need an R-rated program on

my air," said William Moll, Channel 12 general manager.

"I think it's an absolutely superb TV series and think that we'll be able to run it successfully on our TV station. However, because it is so good and so strong, it doesn't need those elements."

Like many other ABC affiliate representatives, Moll said he has urged the network to edit those potentially offensive scenes.

"No one wants to engage in censorship or prior restraint. That's not what we are about," he said. "But what we are about is making judgments of taste and quality."

In interviews, Bochco has said he is considering editing the series but promised only "minor" changes.

Media morals watchdog the Rev. Donald Wildmon of Mississippi has

bought full-page newspaper ads berating the show.

"This time TV has gone too far! We are FED UP! Will ABC Begin an 'R-rated' Series?" the ads read.

"It's clear that the reason why they're doing this is to try to attract viewers," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, psychiatrist and chairwoman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, a group that monitors violent activity on TV.

"They're taking a chance on this, even though they know it's going to get some people angry, thinking ultimately it will attract more viewers and be worth it."

"N.Y.P.D. Blue" with its sex, rough language and violence, was unveiled to network affiliates and the press at a

Please see NYPD, 3B

NYPD

From Page 1B

time when TV watchdogs were claiming victory in a fight to make network viewing a kinder, gentler experience.

On June 30, bending to public pressure, the major networks announced they will begin warning viewers this fall when violence appears in televised movies, mini-series and specials.

"Due to some violent content, parental discretion advised," will appear before any shows with a level of violence that could be disturbing to children.

While violence has become a recognized part of the networks' programming, nudity and ob-

scene language have rarely found their way into over-the-air programs. With a few notable exceptions — Mariel Hemingway nude in a gauzy, filtered scene in "Civil Wars," (another Bochco production), an occasional "artistic" bit on PBS in such shows as "Masterpiece Theater" — cable has been where bottoms and more are bared.

"We have a double standard for it," Moll said. "Pay cable can run things of that nature because presumably the viewer makes an overt choice in paying money for that."

"When it's free TV, we come into the home as an invited guest. People set a different standard for that, and people expect us to live up to that standard."

DAILY VARIETY

90 CENTS

THURSDAY

JULY 1, 1993



Associated Press

ABC's Thomas Murphy, NBC's Warren Littlefield, Sen. Paul Simon, CBS' Howard Stringer, MPAA's Jack Valenti and Fox TV's George Vradenberg announce violence advisory plan on Capitol Hill.

WEBS REVEAL BATTLE PLAN VS. TV VIOLENCE

BY PAUL HARRIS

WASHINGTON — Officials of the Big Three networks and Fox Broadcasting Co. Wednesday unveiled a plan to place parental advisories on programs containing violence. But critics dubbed the action a hasty gambit to head off more restrictive legislation from Congress.

Exes of ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox displayed details of a joint "advance parent advisory plan" that they say will help parents supervise children's TV viewing.

Starting this fall, the nets will place

advisories at the beginning, during some commercial breaks and on all promotional material of prime time films, miniseries and specials that contain violence that some viewers might find offensive. The plan will be phased in for series programs during the 1993-94 season.

The scheme was presented at a boisterous Capitol Hill press conference that included Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.). The industry officials included ABC chairman Thomas Murphy, CBS Broadcast Group prez Howard Stringer, NBC Entertainment prez Warren

Turn to page 12

Continued from page 1

Littlefield, Fox Television exec VP George Vradenberg and Motion Picture Assn. of America prexy Jack Valenti.

While carefully avoiding agreement that vid violence is a major contributor to crime in society, the web officials offered details of the two-year experiment.

Among its elements:

- Advisories will be used when, "In the judgment of the network, the overall level of violence in a program, the graphic nature of the violent content, or the tone, message or mood of the program make it appropriate." Factors will include the context of the violent depiction, the composition of the intended audience and the time period of the broadcast.

- Programs will be evaluated individually to assure that the advisory system highlights appropriate programs. The system would not necessarily be warranted for programs where only an isolated act of violence occurs, or for genres where violence is known to be present but is not graphically depicted.

- The advisory will read: "Due to some violent content, parental discretion is advised." It may be modified to provide further clarification in response to particular situations.

- The webs agreed to individually evaluate use of the advisory after two years, weighing such factors as its use by competing TV distributors and the reaction by viewers, advertisers, producers and affiliates.

The plan will be formally presented at an industry powwow on video violence in August, where the

networks will urge colleagues in cable TV, syndication and at the local station level to sign on. (Ted Turner has already endorsed the plan for shows aired by the Turner Broadcasting System.)

Children's television advocates wasted little time in assessing the joint network agreement. "It is a small step in the right direction, but it's not nearly comprehensive enough," said Carole Leiberman, who chairs the National Coalition on Television & Violence. She called it a "last-minute peace offering to avoid stiffer government regulation."

Leiberman said the most valuable aspect of the plan is its "implicit admission that there is a link between TV and societal violence." But she urged adoption of a formula that makes "scientific and psychological sense."

Kathryn Montgomery, co-director of the Center for Media Education, also called the program a promising first step, albeit one clearly aimed at preempting increased pressure on media violence. Montgomery said it is "unfortunate" that the plan omits children's programming.

The network exes told reporters not to expect advisories on routine series since they're not brutal enough to qualify. However, ABC's new police drama "NYPD Blue" will carry a warning, Murphy said, which had been planned prior to the announcement.

In addition, networks and local stations frequently air viewer discretion advisories on theatrical movies airing on TV and occasionally on made-for-TV fare.

Stringer said CBS will consider whether labels are warranted for its Chuck Norris action series, "Walker, Texas Ranger." The show was cited in a spring tryout as one of the more violent hours on TV.

What will the new labels cost in terms of advertising? "It's too early to put a dollar figure on it, but it could be significant," NBC's Littlefield said. "The advertising marketplace is soft right now, and if someone is looking for an excuse to get out of a movie, they've got one," he said.

MPAA chief Valenti put it more bluntly: "Ain't nobody gonna make money out of this," he told the press conference. Valenti said the MPAA will hold meetings within the next few months on vid violence and how to deal with it.

The joint plan drew applause from the two lawmakers on hand for the announcement. "It is a significant step in the direction of assuring that a powerful medium can be a force for good in our society," Simon said.

Markey will hold hearings today on the plan before his House telecommunications subcommittee.

Littlefield said the key to the joint program is the leadership position being taken by the networks. But he said it's not the total answer.

"When you talk about societal violence, clearly what network TV does is important. But other important issues include the proliferation of handguns, drugs, medical care and the treatment of the mentally ill, fractionalization of the family unit and other social issues."

Karen Harris contributed to this report.

Experts See 'Jurassic Park,' Discuss the Fear Factor

By DAVID J. FOX
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The fright factor in "Jurassic Park" is especially intense for young children, concur a group of experts who study child psychology and the effects of mass media.

In an informal survey, The Times interviewed a number of authorities, all of whom saw the popular Steven Spielberg film in its first few days of release, to elicit their firsthand reactions to a subject that has become very topical.

For the most part, all agreed that the film's rating of PG-13 (parents strongly cautioned, some material may be inappropriate for children under 13) should be taken seriously.

However, several believed that, while "Jurassic Park" portrays violent behavior, it is at least more palatable than the barrage of murder and may-

hem to which children are often exposed both in the news and in entertainment.

In the film, which in only six days of national release has attracted an enormous \$75 million at the box office, dinosaurs go on a terrifying rampage. The title is the name of a fictional amusement park where dinosaurs have been scientifically re-created.

Norma Feshbach and her husband, Seymour Feshbach, both professors of psychology at UCLA, concluded that the rating did not seem strong enough. They would urge parents to view the movie before exposing children to it. "The dinosaurs were so well portrayed that it gave it a reality. And because of that, it makes them more frightening, especially in a major segment in the film when children are the potential victims," she said.

Please see REACTION, F9

Continued from F1

She added that she was "shocked that there were so many children at the movie that were younger than 10," though "they seemed absolutely spellbound."

Merritt Schreiber, a clinical child psychologist in Irvine, also felt that the level of violence would be "overwhelming for younger kids," especially since the only experience with dinosaurs many children have is with the cuddly, purple Barney character on TV.

"The two child characters are the subject of a lot of aggression and through much of the movie the adults are really not able to protect the children," Schreiber said. "The movie plays on that realistic vulnerability that children have."

On the other hand, Schreiber added: "There are a lot worse things that kids watch like 'RoboCop' and 'The Terminator' and 'Rambo' movies—that have impersonal violence. . . . Movies that

depict violence as a solution to conflict."

John P. Murray, a professor and chairman of the department of human development and family studies for Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan., observed: "Children have probably seen much more violence on their screens at home, than they'll see in 'Jurassic Park.'" He added, "I wouldn't feel bad about a youngster being frightened by 'Jurassic Park' as long as they can talk about it with someone and get a sense of the issues. The fact that the movie had a number of violent scenes is a minus, but it at least showed the consequences of the violence, unlike most things that children watch.

"On Saturday morning cartoons, someone gets shot in the face with a shotgun and ends up with only a brown smudge on their face."

Murray said he talked with one child who he said accurately explained why the film can be frightening. "It moved very suddenly from what was a peaceful situation

to a violent one."

The film's distributor, Universal Pictures, contends the marketing of the movie has not been directed at children. Nevertheless, there's a current flood of dinosaur-related toy products, games, books and candy—all licensed to tie in with and promote "Jurassic Park."

Universal said its surveys indicate that only 2% of the audience has been under age 8. But each of the persons interviewed for this article mentioned how surprised they were with the numbers of children in the audience.

"The studio is being disingenuous with all the dinosaur promotions," said Mary Parpal, a psychologist at the Assessment Treatment Services Center near Costa Mesa, who also has a private practice in Newport Beach. "I can imagine there's a lot of pressure among kids to see the film."

Parpal termed the film's story "a wholesome kind of terror, as opposed to a random chop-'em-up

kind of violence" and said that is a plus for pre-adolescents. But she believes it is "way too scary for anyone under 10. It was very loud, with things popping out—things that can induce terror in young children."

Associate professor Barbara Wilson in the department of communications at UC Santa Barbara also agrees that the movie "is not designed for kids. But the way it is being pitched makes it fascinating to children."

Wilson, who has 10 years of research on children's fear reactions to the mass media, said children ages 3 to 7 are gripped by how

things look and sound. "The scenes of dinosaurs attacking people, growling and stomping are particularly threatening. This age group really has difficulty in grasping the difference between reality and fantasy. To them, whatever looks real, is real. And, of course, in this movie, the dinosaurs look real."

Children 8 to 12 begin to look at what motivates characters and question whether things are possible, Wilson said. "In the film there are sudden shifts from good dinosaurs to menacing dinosaurs. As in 'Gremlins' [another film produced by Spielberg] you have these cuddly creatures that halfway through

the movie suddenly switch. Also, the two main victims in the movie are about 8 and 12. [This] could really elevate the fear level."

Cautions Dr. Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist in Beverly Hills: "It's a very dangerous and misleading rationale for parents to believe that because their child survived one violent movie, they should be able to survive another one. The point is, they shouldn't take them to any violent movie to begin with [because] each movie adds its own cumulative effect to the overall impact of screen violence which leads to more aggressive and desensitized behavior."



Psychiatric News



Vol. XXVIII No. 11

Newspaper of the American Psychiatric Association

June 4, 1993

Stop NASA From Glamorizing Violence

By Carole Lieberman, M.D.



Help! This world has gone insane! Such was my first thought when I woke up in March and read an article in the *Los Angeles Times* that said that Columbia Pictures had bought exclusive billing on a NASA-funded rocket

to advertise Arnold Schwarzenegger's upcoming movie, "Last Action Hero." A NASA rocket—once the symbol of our highest scientific achievements and our hopes for the future—would now tout a message of violence?

NASA granted \$85 million of taxpayer's money to this project, called COMET (Commercial Experiment Transporter), and private enterprise added approximately 10 percent of that to the project. The private enterprise side then sold the ad space to Columbia through Space Marketing Inc. for \$500,000.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is more responsible for violent entertainment than any other Hollywood star in the last decade. His movies contain more than 100 acts of violence per hour. "Last Action Hero" contains more than 30 acts of violence in the three-minute trailer alone. Yet Columbia continues to try to say that this is a "spoof on violence." In our society, where children are killing and being killed in record numbers, should there really be a "spoof" on violence?

A member of the audience who pre-viewed the movie, when asked whether it contained the alleged anti-violence message said, "If there was, you couldn't hear it above the gunshots and explosion."

As chair of the National Coalition on TV Violence, I have begun a protest campaign

against the "Schwarzenegger Rocket," asking people to contact President Clinton, NASA, Columbia, and Schwarzenegger. The letters, faxes, and phone calls have poured in. Yet, to date, no one has called it quits. The movie comes out June 18, and the rocket is due to be launched in August. We need your help. According to the research of NCTV and others, there is little doubt that media violence causes real-life violence and desensitization to violence.

Sending a rocket into our universe carrying a message of violence is obviously the product of a collective unconscious addicted to violence. But the public's response to this protest so far is a sign that we can raise their awareness of this problem. Please help by communicating your views to the individuals and agencies listed below and by talking to your patients and colleagues about the harmful effects of media violence, including the Schwarzenegger Rocket ad—the ultimate glorification of media violence.

If you feel strongly about this subject, I urge you to contact the following:

- NASA Complaint Hotline: (800) 424-9183; fax: (202) 358-4345, addressed to Dan Goldin, Administrator, NASA, Washington, D.C.

- Mark Canton, Chair, Columbia Pictures, 10202 W. Washington Boulevard, Culver City, Calif. 90232; (310) 280-8000; fax: (310) 280-1854.

- President Bill Clinton, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; (202) 456-1414; fax: (202) 456-2461.

- Arnold Schwarzenegger, c/o Charlotte Parker, 11500 West Olympic Boulevard, Suite 400, Los Angeles, Calif. 90064.

Dr. Lieberman is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at U.C.L.A. and is in private practice in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Daily News

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 1993

Violence's link to TV disputed

Executives say medium doesn't cause killings

By Betsy Bates
Daily News Staff Writer

Entertainment industry leaders told a congressional panel Tuesday that they can curb violence in television programs as easily as they cut out scenes that glamorized cigarette smoking.

But violence is part of the real world and will endure, whether or not television tells "morality tales" of life and death, Ned Nalle, executive vice president of Universal Television, told senators studying the impact of televised violence on children and society.

"Now I don't think I'm giving anything away if I tell you that in each and every episode for next season, the good guys are going to win," Nalle testified. "And the bad guys in these morality tales, violence or not, routinely pay a stiff price for their misdeeds."

The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and Constitution Subcommittee heard from studio chiefs and academicians in the second recent hearing on the impact of television violence on children and society. The senators are studying the issue in anticipation of the Dec. 1 expiration approaches of the federal Television Violence Act of 1990.

The act waived antitrust laws for three years to encourage the entertainment industry to establish voluntary standards to reduce television violence — a goal many critics believe the industry has not accomplished.

Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, told senators that he supported voluntary curbs, saying it should be of "passionate importance" within the industry.

Similar voluntary efforts nearly have expunged casual drug use, cigarette smoking, and drinking and driving from the screen, Valenti said.

But he cautioned against blaming society's violence on television, especially when Congress allows "guns of every size, muzzle velocity and killing qualities."

TV executives reject blame for U.S. violence

VIOLENCE / From Page 4

"Stretching from the early birth years of the republic, violence has run through our history like a twanging scarlet wire," Valenti told the panel. "Long before there was an electronic box in the living room of millions of Americans, there was violence generated by religious intolerance, distorted piety, racial bigotry . . . ethnic quarreling, tribal discords and familial disputes . . ."

Sen. Paul Simon, D-Illinois, said in an interview that he believes some entertainment leaders are serious about curbing television violence.

But Simon, who is chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, said some entertainment executives still believe "everything is sweetness and light, and (they) really don't need to change anything."

Simon said he will make it clear that violence levels must change during an industrywide conference on televised violence in Los Angeles on Aug. 2.

"They have to move voluntarily, or unquestionably, the mood in the Senate is to move on its own," Simon said.

Dr. Carole Lieberman, who is chairwoman of the National Coalition on TV Violence, agreed with Simon that many politicians are "eager" to implement ratings and content control.

"I'm actually quite fearful," said Lieberman, who attended the hearings and submitted written testimony. "On the way out here, I reread '1984' and 'Animal Farm.' I do feel we need to be quite concerned about First Amendment rights, and I think ratings in the wrong hands can get out of control."

Lieberman said she, like Simon, hopes voluntary changes can be made by the industry before violence standards are imposed by people without expertise in entertainment or violent behavior.

"It really shouldn't be left in the hands of people with religious axes to grind," Lieberman said.

Simon said decades of research "overwhelmingly" document the connection between television violence and violence in society, especially among children.

But studio heads, while vowing to work to bring about change, questioned the methods used to calculate violence in programming. They decried studies that tabulate the number of violent acts without examining the story content, lessons learned or points being made.

Daily News

TV VIOLENCE UNDER ATTACK



Jon Giering/Daily News photo illustration

Images of violence are depicted in the TV broadcasts of, clockwise from top left, "Cops," "Lethal Weapon," "The Untouchables," "Terror in the Tower," "Wild Palms," and "Terminator 2."

"There was a guy with a chainsaw, and he was cutting another guy in half. I thought . . . what's this doing to a 10-year-old?"

— Sen. Paul Simon, D-Illinois

Congress, many viewers fed up with graphic images

By Paul Hefner
and Pat Karlak
Daily News Staff Writers

As the television networks blaze through the May sweeps period with graphic images of violence and mayhem, there is growing pressure from parents and from Congress on the entertainment industry to limit violent programming.

A growing body of research suggests that TV violence has a profound impact on children, desensitizing them to violence and in some cases actually encouraging violent acts.

Legislation is being considered in both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives that could lead to government-imposed limits on television violence.

In response, the entertainment industry has scheduled an unprecedented Aug. 2 meeting in Los Angeles to talk about how the level of TV violence overall can be reduced through voluntary standards rather than government intervention.

"This historic conference is the first time the entire industry will come together to discuss this important issue," said CBS Broadcast Group president Howard Stringer, who testified Friday at a Senate hearing on TV violence.

"We hope that every segment of the television industry will find an appropriate way to acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and take responsibility for what they send out to the public," Stringer said.

The keynote speaker at the industry meeting will be Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., who has become the leading congressional advocate for limiting violence on television.

"We have tried to prevent excess violence . . . and we intend to try harder. In our new fall schedule for prime time, the largest component . . . is comedy."

— Thomas S. Murphy, chairman, Capital Cities/ABC

New work leads a head-on assault by Congress

VIOLENCE / From Page 1

Simon, who chaired Friday's hearing, drafted a 1990 law that gave broadcasters three years to collaborate on voluntarily reducing TV violence — with the implication that Congress might step in if executives fail to do enough.

Simon said in an interview last week that he became interested in the issue after watching a particularly violent murder scene on TV.

"There was a guy with a chain saw, and he was cutting another guy in half," Simon said. "I thought, if this bothered me — an adult who knows it's not real — what's this doing to a 10-year-old?"

New urgency for debate

Debate over the impact of television violence on actual violence is not new. But it has taken on new urgency in the past few years, as the trend toward reality programming and true-crime dramas has increased the number of rapes, beatings, murders and screaming victims that appear nightly on TV.

A 1992 study by the American Psychological Association, "Big World — Small Screen," estimated that a typical child will watch 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school.

"Children's minds are being increasing polluted by the drug of violence," said Carole Lieberman, a Los Angeles psychiatrist and chairwoman of the 4,000-member National Coalition on Television Violence.

"The entertainment industry needs to turn the corner toward greater recognition of the link between televised violence and real-life violence," Lieberman said.

But others insist that it is inappropriate to blame television when society itself has become increasingly violent.

"We are not helping violence," said Stringer of CBS. "We are encouraging, maybe stimulating it, maybe shaping it, but we are not the sole cause of violence."

"And if the frustration of this society only takes it out on us — the networks and eventually the cable industry — that alone is not going to solve violence in America," he said.

Research into the effects of television violence are almost as old as the medium itself, with more than 3,000 studies on the issue made over the last 40 years.

"Most of the studies I've seen, the researchers aren't certain which way the correlation goes — whether some people who see violence tend to become violent, or whether violent people like to watch programs with violence," said George Vradenburg, executive vice president of Fox Inc.

But others say the industry is closing its eyes to the accumulated evidence.

"Those who say more definitive research is needed are stonewalling and promoting a myth," said Seymour Feshbach, a psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Says debate is settled

Leonard Eron, Edward Donnerstein and Ronald Slaby, the researchers who authored "Big World — Small Screen" for the American Psychological Association, asserted that the "scientific debate is over."

Eron has researched TV violence for more than 35 years, following the same group of 875 males and females from ages 8 to 30. His studies found that those who watched more violent television as children were more likely as adults to commit serious crimes and to use violence to punish their own children.

"What one learns about life from the television screen seems to be transmitted to the next genera-

tion," he concluded.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs monitored a day's worth of TV programming last June to determine the number of deliberate violent acts depicted.

Stations monitored were ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and their affiliates; PBS; independent station WDCA in Washington, D.C.; and cable stations WTBS, USA, HBO and MTV.

The center tallied nearly 2,000 acts during an 18-hour period. Not included were acts of unintended or accidental violence, violence in sports, or violence by animals in nature shows.

The study, commissioned by TV Guide, found that bulk of the violence occurred in children's programming — with cartoons registering 25 violent acts per hour.

Another study, published last June in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, concluded that the introduction of television into the United States, Canada and South Africa paralleled increases in the murder rates of all three countries.

That study, conducted by Dr. Brandon Centerwall of the University of Washington, found that the murder rates in Canada and the U.S. increased 92 percent and 93 percent, respectively, from 1945 to 1970.

In both countries, ownership of TV sets increased at almost the same proportion as the homicide rate, he found.

Because of the volatile racial and political climate in South Africa, Centerwall focused solely on the murder rate among whites.

Homicide rate exploded

He found a gradual decline in that country's homicide rate from 1945 to 1970. After 1975, when television was first broadcast, the homicide rate exploded, increasing 130 percent by 1983.

Sen. Simon said Centerwall's study tripped alarm bells among politicians.

"When the AMA Journal comes out saying that up to half of the homicides are caused by violence on television, that carries a lot of weight," Simon said. "That's not exactly some right-wing scandal sheet."

But some question the validity of such studies.

"There's a tragic rhyme and reason for violence in young people, having a lot to do with the environment they're brought up in," said Paul Mones, a Santa Monica attorney and author of the book "When a Child Kills."

"TV violence is, if anything, the least influential factor — if it's even a factor at all — right up there with rock music," Mones said.

"I don't think violence on TV is the healthiest thing for children, but neither do I buy into the hysterical notion that it causes them to become violent," he said. "It might lead to unnecessary fear and anxiety, but not violence."

Nevertheless, the accumulated research has given ammunition to the growing number of groups calling for controls on programming — particularly on shows aimed at children.

The largest group, Americans for Responsible Television, claims 100,000 members, and has gained the attention of lawmakers.

The organization's founder, Terry Rakolta, has called on Congress to regulate broadcasts children are likely to see. Rakolta says laws are needed because efforts to encourage broadcasters to regulate themselves haven't worked.

"I think Congress gave these guys enough rope to hang themselves with because they haven't done anything to date," she said. "Over the past three years, our organization has noticed a dramatic in-

CARTOONS AND VIOLENCE

Children's cartoons are among the most violent shows on television, according to the National Coalition on Television Violence — which lists the following as the worst:

Cartoon	Network	Violent acts per hour
Dark Water	FOX	109
Cookie's Cartoon Club	WGN	100
Tom and Jerry Kids	FOX	88
Dragon Warrior	Syndication	85
Looney Tunes	Nickelodeon	80
G.I. Joe	Syndication	78
Bugs Bunny and Pals	TNT	68
Toxic Crusaders	Syndication	63
Capt. N: Super Mario Bros.	NBC	58
Police Academy	Syndication	58

National Coalition on Television Violence

Daily News

ONE DAY'S TV VIOLENCE

The Center for Media and Public Affairs monitored a day's worth of TV programming last June to determine the number of deliberate violent acts depicted. Not included were acts of unintended or accidental violence, violence in sports, or violence by animals in nature shows.

Violent acts	Acts of violence
Serious assault (excluding use of guns)	389
Gunplay	362
Isolated punches	273
Pushing/dragging	272
Menacing threat with weapon	226
Slaps	128
Deliberate property destruction	96
Simple assaults	73
All other types	28
TOTAL	1,846

Center for Media and Public Affairs

Daily News

VIOLENT FILMS ON TV

According to the National Coalition on Television Violence, the following is a listing of the most violent films appearing on the major broadcast networks during the 1992 early fall season period. The chart shows incidents of violence per hour.

Film	Network	Violent incidents per hour
The Hard Way	NBC	76
Die Hard	FOX	55
Dune, Parts 1 & 2	FOX	43
Harlem Nights	FOX	29
Tales from the Darkside	FOX	27
With A Vengeance	CBS	25
Back to the Future II	ABC	24
In the Line of Duty: Street Wars	NBC	24
Problem Child 2	NBC	24
When No One Would Listen	CBS	21
In the Deep Woods	NBC	20

National Coalition on Television Violence

Daily News

crease in televised violence."

Seeks early impact

Simon said that while he has yet to see any real progress, he's hopeful that new standards adopted voluntarily by the networks in December will have an impact on the fall television season.

The joint standards set out 15 broad guidelines for using violence on television. Three dealt directly with children, including one that called for using "exceptional care" in stories where children are victims of violence.

"We'll know in the fall," Simon said. "The ultimate test is in the programming."

Last week, CBS announced a fall prime-time lineup that emphasized

programs with a low violence content.

One of the shows, a Chuck Norris action drama called "Walker, Texas Ranger," will specifically be toned down, said Jeff Sagansky, president of CBS Entertainment, at a New York news conference announcing the new schedule.

"We've told them we want a lighter tone," Sagansky said, adding that he doesn't think Norris is interested in doing a violent program.

But in an interview last month, Norris said he believes the networks' new skittishness about violence is eroding their share of viewing audiences.

"Cable TV is getting stronger and stronger because networks are too-

TV VIOLENCE UNDER ATTACK

PRIME-TIME VIOLENCE

Prime-time violence has increased markedly since 1980, when the two most violent shows each registered 22 incidents per hour, according to the National Coalition on Television Violence. In 1984 and 1992, several programs had more than 40 violent incidents per hour.

Program FALL 1980	Violent acts per hour	Program FALL 1984	Violent acts per hour	Program FALL 1992	Violent acts per hour
Enos	22	Hammer	55	Young Indiana Jones	60
Sheriff Lobo	22	A-Team	54	Covington Cross	45
BJ & the Bear	17	V	52	The Hat Squad	42
Hart to Hart	17	Matt Houston	40	Raven	42
The Incredible Hulk	16	Cover Up	38	Angel Street	41
Charlie's Angels	14	Fall Guy	37	Top Cops	38
Hill Street Blues	14	Airwolf	33	FBI: Untold Stories	28
Vegas	13	Hunter	33	Final Appeal	27
Nero Wolfe	11	Street Hawk	31	Secret Service	24
Dukes of Hazzard	11	Scarecrow & Mrs. King	31	The Commish	17

National Coalition on Television Violence

Daily News

A similar promise was offered by Thomas S. Murphy, chairman of Capital Cities/ABC Inc., in his testimony before the Senate panel.

"We have tried hard to prevent excess violence on ABC, and we intend to try harder," he said. "In our new fall schedule for prime time, the largest component — almost 40 percent — is comedy."

But Simon and other lawmakers signaled growing impatience with the industry, especially after viewing excerpts of some of this month's most violent prime-time broadcasts.

At Friday's hearing — which was televised live on C-Span — Simon showed video clips of promotions for several made-for-TV films airing this month.

Violent previews

Guns blazed and bodies dropped in previews of "Murder in the Heartland," "Ambush in Waco," "When Love Kills," "Legacy of Lies," "Kung Fu: The Legend Continues," and "Aliens 2."

"There is something wrong with an industry that puts on the tube so much negative material that my grandchildren are precluded from turning on the TV sets by their parents because they don't want them to see all of that violence," Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, told network executives Friday.

"I don't want them to see all that violence," Metzenbaum said.

"The television industry ought to recognize one thing and never forget it: They don't own the airwaves, they just have franchises. And what Congress giveth, Congress can taketh away. I think we've had enough," he said.

Even Sen. Dianne Feinstein, whose home state of California is the focal point of the entertainment industry and the seedbed of most programming, said she would consider imposing mandatory restrictions.

"I don't see the industry regulating itself," Feinstein said. "(Congress) must begin to take some action. Otherwise, we're a paper tiger."

Reducing the number of violent shows would appear to make good business sense, because the public generally has responded to TV mayhem by changing channels, according to ratings compiled by the A.C. Nielsen Co.

In early May, for example, the top 10 shows in order, were "Cheers," "Home Improvement," "Seinfeld," "Roseanne," "Home Improvement: Special," "60 Minutes," "ABC Monday Night Movie: Tommyknockers, Part 2," "Murder, She Wrote," "Coach" and

scared to show what they should be showing," Norris said.

"You can have all the sex you want on TV, but if you hit somebody it's the end of the world. To me, sex is much more detrimental than a guy getting beat up," he said.

"I never felt watching an action movie was going to affect my children," Norris said. "If I did, I wouldn't take them. If the public felt that way about me, they wouldn't be showing my movies as often as they do on television."

Pledge by executives

At Friday's hearing before Simon's Judiciary subcommittee, network executives pledged that their fall prime-time lineups — and their programs for next May's sweeps period — would be less violent.

"We have met your challenge to show progress. The proof is in our program selections," NBC entertainment president Warren Littlefield said.

"Our decisions in arranging that schedule were directly affected by our constant and growing concern for decreasing excessive violence," he said.

Stringer told the subcommittee that CBS has accepted a "leading role" in reducing violence in its programming.

"We have stepped forward. But we must do more, and we will," he said.

"CBS reaffirms its commitment as to how violence is depicted on our network, and reassures you of our commitment to apply reasonable, contemporary standards to our programming reflecting that high degree of concern," Stringer said.

Public's taste may be changing

VIOLENCE / From Page 8

"PrimeTime Live."

Perhaps the most violent show of the week, the 1989 theatrical movie "Lethal Weapon II," was 57th in the Nielsen's with a 9.4 rating. That means about 8.7 million of 93.1 million households tuned in, compared with 18.7 million for top-rated "Cheers."

The week before on ABC, the Arnold Schwarzenegger action film "Total Recall" was beaten by a wide margin by the softer "Fried Green Tomatoes" on NBC in the same time slot. "Total Recall" had a 13.1 rating (12.2 million households), while "Fried Green Tomatoes" had a 23.8 (22.2 million homes).

Fierce competition

Stringer said the growing number of cable and other programming outlets has made competition fierce for the kinds of nonviolent programs critics praise.

"It's not very easy to find quality for all these channels," he said.

Cable executives told Simon's subcommittee that they also are addressing the issue.

"I cannot tell this panel that USA Network's programming is wholly nonviolent," David Kenin, executive vice president of programming for USA Networks, testified.

"Violence exists in society, in television programs and on the the daily newscasts," Kenin said. "We believe that we have a responsibility not to show gratuitous violence, graphic violence or programming which glorifies violence."

The entertainment networks have broadcast standards divisions whose job is to limit gratuitous violence and sex on television.

Christine Hikawa, head of standards and practices for ABC, said

the network is particularly sensitive about children's programming, in recognition of the propensity for children to imitate what they see.

"With the Roadrunner and the Coyote, they're out in the desert. All of the violence is done with gigantic boulders or huge rockets, things children wouldn't have access to," she said. "For children, it's not a relatable scenario."

"Imitation is the first key," Hikawa said. "We'd never show a child slapping someone. Another question is access. We'd never let a character use a common object to hurt someone, like a hammer or a kitchen knife."

But others question the notion that young children draw a distinction between fantasy and fact, especially when it's portrayed on a television screen.

"No one could seriously believe that children don't imitate," said Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-North Dakota.

"Why on earth would advertisers invest the money they invest in programming if they didn't believe that people imitate?" Dorgan said. "Children pick up their cues from television about how to solve problems, how to look cool."

Concern about cartoons

Littlefield said concern about the effect of cartoons prompted NBC to rejuggle its Saturday morning lineup.

"At NBC, a year ago we abandoned our Saturday programming for news shows and a block of teen-oriented comedies," he said.

Vradenberg said Fox executives also are especially concerned about programs aired when children are likely to be watching.

"We consistently try to put out a product that we would ourselves, as parents, be comfortable having our

kids watch," he said.

Like the other networks, Fox screens shows for offensive content, even "reality" shows such as the series "Cops," which features police officers making actual arrests, he said.

"Even that show is toned down from what reality is," Vradenberg said.

"Some groups say the show is too graphic, too real, but at the same time we have people in law enforcement and victims groups who praise this show, because it shows the real consequences of illegal acts," he said.

Hikawa said ABC's policies call for allowing violence only when it is needed to carry the story.

"When it is necessary, we try to make it as palatable as possible, and to see to it that all of the consequences of violence are shown," she said, adding that the key to reviewing programs is to hone in on the impressions that specific scenes create.

"I don't think we're really trying to count blows," she said.

"Sometimes it's too many impacts, or too many gunshots or the blood. Other times, it's the music or the sound effects. There are so many factors that contribute to the intensity of a scene," Hikawa said.

Is violence understated?

She said that some editing fuels criticism that television violence

isn't graphic enough — downplaying the pain and suffering of victims.

"Sure, there are some experts who say we should show all the blood and the gore, but for us it's a taste issue," she said. "We're a mass medium, and there are some things we're not going to show."

Instead, the network tends to portray the consequences of violence in broader terms, Hikawa said.

"When two teen-agers come at each other with guns and one of them ends up dead, you can show the impact on the family," she said.

Tony Thomopoulos, president of television for Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, said broadcasters have a responsibility to decide what to put on the air, but parents should take the lead in controlling what their children watch.

"Parents should exercise responsibility," he said.

Robert Peck, executive director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union, said viewers have the power to curb televised violence.

"I think the appropriate way to deal with the issue is for viewers to express themselves to the broadcaster by turning off any program they find too violent or otherwise offensive," he said. "If broadcasters lose viewers, they'll change."

Mark Sonnenberg, director of programming for KCOP-TV, an independent station in Los Angeles, said he regularly receives complaints when the station broadcasts action movies even though the station advises viewers when a program contains graphic violence.

"I get calls from people who say, 'Oh, my son watched a movie on your station last night, and now he's walking around talking about it, I can't believe you put that on,'" he said. "But parents have to show some responsibility. Some movies aren't aimed at children."

But some executives said there are signs that viewers and advertisers are growing weary of televised mayhem.

Murphy said ABC aired "Murder in the Heartland," based on the real-life killing rampage of Charlie Starkweather, because "we thought it was a good idea at the time."

But it got poor ratings and was "an economic disaster," he said.

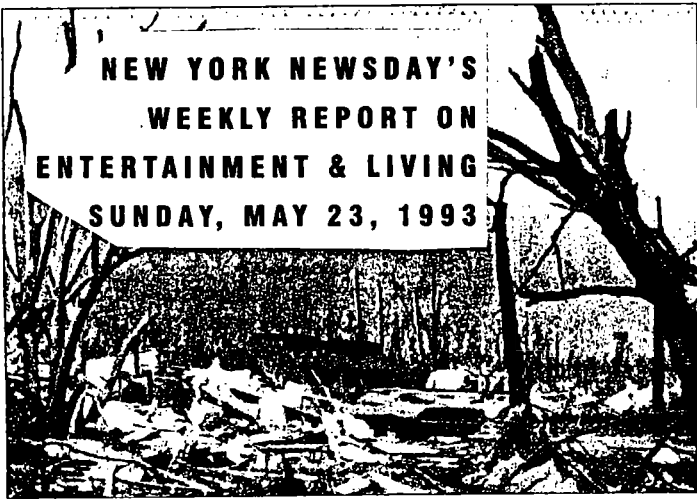
"All the advertisers left the show because it had the violence in it, and it didn't get particularly good ratings," Murphy said.

Fox's Vradenberg agreed.

"The marketplace may be a great regulator," he said. "Both the advertisers and the audiences are getting turned off to this material."

Daily News Staff Writer Diane Joy Moca contributed to this story.

**NEW YORK NEWSDAY'S
WEEKLY REPORT ON
ENTERTAINMENT & LIVING
SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1993**



Newsday / Audrey C. Tiernan

**Aug. 24,
1992**

Hurricane Andrew hits southern Florida and Louisiana, killing 30, leaving 250,000 homeless.

**May 24,
1993**

Scenes of devastation are back on TV in NBC's movie.



**Feb. 26,
1993**

A bomb at the World Trade Center kills six people and injures 1,000.

**May 26,
1993**

Actor James Avery, in the movie, is caught in the wreckage.



Newsday / Daniel Sherhan



NBC's Terror Spree

BY VERNE GAY
STAFF WRITER

H

OW FAST IS fast in the world of TV movies these days? Consider:

- Filming for the TV movie on David Koresh was complete even before the Waco siege ended;

- Show biz agents and producers, in search of rights for the TV movie, were picking through the ruins of Miami only a couple days after Hurricane Andrew;

- The deal for the TV movie on the World Trade Center explosion was locked up only an hour after the terrorist bomb exploded.

NBC has bunched together these three disaster movies to give the network a rock 'em, sock 'em finale to the May sweeps: "In the Line of Duty: Ambush in Waco" (airing tonight at 9), "Triumph over Disaster: the Hurricane Andrew Story" (tomorrow at 9 p.m.), and "Without Warning: Terror in the Towers" (Wednesday at 9 p.m.).

But the fact that these three movies are on the schedule so soon after their real-life counterparts is the most telling evidence yet that a radical change has come over the landscape of made-for-TV

**You've seen
the tragedies,
now watch
the movies**

movies: We have entered the age of the quickie movie, where disaster strikes one day and the TV drama seemingly comes out the next.

In the "old" days it might take as long as a year to make a "ripped from the headlines" movie. Now, the emphasis is on speed, and, more than ever before, real-life drama. And, of course, the subject doesn't have to be a disaster — as in the three Amy Fisher movies. But speed doesn't necessarily translate into cheapness: Although some of these telepics, like "Towers" and "Andrew," will use

actual news footage to sharpen the sense of drama, they are often more expensive to produce because of special effects and higher costs involved in post-production. (The standard cost for a two-hour network movie is about \$2.8 million, although each of these is believed to have cost more than \$3 million.)

Moreover, a network doesn't necessarily need "name" actors, or a first-rate script for some of these movies. But there is often a frantic chase for rights. Indeed, a cottage industry of ambulance chasers has sprung up that specializes in the procurement of victims' stories. Without rights, the movie cannot be made in most cases. The producers of "Terror in the Towers" paid an estimated \$100,000 for rights to the stories of about eight firefighters and police officers, as well as two teachers of trapped schoolchildren from Brooklyn's P.S. 95.

But that is considered small change. CBS paid James and Jennifer Stolpa, who were stranded in a Nevada snowstorm last January, an estimated \$500,000 for their rights.

Rights costs have escalated so rapidly that some producers are beginning to resist paying them: "The whole issue of chasing rights is awful for all of us, and we try to avoid it," says Ken Kaufman, the executive producer of "In the Line of..." series.

There are more important and disturbing social and ethical issues surrounding the quickie disaster movie: Are the networks exploiting human tragedy by airing films so soon after the real event? The networks say they are not. Producers of the three NBC movies say their films are celebrations of the human spirit, and tales of heroism. "Terror in the Towers" is about "ordinary people under extraordinary circumstances," says producer, John McMahon, president of Wilshire Court Productions. "By the end of the day they have been in combat and risen to the occasion."

But critics say such movies are just the logical extension of the media's preoccupation with human misery. Talk shows, tabloid magazines and local newscasts all traffic in disaster, so why not the TV movie?

"We become desensitized to these disasters and crimes when they are fictionalized," says Carole Lieberman, a Beverly Hills psychiatrist who specializes in the media. "It's like the concept of building tolerance to a drug: After a while you need more and more to get the same result... The scary thing is, where does it all lead?"

Of the four networks, NBC has so far exhibited the greatest appetite for this type of movie. The reason is Don Ohl-



Feb. 28, 1993

Four federal agents and at least two cult members die in a raid of David Koresh's compound.



May 23, 1993

Timothy Daly appears as Koresh in the TV movie.

meyer, president, NBC West Coast, and the network's new head of entertainment.

A burly Notre Dame graduate and Emmy-winning producer (ABC's "Monday Night Football"), Ohlmeyer later became an independent producer and developed a penchant for the nonfiction disaster flick ("Special Bulletin," "Under Siege").

Ohlmeyer couldn't be reached for comment, but one producer described the executive as an "event" programmer who sees the ability to get a project on the air quickly as something special. "I don't know if everyone agrees with type of thinking," the producer said.

Not everyone does. Some producers are concerned that the rush to get something, anything, on the air could mean a sacrifice in quality. But of far greater concern is the shifting of priorities — away from a polished script to procurement of rights.

Disaster movies are in vogue because a network can easily get rights from survivors or other individuals who were pivotal in the unfolding drama. As one source puts it, "You're not waiting for the outcome of a trial . . . The only reason the Amy Fisher movies were able to get on the air so quickly was because she

TELEVISION

entered a plea bargain."

But the emphasis on rights means the network also has less control over a movie's content. The process has a danger of spinning out of control because the network is relying on securing a package of rights instead of a script. Getting rights is also done to avoid lawsuits by people who claim their story was stolen or misappropriated; but this also tends to distort the movies because participants sometimes have radically different perspectives.

"This business is sick," says a TV executive, referring to the scramble for rights. "Anytime a disaster or true crime happens, or a tabloid show has it on the air, the next day the phone calls start coming in. We don't even have to read the newspaper."

But can the stories of one person, let alone more, accurately convey a tragedy like Waco, or the World Trade Center? "You have to step back and get some perspective to find something socially redeeming," says the same executive. "And I don't know if you can do that until way after the fact."

Each movie developed in slightly different fashion. On Friday, Feb. 26, just moments after CNN began airing pictures from the World Trade Center explosion, producers began calling the networks about making a movie. (NBC reported getting some 15 to 20 calls from producers within a few hours.)

But McMahon, a veteran TV producer who headed Johny Carson's production company, got the jump. He immediately joined forces with New York-based producer Madelon Rosenfeld, who began the rights process. McMahon then called Ohlmeyer, who green-lighted the show even as thousands of people were still trapped in the building.

Within 24 to 28 hours, Rosenfeld contacted the teachers from the Brooklyn school and a handful of others whose stories would form the basis of the movie. "It took six days to lock everything up," McMahon says.

Rosenfeld and McMahon then hired Stephen Downing, a writer and former Los Angeles deputy police chief, and another writer, Dwayne Poole, to whip up a script. "What they wanted was impossibly quick," says Downing.

But the two men went to work. By Tuesday, March 9, they had "interviewed everyone we could," Downing said. That night, on the plane back to Los Angeles, they divided the stories and began to write.

The script was finished by mid-March, and a few days later, filming started in Portland, Ore. The entire shoot took 19 days; by the end of April, they delivered a "first cut" of the movie.

The Waco siege presented a different problem. NBC decided to do the movie as an "In the Line of . . ." production, an ongoing series about federal officers who are killed on the job. In fact, producer Kaufman bought no rights because of a law prohibiting federal employees from selling them. NBC and Kaufman decided to focus the story on cult leader David Koresh (played by Tim Daly) rather than the siege itself or the death of the four federal agents.

In a bizarre example of art imitating life, Kaufman built a replica of

the compound a few miles away, hired 250 extras, and re-staged the first storming of the compound — while the real siege was still in progress. But the real-life ending — the fatal fire that consumed the compound — occurred shortly after filming concluded, so tonight viewers will see a text "crawl" at the movie's end telling them what happened, rather than a re-creation of the inferno.

NBC's "Hurricane Andrew" movie kicked into high gear only when Richard Lobo, general manager of WTVJ, an NBC-owned station, called the network a few days after the storm to say that a "frenzy of rights buying" was taking place. Actor Tony Danza was among those scouting the ravaged city for an ABC production still in the works.

Because WTVJ had played a key role during the hurricane (its meteorologist, Bryan Norcross, was on the air throughout the storm), Lobo wondered whether a movie could be based, in part, on the station.

"I went down with great reluctance because the last thing I wanted to do was exploit the hell out of someone's tragedy," says producer Brian Pike.

But he was given the "luxury" of time — early on, the movie had no firm air date — as well as a commitment to do it without

'The worst thing you can do is drag an audience through something like this and, when it's over, they feel dirty.'

— 'Andrew' producer Brian Pike

rights. (The only personal rights he bought were Norcross's.) Pike and his colleagues interviewed dozens of storm victims to get what he called "representative" stories. "When ten people tell you [the same story] you realize that this isn't the story of one person, but that it was a universal experience."

"There's a huge appetite in this country for this kind of material," Pike says. "But the worst thing you can do is drag an audience through something like this and, when it's over, they feel dirty. You hope that they are little bit better for having the experience."

Whether any of these movies turn out to be an uplifting — or degrading — experience for the viewers, or for those who had to suffer through the traumas, will be known within the next few days, of course. But the more pertinent question: When will viewers and the networks say "enough already"?

Perry Simon, a senior vice president with NBC Entertainment, recently told reporters that the mayhem movie "is not a trend for NBC . . . We've looked at the last five years and the percentage of movies based on [real-life tragedies] has not changed — it is neither up or down. The thing is, five years ago the public didn't have as many 'Geraldos' or 'Current Affair'-type shows, so there's a sense that, 'God, there's so much more of this stuff.'"

But are these three movies bleak previews of the future, in which every tragedy will be quickly recycled into family entertainment? The answer: perhaps, and that is the danger. "There's such a blurred line between reality and fantasy, as well as a progression of violence," says Lieberman, the psychiatrist. "It's like the fall of the Roman Empire . . . We're going back to being barbarians."

Free-lance writer Denise Flaim contributed to this story.

Groups seek limits on TV violence

By JONATHAN D. MILLER
Raleigh Extra staff

Two Triangle community groups that believe a gun ban for minors will only be of limited use in reducing school violence are calling for restrictions on violence in television programming.

Banning guns helps, but it fails to address some of the causes of school violence, including gratuitous TV violence, say members of the Center for Peace Education and the Christian Action League.

"These war toys are linked with programming," said Marion O'Malley, director of the Center for Peace Education in Chapel Hill. After children watch shows such as the Ninja Turtles, "they beg parents for the toy, then play with the toy exactly as dictated by how they see it on TV," she said.

Programming directors at local TV stations said it was unfair to place the blame for school violence on television, and that restrictions wouldn't

"I don't think the networks are out there blindly offering programming that is excessively violent."

JIM GRIFFIN
PROGRAM MANAGER, WRAL-TV

have much impact.

The state House and Senate, in response to mounting concerns over school violence — including a school-related shooting near Millbrook High School in Raleigh — recently passed bills making possession of a gun by a minor a felony. Legislators are currently working to pass a single bill.

The community groups applaud the state effort but also support initiatives by the federal government and the entertainment industry to address a growing concern over TV violence. The initiatives include a proposed requirement for warnings at the beginning of violent programs and a set of voluntary standards on violence adopted last winter by the ABC, CBS and NBC television networks.

Joe Lennon of Wake Forest, president of the Christian Action League, said league members have complained to cable system operators about some of the programming, with little effect.

Lennon recently asked his cable operator to block an offensive channel in his home, citing a Federal Communications Commission rule that allows that, but the operator has failed to comply with the request, he said.

Lennon and O'Malley support a bill introduced in Congress this month by Sen. David Durenberger, D-Minn., that requires warnings to be broadcast at the beginning of violent TV



NOT FOR MEN ONLY: Angie Dickinson, in her role as the evil Josie Ito in ABC's recent mini series 'Wild Palms,' proves that women characters are fully capable of perpe-

trating violence on television. Two Triangle groups, the Christian Action League and the Center for Peace Education, are seeking to limit violence in TV programming.

programs. Durenberger has cited a doubling in the ratio of murders to population since the introduction of TV sets in American homes as evidence of the need for some controls. The bill is currently in committee.

The TV network directors, in a response to pressure from Congress, signed an agreement last December that sets production standards rather than instituting a warning system.

The standards, which are more like guidelines than requirements, include the discouragement of gratuitous or excessive violence, as well as the discouragement of scenes that depict vi-

olence as glamorous or as an acceptable solution to conflict. Exceptions are fine, the directors said, when the overall theme of a program is "clearly and unambiguously anti-violent."

O'Malley called the standards a "P.R. move," and Carole Lieberman, president of the National Coalition on Television Violence, said they were "full of holes."

"What are they going to do, reduce it to two bullet holes from three bullet holes?" Lieberman said. "They don't know how to evaluate violence in the context of the script."

Jim Griffin, program manager at

WRAL-TV, said he doesn't see much of a problem with violence on television.

"I don't think the networks are out there blindly offering programming that is excessively violent," Griffin said.

Occasionally, his station will express concern to the CBS network over a planned new series that may be too violent, as it did several weeks ago when CBS began running "Walker, Texas Ranger," featuring martial arts star Chuck Norris.

"We thought it was a little much," Griffin said.

Photo submitted

AUSTRALIA
SUNDAY AGE
2 May, 1993

Advertising industry finds heaven

Having saturated planet Earth, American advertisers are taking their messages into outer space.
Lynne Cossar reports.

LOOK. Up in the sky. It's a bird ... it's a plane ... it's Superman. No. It's the first American advertisement in space.

In early June, an unmanned rocket, partially funded by the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA), will blast off from Wallops Island, Virginia, carrying a special message beyond Earth's atmosphere.

Emblazoned on the main fuselage will be the words 'Last Action Hero'; a reference not to humankind's endeavor to conquer the final frontier or its relationship with the comic book hero who hails from another planet, but to the title of a forthcoming adventure-fantasy movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Columbia Pictures has reportedly paid about \$US500,000 to get the name of its star — and his latest movie — which is due for release in the US on 16 June, painted on the rocket and on three of its six boosters.

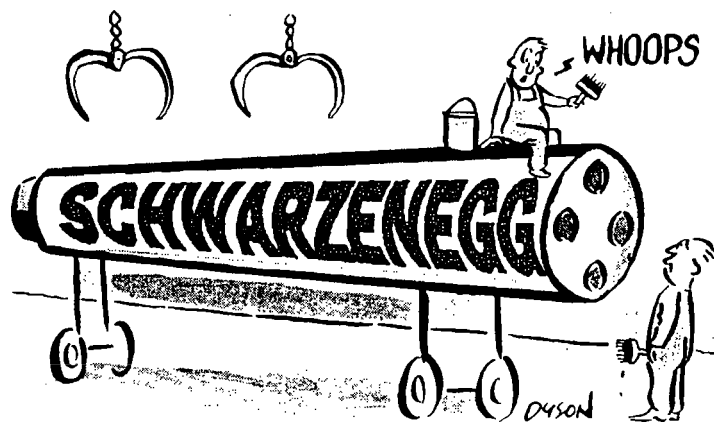
The choice of America's first ad in space has incensed some people, who claim that Schwarzenegger represents everything that is wrong with the US.

Dr Carole Lieberman, the chairperson of the National Coalition on Television Violence, is furious that taxpayers — who are helping to finance the mission — have had no say in the decision that the first commercial being pitched to extra-terrestrials is Earth's glorification of violence.

"Next thing we will be selling ad space on the White House," she says. "There is no one in the US who has promoted violence as much as Schwarzenegger in the past decade. It just shows how sick and depraved our country has become."

NASA too has come under fire, not only because it was Hollywood that won the contract, but that it apparently cost Columbia Pictures so little. This year advertisers had to pay a record \$850,000 for a 30-second spot during the live telecast of the Super Bowl, yet Columbia paid \$350,000 less than that for an ad that has attracted national attention.

Although the rocket is to orbit Earth at a distance of about 300 nautical



miles — so the ad will be almost impossible to see without satellite tracking equipment — Columbia admits the publicity surrounding the launch has warranted the expense.

For its part, NASA says it had nothing to do with awarding the contract. The \$30 million rocket is owned by a consortium, which includes the University of Tennessee and private corporations, who are interested in space research and commerce.

But while NASA may not own the rocket, it did provide up to half the funds in grants to the university. This funding arrangement is part of the COMET venture, a joint effort of NASA with education groups and private corporations, designed to help establish the infrastructure for a viable, commercial space industry.

Mr Charles Redmund, a spokesman for NASA, says the space agency is trying to provide a more business-like access to space. But is a plug for Schwarzenegger's latest movie the most appropriate way to help finance it? "It's improper for a government official to comment on that," he says.

However, Mr Redmund, does admit that there are very few regulations on the books when it comes to advertising in space. "It's a new arena of human endeavor."

Crass versus cash. That's what it boils down to. While space may hold

the key to many of Earth's secrets, the question of who is going to pay for them is a real and pressing one. While government is looking more and more to private industry, private industry is looking more and more to advertisers to help offset the cost.

THE private firm that handles COMET's promotional efforts, Space Marketing Inc., says it could have sold dozens of ads on the rocket, including promotions for fast-food chains and soft drinks. Its president, Mr Mike Lawson, says it chose Columbia Pictures because of two reasons: "'Last Action Hero' is a story about heroes and Arnold Schwarzenegger is one incredible spokesperson," he says.

"I don't see any correlation between selling something on a rocket and selling violence," he says. "No matter what was put on the side of the rocket someone would object."

The opening of space to private interests has a number of groups worried. Although space advertising was pioneered by the former Soviet Union, which in 1990 launched a rocket featuring ads for such companies as Minolta, Sony and a maker of sanitary napkins, it is the US which is now leading the way.

Space Marketing Inc., has plans to put a mile-long billboard in space. To

be mounted on an inflatable platform, it would be visible from earth for about 14 days before being released to burn up on its re-entry into the earth's atmosphere.

The billboard — scheduled to be launched in 1996 — would help finance a privately funded environmental research project. But the mention of a billboard has made some environmental groups wary. Mr Lawson says the whole project has been misunderstood.

He says the billboard would carry a logo — say for example a green dot — which would symbolise regard for the environment. Advertisers may then buy that logo for inclusion on their products. As yet no deals have been signed. But it is possible a green dot may start appearing on McDonald's hamburger wrappers. Maybe even on the soles of the latest Reebok running shoes. It's called echo advertising; more subliminal, but, according to Space Marketing Inc., less offensive.

Not surprisingly, Mr Lawson is guarded when he talks about the project. Yes, the logo would be visible from earth, but only during the daylight. Yes, it would be seen by more people than Americans, probably about 60 per cent of the world. Yes, there may be smaller, written advertisements on the billboard. But no, these would not be visible to the naked eye.

Mr Lawson argues that no advertiser is going to be so blatant in their message as to risk the wrath of the consumer. But in the absence of firm regulations, will everyone be as considerate as Space Marketing Inc. claims to be?

Mr Louis Friedman, the executive director of the Planetary Society, says there are laws prohibiting weapons and nuclear waste in space, but none banning obscene advertising.

Mr Friedman says there has always been gimmickry in space. "I don't think the public gets fooled by these attempts," he says. But Mr Friedman does believe there should be broader public discussion and debate. "Space is a global concern."

Daily News

THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1993



CELEBRITIES

Marilyn Beck & Stacy Jenel Smith

Star wars: The National Coalition on Television Violence intends to announce today that it is filing suit against Columbia Pictures in an attempt to prevent the studio from placing that highly hyped ad for **Arnold Schwarzenegger's** "The Last Action Hero" on the side of a NASA rocket that is scheduled to blast into space next month. **Dr. Carole Lieberman**, chairman of the NCTV, said, "Is nothing sacred anymore? Has the space program become nothing more than an example of commercialization run amok, just to further the glamorization of primitive violence?"



Bob Halvorsen/Daily News

Movie ads protested

Dr. Carole Lieberman, chairwoman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, condemns the advertising campaign for Arnold Schwarzenegger's new movie, "The Last Action Hero," in front of Sony's Columbia Studios on Thursday. The campaign includes an ad of a photo of the actor on a National Aeronautics and Space Administration rocket to be sent into space and a

sweepstakes in which the winner takes part in the launching of the rocket. The group filed a restraining order Thursday to prevent Columbia Pictures from continuing the ad campaign. The coalition contends that Schwarzenegger's movies and similar films glorify violence and have negative effects on children. At right holding a sign is activist Jerry Rubin.

Daily News

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1993



The National Coalition on Television Violence named "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles" the most violent show on network TV.

'Heads in sand' over TV violence

By Cindy Cullen Chapman

Dr. Carole Lieberman, national chairwoman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, is a media psychiatrist specializing in the effect of the media in general on people's minds. For 10 years, she has studied television in regard to violence.

TV violence: Awareness vs. action

■ From page 1D

"I realized that although we're affected very much by everything in the media, the worst thing by far is violence," Lieberman said from her office in Beverly Hills, Calif. "It's so clear that people are being motivated to be violent, to be aggressive, by the media."

The efforts of her group are getting mixed results, she says.

"I think the easiest way to put it is that things have improved to the extent that (NCTV) has definitely increased awareness on the part of the media consumer and the people in the entertainment industry of the research about the effects of media violence on people.

"However, there's a big lag between people knowing about it and doing something about it."

Lieberman accuses the networks of "sticking their heads in the sand ever since television was invented" regarding the effects of violence.

"Certainly in the last 10 years, they've realized they can't do that. Viewers are becoming more educated. They still like to pretend the link doesn't exist, that it's not correct, that it doesn't exist, but it's harder for them to do when the information is more prevalent.

"In a general way, we are responsible for that increased level of awareness in consumers and the industry."

In one of their newsletters, NCTV named "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles" the most violent show on network TV this season. The show's creators called NCTV. "They wanted to know which episodes we

"It's so clear that people are being motivated to be violent, to be aggressive, by the media."

Carole Lieberman
media psychiatrist

watched, trying to say they weren't all violent. Well, it was a random selection of shows during a period of time.

"But this was good. It shows that people are aware of our research and are getting nervous about it. It is having an effect . . . it is increasing the consciousness."

Contact: National Coalition on Television Violence, Dr. Carole Lieberman, National Chairperson, 247 S. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212.

Chicago Tribune

Sunday, March 28, 1993

Business

Media moguls ready to tone down violence

By Pat Widder
Chicago Tribune

NEW YORK—Listen closely. That *ka-chunk, ka-chunk* you hear is the sound of media moguls toting up the profits from such fare as "Beauty and the Beast" and "Groundhog Day," and calculating the ratings for "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman."

It's also the sound of a clock ticking toward December, when time runs out on a three-year exemption from antitrust laws granted to the television networks to work together on the issue of violence.

And in the background are the barely perceptible sounds of a sea of change in how society views violence on television and in the movies.

Make no mistake: America still glorifies violence in ways that seem obscene in some parts of the world.

While Americans say they hate violence in the movies, "Terminator 2" rolled through as the top-grossing movie in 1991.

More than 20,000 Americans are murdered each year, and there are an estimated 200 million guns in the U.S.

So it is unlikely that violence on TV and in movies is going to disappear.

But something does seem to be changing.

The people who run the studios, make the movies and put shows on TV are recognizing that they play a role in the glorification of violence, according to comments made at two recent industry conferences.

They may finally be getting it—"it" being that 80 percent of the American people are deeply troubled by violence in entertainment and think it harms society,

according to a Times Mirror poll released last week.

Consider that the biggest surprise of the current television season is the runaway success of a series about a frontier doctor in a skirt—the aforementioned Dr. Quinn, on CBS.

And "The Last Action Hero," starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, among the world's most bankable stars, will very deliberately be rated PG-13 when it arrives from Columbia Pictures in June. Five years ago, say studio heads, such a rating would have been the kiss of death.

It's about time, says U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), who has been pushing this issue since 1985, when he flipped on a television set in LaSalle County and saw someone being sawed in half with a chainsaw.

"I'm old enough to know it isn't real, but it bothered me," said Simon. "I'm also a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union," he added, emphasizing that he doesn't favor government controls. "But somehow in a free society, we have to deal with this."

Simon wrote and shepherded through Congress the Television Violence Act, which gave the networks the antitrust exemption so they legally could get together to talk about the issue. Last December the heads of the networks agreed to joint standards on entertainment violence.

And in August, the networks, the Motion Picture Association of America, the National Cable Television Association, the studios and independent producers will convene an industry-wide conference in Los Angeles to discuss further steps to take.

"Congress is mad about [this], and they're right to be," said CBS President Howard Stringer, speaking to a packed conference on the entertainment business sponsored by Variety magazine and Wertheim Schroder & Co. last week.

"Movies are so powerful," Michael Fuchs, chairman and chief executive of HBO, said at the same conference. "They set a cultural tone." He cited the "Lethal Weapon" movies and many of Clint Eastwood's films that "glorify violence. That doesn't cause violence, but it drifts down through society."

He added, "We are not the problem, but we are part of the problem."

"We are the 20th Century's defining life form," said Peter Guber, chairman and chief executive of Sony Pictures Entertainment. Pacing back and forth across the dais and gesturing to the crowd, Guber asked, "Do we reflect our culture or do we shape it?"

He didn't specifically answer his own question, but if entertainment shapes culture, the violence in entertainment plays a role in the culture. And if it merely reflects the culture, as Brandon Tartikoff, former head of NBC programming and Paramount Pictures, once noted, there should be as many depictions of churchgoing as of violence. After all, Tartikoff said, millions of people go to church every Sunday.

"We need to admit more responsibility," Stringer said to applause from the audience. Violence has "more to do with guns and bullets than TV," he said, but it has to do with TV, too. "We're going to be much tougher this fall" on programming choices, he added.

"If you deglamorize violence, I think it will have an impact," said Simon. "It's a little like arms control. If everyone agrees not to produce nuclear weapons, then no one is at an advantage by doing so."

"I sense a societal change. Movies are a reflection of society," said Columbia Chairman Mark Canton, speaking at the same forum.

Violence

Continued from page 1

Canton noted that a PG-rated movie was three times as likely to gross \$100 million as an R-rated movie. Further, he said, 40 percent of PG films grossed more than \$20 million, while only 20 percent of R-rated movies broke that barrier.

"I am not one to suggest that you shouldn't make R-rated movies," added Canton. "But the opportunities for PG have to be looked at carefully." Going from R to PG-13 is "often a simple thing."

James Robinson, chairman and chief executive of Morgan Creek Productions, whose hits include "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves," says bad-guy movies are losing out to relationship movies. "Clearly love is back," he said.

Jack Valenti, president and chief executive of the Motion Picture Association of America, noted at the conference that entertainment violence "is a problem, and it's a political problem."

Valenti, like Simon, emphasizes



Arnold Schwarzenegger stars with Danny Madigan in "The Last Action Hero."

opposition to government-imposed sanctions.

"I'm an implacable foe of censorship," said Valenti. But both

also cite the entertainment industry's conscious shift in recent years on the casual use of tobacco, drugs and alcohol as a model for toning down violence.

The offhand use of such substances has been virtually "expunged," said Valenti, "not by edict or regulation but by the combined efforts of... creative people."

Fuchs said the movies HBO makes have a "low violence factor"; recent made-for-HBO films include "Barbarians at the Gate," "Stalin" and "Hostages." But, Fuchs admitted, the theatrical movies licensed for showing on HBO are "quite high" in violence.

He said he had been troubled some years ago after HBO televised "The Deer Hunter," the Vietnam War film with a graphic sequence of U.S. soldiers playing Russian roulette. "We found out after the fact that people were trying Russian roulette and were killing themselves," said Fuchs.

At a recent International Radio and Television Society lunch, the network entertainment programming heads were asked to name the biggest surprise of the past season. They agreed it was CBS' "Dr. Quinn."

ABC Entertainment President Edward Harbert said, "It's wonderful when viewers slap us hard on the face and say, 'We'll watch this.'"

"We thought Saturday was dead," said CBS Entertainment President Jeff Sagansky. "We just weren't programming right." He added, "There's too much true crime on TV," and CBS' success with such fare as "Evening Shade" and "Medicine Woman" prove "violence is not all they want to see."

Still, there is clearly a long way to go.

As for the PG-13 rating for "The Last Action Hero," Dr. Carole Lieberman, who chairs the Beverly Hills-based National Coalition on Television Violence, says, so what? She has seen a preview trailer for the movie and said she counted 30 separate violent acts.

"A PG-13 rating is meaningless in terms of actually instructing parents about violence," said Lieberman. And as for prime-time television, she said, "someone was murdered every 78 minutes in prime time last year. That's up from every 107 minutes in 1991."

March 22, 1993

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Crain's International Newspaper of Marketing • In Two Sections • Section 1 • \$2.50 • In Canada \$3.50

LAST MINUTE NEWS

Group wants Arnold off rocket ad

PASADENA, Calif.—National Coalition on Television Violence, the media watchdog group, wants the National Aeronautics & Space Administration and Columbia Pictures to scrub plans to emblazon Arnold Schwarzenegger's name and the title of his summer movie, "Last Action Hero," on the hull of an unmanned rocket. "I can't think of anything worse than Arnold Schwarzenegger" as the subject of the first U.S. ad in space, said Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist who's chairwoman of the coalition. The group disapproves of violence in Mr. Schwarzenegger's past films, although this one is expected to be rated PG-13.

PASADENA STAR-NEWS

March 20, 1993



UCLA PROFESSOR Carole Lieberman discusses the protest over NASA's decision to place an advertisement for an upcoming movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger on a rocket scheduled for launching in May. The protest centered on the advertisement's image of violence.
Staff photo by MICHAEL HAERING

Movie ad on NASA rocket sends opponents into orbit

By ROBERTO CENICEROS
LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE

Launching a rocket with Arnold Schwarzenegger's name painted on the side could send the wrong message to extraterrestrials, the chairwoman for the National Coalition on Television Violence said yesterday.

The statement came during a press conference held outside the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to protest a splashy advertisement planned for Schwarzenegger's upcoming film, "Last Action Hero."

"Arnold Schwarzenegger and his movies have become an icon, a symbol of all the violence in the media that is spilling into the streets," said Carole Lieberman, a Beverly Hills psychiatrist and professor at UCLA. "Our society has become consumed with greed and violence. Is it the message we would want to send to extraterrestrials?"

JPL officials have said the rocket "is not a NASA rocket but rather a commercial launch vehicle built and marketed by a pri-

"Arnold Schwarzenegger and his movies have become an icon, a symbol of all the violence in the media that is spilling into the streets. . . . Is it the message we would want to send to extraterrestrials?"

*Carole Lieberman,
UCLA professor*

vate firm, EER Systems Corp. of Vienna, Va."

Columbia Pictures has said the rocket will carry Schwarzenegger's name and the movie title into space.

"NASA and JPL have no connection with the sales of advertis-

ing space on the rocket," a JPL statement said. "JPL believes the coalition's argument is with the advertiser, Columbia Pictures, and not with NASA or JPL, and that the staging of a protest activity at the laboratory is inappropriate."

Lieberman was joined by four supporters during the protest.

The coalition held its press conference in front of JPL, Lieberman said, because the facility contracts with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

But the National Coalition on Television Violence said NASA spent \$85 million to fund a commercial experiment program that will partially pay for the launch.

Columbia Pictures issued a statement claiming that "Last Action Hero" spoofs the rising tide of violence and is therefore anti-violence.

But Lieberman said she counted 30 acts of violence contained in a three-minute segment of the film.

THE FOOTHILL LEADER

Saturday, March 20, 1993

Group attacks movie promotion

By Jessica Goodheart
Foothill Leader

Columbia Pictures calls its promotion of an upcoming Arnold Schwarzenegger movie on a NASA-launched rocket "possibly the best use" of ad revenues in the history of the film company.

But Carole Lieberman, chair of the National Coalition on Television Violence, doesn't see it that way.

The psychiatrist lambasted NASA and Columbia Pictures for promoting violence in outer space at a press conference Friday outside Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge.

"We Americans need to question NASA and its goals," said Lieberman, who charged that past films featuring the Austrian-born actor glorify violence. Lieberman said studies by her organization revealed that Schwarzenegger movies average 109 acts of violence per hour.

Media violence is "spilling over into our streets," she added.

A JPL engineer who attended the news conference criticized Lieberman's decision to hold the event at the laboratory, which he said had no involvement in the project.

"I think you are doing a disservice to JPL by choosing this location," Michael Batchelder told Lieberman.

A spokesman for JPL echoed Batchelder's sentiments. "We believe the coalition's argument is with the advertiser, Columbia Pictures, and not with us," said JPL Franklin O'Donnell.



Carole Lieberman holds picture of rocket bearing movie advertising.

The laboratory denies any involvement in the decision to sell advertising space on the Conestoga rocket, which is part of a joint effort of NASA with commercial and education groups. JPL is operated by CalTech and receives the majority of its funding from NASA.

NASA spokesman Charles Redmond said that while the space agency helped fund the research and development of the project, the rocket was built by a private Virginia-based firm, EER Systems Corp. EER Systems is handling the marketing along with two other companies, he said.

But Lieberman says NASA bears responsibility for the publicity on the rocket, which is being launched from a NASA facility in Virginia in May. "This is very

much a part of NASA," she said.

At the protest, a representative of Columbia Pictures handed out statements defending "The Last Action Hero" and denying that the film promoted violence.

The statement described the film, due out in June, as an "action-adventure fantasy that spoofs the rising tide of violence and stunts in other Hollywood action movies."

The film's title logo will be painted on the main fuselage of the unmanned rocket. Officials of Columbia Pictures refused to say how much the company paid NASA.

Lieberman is urging people to protest the advertising stunt by calling NASA, Columbia Pictures and President Bill Clinton. "I'd hate to do something like a boycott of Columbia," she said.

TV violence real threat to viewers

The national death toll is rising — on TV, at least. In 1992 a person was murdered every 78 minutes on prime time television — a 27 percent jump from the previous year's homicide rate, according to the National Coalition on Television Violence.

"Media violence is the number one health problem in America today," said Dr. Carole Lieberman, California psychiatrist and chair of NCTV. She said statistics show a rising number of murders each year. "And part of that violence is influenced by TV."

Violence levels recorded in 1992 by NCTV are significantly higher than they were in 1980, and violence is portrayed in a much more callous manner, said NCTV researchers.

Fox was named the most violent broadcast network with 11 acts of violence every hour; CBS had nine. The three major networks — ABC, CBS and NBC — averaged 7.7 acts of violence per hour, down from 8.6 last year.

Lieberman cited several studies showing the effects of violence on children:

- ◆ Two groups of children were shown different television programs — one violent, the other non-violent. Researchers noted that when the children played together afterward, those who saw a violent show were more aggressive in their play.

- ◆ The rates of homicide and violent crime have increased steadily since the introduction of television in the late 1940s.

- ◆ Researchers recorded what programs several 8-year-olds watched, and followed them as they grew up. Those who watched more violent programming were more likely to be violent and to be drug and alcohol abusers.

Dr. Robert Gould, NCTV board member, said the danger of glamorizing violence on television is that it glorifies harmful and sometimes fatal acts.

"Violent programs are inextricably connected with the increased violence in our country — in our lives," he said. "We as individuals become desensitized to violence, more accepting of it, and, alas, more prone to practice it as a way of solving life's problems."

Tom Leathers, publisher of the Kansas City newspaper *The Squire*, said viewers don't comprehend the catastrophic result of violence.

"Violence on TV is so commonplace we don't recognize it any more," said Leathers, who has written dozens of articles on the impact of TV violence. "It's just matter of fact to kill."

Gould said any violence on TV, whether it be roughness on the athletic field or brutality on television programs, makes viewers more violent in their own behavior. The New York psychiatrist is a sports violence reviewer, so he said he is particularly concerned with the violence people watch in athletic events.

More irritable, aggressive

"What you see, you take in," he said. People don't necessarily feel more violent, but they are more irritable and more aggressive. "Violence becomes your answer to problems because you see it all the time on TV; you begin to cheer violence."

Lieberman said the negative impact is mainly subconscious. "People see violent images and store them in their minds," she said. "When they get in a frustrating situation, they react in the way they saw on TV without realizing it."

Lieberman added that screen violence occasionally can affect people consciously. She mentioned that a New York serial killer recently said he modeled his killing methods after those used in the science fiction movie thriller "Robocop."

One of her adult patients actually fan-

tasizes about killing people he is angry with in ways he has watched on TV. She said he came very close to killing a store clerk who irritated him.

Leathers agreed the subconscious impact is a serious problem with TV violence. He said it mostly becomes dangerous with disturbed people, but repeated violence could have a negative influence on anyone.

"Violence becomes a viable outlet for an answer to a problem," Leathers said. "When we erupt inside, we can erupt outwardly in a way we have seen on TV."

Lieberman agreed repeated exposure is a factor. Children growing up in the video game generation will be worse off because they watch violence in so many media. Cartoons are as much at fault as other programming. They average 26 acts of violence per hour — a higher average than prime-time TV.

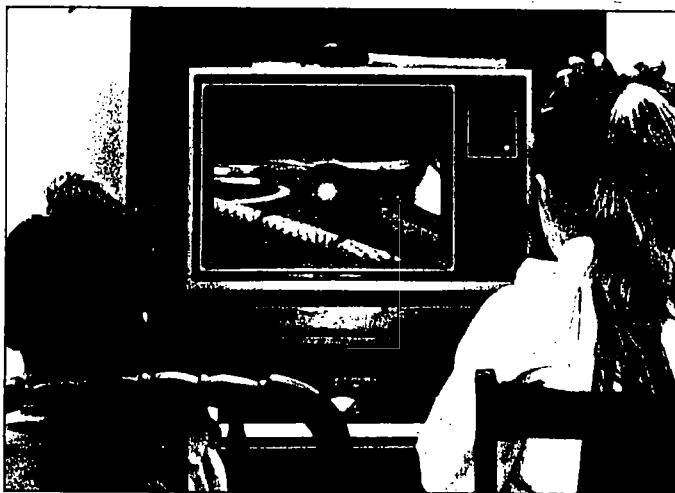
"I had a child patient who was acting out a lot in school, getting in fights and not paying attention. I had the parents take away his TV privileges to watch the *Ninja Turtles* and *Batman* and other shows," she said. "Lo and behold, his aggressive behavior in school stopped."

Lieberman said stopping the violence trend in media has to be a joint effort between agents of the media and parents monitoring programs that are inappropriate for children to watch. She presented a 10-step plan to Congress, which included warning labels on the screen so parents would be more aware of appropriate programming for their children (Please see list on pages 8-9).

Networks pledge same rhetoric

She added that the recent pledge by the three major networks to study TV violence and to make an effort to tone it down is the same rhetoric America has heard for years.

Gould said an attitude makeover will be



American children watch three and a half hours of TV every day on average, spending only 12-15 minutes a day with their mother and two to four with their father.

necessary to clean up media violence. "Education is the answer. A whole attitude has to be changed," Gould said. "There has been so much more violence in society, and it's not all due to television, but a new attitude needs to emerge."

"I don't want to take football off the screen, but we should take the violence out of football," Gould offered no specifics on how to eliminate existing athletic violence.

Nielsen television ratings for programs high in violence continue to be low for the seventh year in a row. Most violent shows now consistently rank in the lower half of the ratings. In contrast, NCTV found many of Nielsen's top 20 to have an overall positive impact — "60 Minutes," "Home Improvement," "Full House," and "20/20."

The most violent show on major network

television is "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles" on ABC, averaging 60 violent acts per hour. The top 10 most violent prime-time shows include: "Covington Cross" (ABC), "The Hat Squad" (CBS), "Raven" (CBS), "Top Cops" (CBS), and "America's Most Wanted" (Fox).

The study recommended 19 prime-time programs that consistently have prosocial themes. News magazine shows, such as "60 Minutes" (CBS) and "20/20" (ABC), dominated the list. ABC's "Coach" and "Home Improvement" also were listed.

"We (NCTV) want to get rid of all the gratuitous violence," Lieberman said. "Ninety-five percent of media violence serves no artistic purpose. I think more viewers want less violence than the TV industry acknowledges." (WORD & WAY)

1

No Censorship. There should be no government censorship of the media. It must be recognized that upholding the separation of government and media (as well as religion and the media) is even more vital to American citizens than curbing violence.

3

Ingredient Labels. TV shows should be required to broadcast ingredient labels and use them in TV publicity/listings. Such labels would reflect the results of the ratings system—the quantity and quality of the violence.

2

Ratings System for Violence.

A ratings system that describes the violent content on TV shows should be agreed upon by the networks and cable channels. It would delineate the quantity (number of violent acts per show) and quality (how graphic the overall message of the violence: pro- or anti-violence).

4

Warning Labels on TV.

TV shows should be required to flash a warning label before those rated heavy in violence, such as "The TV show you are about to watch may be hazardous to your psychological and/or physical health due to its highly violent content."

5

Warning Labels on Ads.

Commercials for war toys and other violent-themed toys should carry appropriate warning labels: "The toy you have seen advertised may be hazardous to the psychological and/or physical health of a child due to its theme of violent play."

7

Public Service Announcements.

Networks and cable channels should be strongly advised to carry PSAs that educate viewers about media violence. Each channel would be advised to carry a number of PSA's per day in proportion to its violent programming.

9

Tax Breaks.

Tax breaks should be given to networks and cable channels, production companies, foundations, private donors, etc. who provide money to support research and education on the effects of TV violence and to the development of non-violent programs.

6

Violence Advisers on Staff.

At least one psychiatrist and/or researcher should be on staff at each network and cable channel to review its shows, determine impact of the violence and advise producers how to clean up the violence without compromising artistic integrity.

8

"Just Say No."

No violent TV programming should be offered to residents of government institutions—such as jails and psychiatric hospitals—especially children. Residents are often exposed to countless hours of TV viewing, while in a vulnerable condition.

10

Public Health Campaign.

A public health campaign should be launched to promote awareness of the effects of media violence.

Information about NCTV can be obtained by writing to the National Coalition on TV Violence, P.O. Box 2157, Champaign, IL 61825, or by calling (217)384-1920.