

Audience for Youth Violence Event on Tuesday:

African American Constituency

1. Kweisi Mfume (education/civil rights)
President and CEO, NAACP
410-486-9100
2. Mr. Hilary Shelton (education/civil rights)
Director, NAACP Washington Bureau
202-638-2269
3. Reverend Jamal Bryant (youth/education/civil rights)
NAACP National Youth Coordinator
410-486-9162
4. Dr. Altha J. Stewart (advocacy)
President, Black Psychiatrists of America
313-833-2500
5. Wade Henderson (education/civil rights)
Executive Director, LCCR
202-466-3311
6. Hugh Price (education/civil rights)
President and CEO, National Urban League
212-558-5333
7. Sullivan Robinson (religious)
Executive Director, Congress of National Black Churches
202-371-1091
8. Bill Cosby (personality)
c/o: The Brokaw Group, inc.
Attn.: Joel Brokaw, 310-273-2060
9. Quentin Lawson (education)
Executive Director, NABSE
301-483-1549
10. Dr. Alvin Pouissant (expert)
617-232-8930

- OPL 65
- 16A/16y 10

11. Dr. Samella Abdullah (advocacy)
National President, Association of Black Psychologist
202-722-0808

12. Dr. Ramona Edelin
Executive Director, CBCF
202-675-6740

Non-Profit Constituencies:

1. Safe Night USA Parties Constituency:

General Number: (800)-942-3723

Loretta Jones
Barry Farm Recreation Center
202-645-3966

Renee Turner
BET Studio
202-608-2731

Barbara Marable
Capitol East Natatorium
202-727-5440

Charles Hooker
Harrison Recreation Center
202-673-7611

Sandrea Wollfolk
Kennilworth Parkside
202-727-5440

A. B. Morgan
Langdon Park Recreation Center
King Greenleaf Recreation Center
202-727-5502

Sylvia Matthews
NY Avenue Playground
202-482-5923

Marshall Cunningham
Park Morton

202-645-3940

Roy Fagin
Takoma Recreation. Center
202-282-2201

Sandrea Wollfolk
Turkey Thicket Recreation Center
202-757-5540

Rovenia Brock
UDC
202-274-7136

2. Floydetta McAfee
Project Director, City at Peace
202-463-9455

3. Elder Jose Rojas
Director of the Department of Youth Ministries
Seventh-day Adventist Church
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600
301-680-6434

4. Rev. James Wall
Editor, The Christian Century
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5. Rev. Msgr, Francis Maniscalco
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United States Catholic Conference
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Women's Constituencies:

1. Mildred Kiefer Wurf
Director of Public Policy, Girls Inc.
202-463-1881

2. LaVerne Alexander
Director of Government Relations, Girl Scouts of the USA
659-3780

3. Linda Tarr-Whelan
President/CEO, Center for Policy Alternatives
387-6030

4. Gabrielle Smith
Executive Director, General Federation of Women's Clubs
347-3168

Hispanic Constituencies

1. Carmen Joge
Policy Analyst, National Council of La Raza
202-776-1753

2. Selena Walsh
Director of Communication and Policy, League of United Latin American Citizens
202-408-0060

3. Katherine Archuleta
Community Relations and Neighborhood Association
303-477-9985

4. Patricia Loera
Co-chair, Hispanic Education Coalition
202-898-1829

Gay/Lesbian Constituencies:

1. Ms. Kirston Kingdon
Executive Director, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
202-638-4200 ext. 211

2. Ms. Rea Carey
Executive Director, National Youth Advocacy Coalition
202-319-7596 ext. 15

3. Mr. Kevin Jennings
Executive Director, Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network
(212) 727-0135 ext. 113

4. Ms. Verna Eggleston
Executive Director, Hetrick Institute
(212) 674-2600

Health Constituencies:

1. Mary Crosby
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
966-7300 x. 108

2. Rosie Sweeney
American Academy of Family Physicians
232-9033

3. Elaine Holland
4. Kerrie Friesch
American Academy of Pediatrics
347-8600

5. Elizabeth Prewitt
American College of Physicians
393-1650

6. Jay Cutler
American Psychiatric Association
682-6000

7. Margarte Garkes
American Medical Association
789-7409

8. Irwin Redliner
9. Dennis Johnson
Children's Health Fund
212-535-9400

10. Eileen McGrath
American Medical Women's Association
703-838-0500

11. Josephine Nieves
National Association of Social Workers
202-408-8600

12. Marj Vanderbilt
American Nurse Association
651-7089

13. Mahummad Ahtker
American Public Health Association
778-5600

14. Jerry Steffl
American Psychological Association
336-5884

15. Gordan Wheeler
American College of Emergency Physicians
202-728-0610

16. Lisa Lindsay
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
601-924-9955

17. Joan Rukavina
National Association of Pediatric Nurses Associates and Practitioners
609-667-1773

18. Judith Robinson
National Association of School Nurses
207-883-2117

19. Lorraine Coles
National Medical Association
347-1895

20. Al Guida
National Mental Health Association
703-838-7509

21. Tom Buis
National Farmers Union
554-1600

22. Pete Wilson
National Association of Children's Hospitals
703-684-1355

23. Rick Pollack

American Hospital Association
638-1100

24. Ron Pollack
Families, USA
628-3030

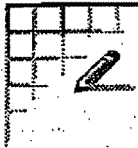
Jewish Constituencies:

1. Sam Fisher
Director, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization
1640 Rhode Island Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-857-6633

2. Rabbi Allan Smith
North American Federation of Temple Youth
914-987-6300

3. Jules Gutin
Director, United Synagogue Youth
212-533-7800 ext. 2300

4. Rabbi David Kaminetsky
Director, National Conference of Synagogue Youth
212-563-4000



Victoria A. Lynch
05/26/99 02:52:58 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Christine A. Stanek/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: Re: Youth Violence Event

Here's 28. Please let me know if you would like more names.

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National Ass of Secondary School Principals
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Amie Fege
Public Education Network
628-7460

Nancy Perry
American School Counselors Ass
7-683-2711

Gerry Morris
AFT
879-4452

Mary Elizabeth Teasley or Joel Packer
NEA
822-7329

PTA
Maribeth Oakes
331-1380

Christine Benero
American Humane Association
347-8153

Susan Bales
Benton Foundation
638-5770

Kathy Bonk

Communications Consortium
326-8700

Starla Jewel-Kelly or Susan Burk
National Community Education Ass.
7-359-8973

National Association of School Psychologists
Susan Gorin
301-657-0270

Belinda Rollins
Parenting Coalition International
898-1155

Eden Fisher Durbin
YMCA
835-9043

Karabelle Pizzigatti
Child Welfare League
638-2952

Carmen Delgado Votaw
Alliance for Children and Families
223-3447

Grace Reed
Childrens Defense Fund
662-3558

Tamara Copeland
National Association of Child Advocates
289-0777

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National Alliance of Black School Educators
483-1549

Della Hughes
National Network for Youth
202/783-7949

William Potapchuk
Executive Director Program for Community Problem Solving
National Civic League
202/783-2961

American Council of Education
Stan Ickenberry or Laura Wilcox
939-9300

44
Rosana Rodriguez
Kellogg Foundation
616-969-2085

Don Ernst
Ass. of Supervision and Curriculum
703-575-8101

Mike Casserly or Jeff Simmering
Council of Great City Schools
393-2427

Stephanie Coney
National Stop the Violence Alliance, Inc
609-486-4406

Ben Smilowitz
International Student Activism Alliance
860-232-8452

Van Henri White
attorney and former Rochester chief administrator for crime and violence reduction
716-263-1000

Game Makers, Taking Hits, Try To Shield Kids

By DEAN TAKAHASHI

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Hoping to avert a regulatory crack down, the video-game industry says it is trying to strengthen voluntary measures to shield children from inappropriate games.

The recent spate of teen violence has prompted legislators to target video-game makers nationwide. The U.S. Senate has authorized a study on the effects of violent games and music on young people, and legislators in four states have already proposed making it illegal to sell games rated "mature" to minors.

Responding, the game publishers' lobbying group, the Interactive Digital Software Association, has begun working with retailers to develop a voluntary system that would essentially "card" potential game buyers. When any adult-rated title is scanned into a cash register, the system would alert the retailer to ask for identification. If the buyer is a minor without parental permission, the clerk could deny the sale. Retailers hope to begin using the system first in Washington state, and eventually plan to deploy it nationally.

How effective that would be is questionable, since critics say retailers are lax when it comes to enforcement. In a study last year, a Minneapolis advocacy group called the National Institute on Media and the Family found that 41% of retail clerks didn't understand the ratings, and only 40% of parents reported routinely checking ratings. When the institute surveyed fourth through eighth graders, half named violent games as their favorites. It also found that while video stores accounted for \$800 million in game revenue last year, only 9% of them refused to rent mature titles to minors.

Meanwhile, there are virtually no curbs to prevent minors from anonymously downloading violent titles from Internet game sites.

Rapid growth of video games has increased the industry's visibility. Last year, electronic-game sales in North America grew 25%, to \$5.5 billion—not far behind the \$6.9 billion in movie box-office receipts. In its first six weeks last Christmas, one game, Nintendo Co.'s "Legend of Zelda," generated \$150 million in sales, outpacing the film "A Bug's Life," which pulled in \$114 million during the same time at the box office.

"As our industry has become so large, we are a fair target for criticism," says Peter Main, executive vice president at Nintendo of America. "The level of concern is greater than ever before, especially on Capitol Hill," says Doug Lowenstein, IDSA president. "More needs to be done with the rating system and ad codes."

As with the movie and music industries,
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Video-Game Firms Step Up Self-Policing

Continued From Page B1

video-game makers have a voluntary ratings system, but it is relatively new and largely ignored. A postage-stamp-size logo appears on game covers categorizing titles as Adults Only, Mature, Teen, Everyone or Early Childhood. Industry experts say so-called "violent shooter" titles—like "Doom," "Quake," "Sin," and "Half-Life"—make up only 6% of the sales of the entire gaming market. All are rated Mature.

Store operators say they aren't the problem. "Retailers should pay attention to the ratings," says Pamela Rucker, a spokeswoman for the National Retail Federation in Washington, but "parents need to know what their children are playing."

The industry's Mr. Lowenstein says research connecting violence and game-playing is thin. Roughly 57% of video games are played by adults, and the industry's fastest-growing sector is children's puzzle and board games, like Monopoly. Of 5,000 games rated by the industry's Entertainment Software Ratings Board in the past five years, 70% were considered appropriate for all ages to play.

Still, it's the violent titles that have gaming companies under attack. After the December 1997 school shooting in Paducah, Ky., families of three victims sued makers of violent games, as well as movie studios, for allegedly influencing the killer.

Washington state is a hotbed of activity. In Olympia, the Washington Retailers Association has agreed to encourage electronic game retailers to voluntarily prohibit sales of violent games to minors

throughout the state.

That plan follows a campaign by a Seattle group called Mothers Against Violence, which started its advocacy work last year when one member's eight-year-old son saw an ad in Electronic Gaming Monthly. The ad, for Activision Inc.'s "Vigilante 8," pictured a school bus armed with missiles and featured "Molo," an expelled student aiming to get an "A" in violent acts. Activision declined to comment.

The video-game trade group says it also plans to tone down such violence references in ads. Last year, Interplay Entertainment Inc. advertised a car-combat game, "Carmageddon," with the caption "Easier than killing babies with axes." The ad outraged children's advocacy groups. In the aftermath, Interplay says it will be "more careful" about its ads and enlarge the warning labels on its adult-oriented games.

While denying any connection between violence and game-playing, some publishers and retailers themselves are taking steps to limit access to violent titles. Some retailers, for instance, recently balked at carrying Interactive Magic Inc.'s "Mortyr," a game whose cover depicted a black Nazi helmet in a pool of blood.

And recently, Electronic Arts Inc. nixed "Thrill Kill," a violent game it inherited when it acquired another company. Glenn Fong, head of the company's Canada studios, said, "We even killed the project altogether so someone else couldn't publish it."

But some people worry that overreacting to recent tragic events could limit the

industry's artistic freedom. "It's scary that the violence issue has become political," says Mike Wilson, chief executive officer of Gathering of Developers LLC, a Dallas company that has a number of violent games in the works. "A big retailer could very well get a lot of PR out of saying they won't sell violent games."

Fans of violent shooting games say their appeal is more about using one's wits than about gore. "We make the games that we like to play," says John Carmack, co-founder of Id Software Inc. and developer of the upcoming Quake III. "It's not for kids."

An online survey, just released by market researcher PC Data Inc. in Reston, Va., found that nearly 19% of respondents said the government should impose minimum age restrictions to buy violent games.

Parents struggle with that same issue. Istok Stajner, a 37-year-old Web site master in San Jose, Calif., says it's hard to steer his 13-year-old stepson away from violent games when his friends play them and see them widely advertised in TV cartoons and in magazines. Enforcing game ratings on sales to minors would help, Mr. Stajner says, but he adds, "Somehow, the kids would still get their hands on the games."

He adds: "I can't make the games into forbidden fruit. All I can do is talk now and then, and stress how violence in real life is not a fun thing."

WSJ Journal Link: Join an online discussion about the issue of violence in video games in The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition at <http://wsj.com>

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Washington State House Democratic Caucus **NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 13, 1999

CONTACT:

Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson (206) 545-6513

Washington Retail Association right on video game violence

OLYMPIA — Parents now have a powerful ally and a new "Pledge to Parents" in the effort to limit children's access to violent video games intended for mature audiences.

State Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson, D-Seattle, is calling a new plan unveiled by the Washington Retail Association "a strong, right and responsible step toward empowering parents in video game rentals and sales."

Dickerson led efforts in the state Legislature this year to help parents understand the risks posed to young or disturbed children by ultraviolent videogames.

in the plan presented to Dickerson in a May 11 memorandum from Paul Sutton, Government Affairs Director for the Washington Retail Association, the association agreed to:

- Notify all businesses that sell or rent video games in Washington of the Entertainment Software Ratings Board game-rating system, which provides age ratings ranging from "Early Childhood" to "Adults Only" for almost all video games sold in the United States;
- Distribute copies of posters and brochures produced by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board to explain what each rating represents, and encourage businesses to display the posters and to hand out the brochure with every video game transaction;

—more—

Dickerson -- violent video games/Page 2

- Ask businesses to sign a "Pledge to Parents" which states that the business embraces and enforces the ratings guidelines, restricts the sale or rental to minors of video games rated "M" (for Mature audiences, ages 17 and older) without parental consent, and restricts the sale or rental to minors of games rated "AO" (Adults Only) under any circumstances.

In addition, the memorandum announced that the Washington Retail Association is now working with the Interactive Digital Software Association to create a point-of-sale system to notify clerks when a purchase or rental involves a game rated for mature audiences or adults only. This point-of-sale system, which would remind clerks to ask for identification or deny the rental or sale, should be up and running within six to eight months.

Dickerson hailed these steps as "exactly the kind of voluntary industry effort that parents need and have a right to expect."

Dickerson, who noted that at least four school massacres in the United States during the past two years have been linked to these games.

Editors note: The 1998 Video and Computer Game Report Card is available on the Internet at <http://www.mediaandthefamily.com/1998vgrcl.html>.



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Posted at 05:37 a.m. PDT; Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Group targets sale of violent video games

by Dionne Searcey
Seattle Times Olympia bureau

OLYMPIA - Children may have a tougher time buying violent video games because of new efforts undertaken by the Washington Retail Association.

The association, which represents all of the state's retail businesses, is asking video-game retailers to sign a "pledge to parents," embrace ratings guidelines, and restrict the sale of some violent games to minors.

"We are concerned that we provide a responsible approach" to selling the games to children, said Jan Teague, executive director.

The association's move is part of an effort to head off legislation Gov. Gary Locke and Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson, D-Seattle, are seeking that would authorize a study of the effects of violent video games.

The bill is part of a package of school-safety proposals the governor hopes will help stop school violence, such as the recent tragedy in Littleton, Colo. The two teenage gunmen there were known to play the video game "Doom," in which shotguns and other weapons are used to slaughter enemies in graphic detail.

The ratings system, which assigns labels to almost all video games ranging from "early childhood" to "adults only," is already in place but rarely used by Washington businesses, Teague said.

Teague wants businesses to forbid minors from buying or renting games rated "M" - for those 17 and older - without parental consent. Her group also wants to ban minors from renting or buying games rated for adults only.

The retailers' group also plans to distribute posters and brochures that explain the rating system and encourage

businesses to give the information to customers. And the association wants to work with software groups to create a cash-register system that will automatically remind clerks to ask for identification on sales of violent games.

Locke's aides said the governor has not yet reviewed the ratings-system plan. Dickerson called the plan a "right and responsible step toward empowering parents in video-game rental and sales."

But Dickerson said she still would seek support for her study, which also would recommend how parents can restrict children's access to violent video games.

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Memorandum

To: Representative Mary Lou Dickerson

CC: Jan Teague, Executive Director
Jan Gee, Contract Lobbyist

From: Pam Eaton, Government Affairs Director

Date: May 14, 1999

Re: Violent Video Games

I wanted to give you an update on what actions the Washington Retail Association is taking to address the issue of education and juvenile access to violent video games.

WRA will be notifying all of the businesses that either sell or rent video games of the ratings system that is present on almost all of the entertainment software. We will be sending out copies of posters and brochures, printed by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, explaining what each of the ratings represents. The businesses will be encouraged to display the posters and hand out the brochures with every video game transaction. In addition, we will be distributing and asking the businesses to sign and display a "Pledge to Parents". This pledge states that the business embraces and enforces the rating guidelines and restricts the sale or rental of video games rated "M" without parental consent and restricts the sale and rental to minors of software rated "AO" under any circumstances. The educational materials and pledge cards will be distributed as soon as we put together a list of relevant businesses from the Department of Licensing and from the software distributors. The information should be out within two months.

In addition, WRA is working with the Interactive Digital Software Association to create a system that will work with the point-of-sale systems in the stores. The video games with a "M" or "AO" rating will be "flagged" so that the clerk is notified and reminded to ask for identification or deny the sale or rental. We do not have a specific timeline for this project, but we are hoping it will be up and running within six to eight months.

Please call if you have any additional questions or suggestions.

618 South Quince, Suite A
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CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

Once considered sanctuaries of safety and learning, American schools today are often perceived as dangerous places. The public recently has been inundated by images of children shooting classmates and teachers, leading to fears that violence is becoming a horrifying "trend" in schools across the nation.

Although the tragic events in Colorado, Arkansas and elsewhere have rightly sparked overwhelming disbelief and concern, experts say that aside from these well-publicized cases, school killings are actually declining in America. They add that today's youth are no more prone to feelings of frustration and rage than teens were 20 years ago. One difference, they say, is that the availability of weapons has enabled young people to strike out in more deadly ways.

Statistics show that children face less than a one-in-a-million chance of being killed at school.¹ Many more dangers lurk away from schools than in them, as 99% of children's deaths occur outside of schools.² Tragically, 11 American children are killed every two days by their parents or caretakers.³ Guns have killed children in America 12 times as often they have killed children in other industrialized countries.⁴ Following are key findings and research about school crime and violence:

Violent Crimes

- Physical attacks or fights without a weapon led the list of reported crimes in public schools, with about 190,000 such incidents reported for 1996-97.⁵
- Schools reported about 11,000 incidents of physical attacks or fights in which weapons were used, 7,000 robberies and 4,000 incidents of rape or other type of sexual battery.⁶
- 10% of all public schools experienced one or more serious violent crimes (defined as murder, rape or other type of sexual battery, suicide, physical attack or fight with a weapon, or robbery) that were reported to police or other law enforcement officials during the 1996-97 school year.⁷
- Less than 1% of all homicides among school-aged children (5-19 years of age) occur in or around school grounds or on the way to and from school.⁸ Of those that occurred on school grounds, 65% of the violent deaths were students; 11% were teachers or other staff members; and 23% were community members who were killed on school property. 83% of the victims were male.⁹
- The rates of young people's being assaulted at school is the same today as it was in 1976.¹⁰ In fact, there were 27% fewer school killings in the 1997-98 school year than in 1992-93.¹¹
- Juvenile crime, which began climbing in 1987, actually has fallen in the past two years,¹² and juvenile homicides have declined 30% since 1994.¹³

Weapons

In 1997, 8.5% of high school students reported carrying a weapon on school property at least once in the month prior to being surveyed.¹⁴ Overall, male students (12.5%) were significantly more likely than female students (3.7%) to have brought a weapon to school.¹⁵ One study reported more than 6,000 students were expelled for taking firearms to school during the 1996-97 year.¹⁶ Of these, 56% were in high school, 34% were in junior high school and 9% were in elementary school.¹⁷ In 1997, 7.4% of high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property at least once.¹⁸

Nonviolent Crimes

- About 116,000 incidents of theft or larceny were reported, along with 98,000 incidents of vandalism.¹⁹
- 50% of public schools experienced at least one incident of crime/violence that was reported to law enforcement officials during the 1996-97 school year.²⁰
- In 1997, one-third of high school students nationwide had property stolen or deliberately damaged on school property.²¹
- While 43% of public schools reported no incidents of crime in 1996-97, 37% reported from one to five crimes and about 20% reported six crimes or more.²²

Effects of Crime and Violence on School Attendance

- In 1997, 4% of high school students reported missing school during the prior month because they felt unsafe either at school or when traveling to and from school.²³
- Latino (7.2%) and black (6.8%) students were significantly more likely than white (2.4%) students to have felt unsafe.²⁴
- More 9th grade female (5.8%) and male (5.2%) students missed school for this reason than did 12th grade female (3%) and male (2.3%) students.²⁵

Differences Among Types of Schools

Crime and violence are more of a problem in middle and high schools than in elementary schools, as 77% of high schools and 74% of middle schools have reported one or more violent incidents, compared with 45% of elementary schools.²⁶ School crime is also more likely to occur in larger schools. While 89% of large schools (1,000 or more students) have reported criminal incidents, only 60% of medium-sized schools (300-900 students) and 38% of small schools (less than 300 students) have reported any incidents.²⁷

Schools in cities (17%) or urban-fringe areas (11%) have been at least twice as likely to report serious violent crime than schools in towns (5%) or rural locations (8%).²⁸ Also, schools with 50% or more minority students (68%) were more likely to report crimes than schools with less than 5% minority enrollment (47%).²⁹ Schools without a policy to report crimes to the public were more likely to have experienced crime than those with a policy, although both types of school have been just as likely to report at least one serious crime.³⁰ However, greater law enforcement presence at schools has been associated with the incidence of serious crime. Also, schools that have reported serious discipline problems have been more likely to experience incidents of crime or violence than those with less serious discipline problems.³¹

Violence Prevention

In 1994, the federal government began requiring schools to introduce safety programs in an attempt to lessen the incidence of violence in schools. By the following year, the number of incidents of violent deaths in high schools dropped more than 50% from an estimated 50 incidents.³² Although the federal safety requirements for schools were eventually overturned by the Supreme Court, most schools still report having formal school violence prevention programs. In 1997, 78% of schools reported having some type of formal violence prevention or violence reduction program or effort.³³ Also, 50% of public schools with violence prevention programs indicated that all or almost all of their students participated in these programs.³⁴

Most public schools report having zero tolerance policies toward serious student offenses such as violence and use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and weapons. Zero-tolerance policies are defined as school or district policies mandating predetermined consequences for various student offenses.³⁵ The proportion of schools that had such policies ranges from 79% to 94%.³⁶

Most schools employ low levels of security measures to prevent violence. Only 2% of public schools have stringent security (a full-time guard and daily or random metal detector checks).³⁷ 11% of schools have instituted moderate security measures such as a full-time guard, a part-time guard with restricted access to the school, or metal detectors with no guards, while 84% of public schools have a low level of security-restricted access to their schools but no guards or metal detectors.³⁸

For more information on school violence, you can look to the "Keep Schools Safe" web site, created by the State Attorneys General and the nation's school boards, at <http://www.keepschoolssafe.org>

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1. Vincent Schiraldi, "Hyping School Violence," *Washington Post*, August 25, 1998.
2. Ibid.
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YOUTH VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Violence among America's young people remains at historically high levels, and both offenders and victims are getting younger each year.¹ Youth are the most frequent victims of violence nationwide, with teenagers at least twice as likely as adults to become the victims of some sort of physical assault.² Every day, 13 children under the age of 20 are murdered.³ Although there has been a 30% decline in juvenile homicides since 1994,⁴ homicide accounts for 20% of all deaths of the 10-24 age group and is one of the leading causes of death for this group.⁵ On an optimistic note, national statistics show violent crime arrests fell 4% in 1995 for juveniles 17 and under, the first drop since 1987.⁶ Teenagers' perception of violence or crime as the biggest problem facing their generation has also declined from 22% in 1994 to 7% in 1998.⁷ But despite massive violence prevention programs and declines in rates of youth violence, juvenile-related crime continues to take its toll:

- 90% of homicide victims under age 12 and 75% of homicide victims between ages 12-17 are killed by adults.⁸
- In general, juvenile homicide victims are disproportionately male and African American. Between 1980 and 1994, the number of Caucasian juveniles killed rose 15%, while the number of African American youth killed rose 97%.⁹
- In 1997, 37% of high school students had been in a physical fight during the past year.¹⁰
- 11 children die every two days from family violence (child abuse or neglect, at the hands of their parents or guardians).¹¹
- 25% of 8th and 9th grade students are victims of non-sexual dating violence and 8% are victims of sexual dating violence.¹²
- Children who are abused and neglected are 67 times more likely to be arrested between the ages of 9 and 12 than other children.¹³
- 62% of teens are willing to participate in programs designed to prevent violence.¹⁴

Weapons and Youth

- The United States has the highest rate of firearm death for children aged 1 to 14 in the industrialized world -- a rate nearly 12 times higher than that for children in the other 25 countries combined.¹⁵
- Every two hours a child in the U.S. is killed with a gun.¹⁶
- In 1990, 2,874 youths were murdered with guns and an additional 541 died in unintentional shootings.¹⁷
- Four out of five youth homicides are the result of gunshots.¹⁸
- In 1991, gun accidents were the fifth leading cause of accidental death for children aged 14 and under.¹⁹
- Gun homicide is the leading cause of death for black men ages 15-34.²⁰
- 88% of children injured or killed in unintentional shootings are shot in their own homes or in the homes of relatives or friends.²¹
- In 1997, one-fifth (18.3%) of high school students reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) in the prior month. Males are more likely than females to carry weapons, and Latinos and blacks are more likely than whites.²²
- More than 6,000 students were expelled during the 1996-97 academic year for bringing firearms or explosives to school. Of these expelled students, 56% were in high school, 34% in junior high

- school and 9% elementary school.²³
- An estimated 1.2 million elementary school children have access to guns in their homes. Thirty-four percent (34%) of handgun owners store their loaded guns unlocked.²⁴
- 14% of teens report having seen or been in fights where someone used a gun.²⁵
- The U.S. toy gun market is an estimated \$186 million, with 55 million toy guns, weapons and accessory units shipped each year in the U.S.²⁶

Suicide

- Suicide is the third leading cause of adolescent death and guns are the primary method used by teenagers to commit suicide (60%).²⁷
- Every six hours a pre-teen or teenager between 10 and 19 years old commits suicide with a gun.²⁸
- 21% of high school students have seriously considered attempting suicide, 16% made specific plans to commit suicide, and 7.7% attempted suicide during the past year.²⁹
- Adolescents that have easy access to firearms in their homes are more likely to perpetrate violence and have suicidal thoughts. Approximately 25% of adolescents report living in homes where guns are easily accessible.³⁰

Time of Day a Factor

The time of day plays a role in all youth violence. Young people between the ages of 12 and 17 are more likely to be crime victims between the hours of 3 p.m. and 11 p.m.³¹ Younger children, ages 6 to 11, are more likely to be victims of crime around 3 p.m., when most schools close for the day, than at any other time of day.³² Youth are also more likely to commit violent crimes around 3 p.m.³³ Furthermore, 99% of youth die outside of the school environment; peak times for killings are evenings, weekends and vacation periods.³⁴

Girls and Violence

- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young women ages 15 to 19. It is the leading cause of death for female African American youth in the same age group.³⁵
- In general, girls are sexually abused almost three times more often than boys. Victims of rape are disproportionately children and adolescent girls -- 60% of forcible rapes occur before the victim is 18 years old; 29% of victims are younger than 11 years old when raped.³⁶
- Girls accounted for 25% of all juvenile arrests in 1994, an increase of 40% from 1985.³⁷
- Although delinquent crime among young women is typically nonviolent in nature, arrests for violent crime committed by girls increased by 125% from 1985 through 1994, while the rates for boys increased 67%. These arrests were primarily related to robbery and aggravated assault.³⁸

Gangs and Violence

Street gang violence has become an epidemic, with gangs active in 94% of all U.S. cities with populations greater than 100,000. A federal survey³⁹ of students ages 12 to 19 showed a rise in gang activity in recent years, with street gangs identified in schools by 28% of those questioned in 1995, compared with only 15% in 1989. The number of gangs has increased in every type of community. In central cities, students report that street gangs have risen from 25% to 41%; in suburbs, from 14% to 26%; and in non-metropolitan areas, from 8% to 20%. The survey confirmed that gangs and violence go together. In 1995, 8% of students who cited gangs at their schools also said they had experienced violent crime there, compared to only 3% of the students who reported no gangs at school. Twelve percent of teens believe gangs play a big part in the daily life of their neighborhoods.⁴⁰ Seventy-eight percent of teens think gangs are violent and destructive and 25% look up to gang members.⁴¹

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"WEAPONS IN MOVIE ADS: A SLOW FADE-OUT?"

A study of 21 years of weapons depicted in newspaper movie advertisements has revealed that ads contain fewer weapons than ever before, despite public belief that movies are more violent today.

The two-year study, conducted by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and commissioned by Mediascope, Inc., a nonprofit public policy organization, found that while weapons appeared in nearly half of all newspaper movie ads in 1972, by 1992, weapons were depicted in only one of every four ads. Moreover, the sharp decline was primarily attributable to the fewer number of guns in newspaper advertising. From a peak in 1973, where guns were portrayed in approximately 23% of ads, the percentage of guns depicted in movie ads dropped to about 8% by 1992.

"While many people believe that the depiction of guns and other weapons has increased over the years, it is their sensitivity to guns that has increased," said Dr. Delbert Elliott, director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

The study analyzed the weekend entertainment editions of the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, New Orleans Picayune, and New York Times for the period from 1972 to 1992. Except for the Picayune, the newspapers were from the largest city in each of the four major geographical areas defined by the Census Bureau (Midwest, West, East and South). Researchers randomly chose one weekend entertainment section per month for analysis. Overall, 960 editions and more than 17,000 ads were analyzed during the 21-year time frame.

The study also revealed a decrease in the portrayal of sexual content in movie ads portraying weapons. While in 1972, approximately 27% of movie ads with weapons contained sexual content -- which was differentiated from advertising that emphasized romantic themes -- by 1992, only 15% of newspaper ads had such content. Likewise, once-major differences in racial depictions narrowed significantly during the period of analysis. In 1972, 33% of all black actors and actresses in movie ads were shown with weapons, compared to 12% of white actors and actresses. By 1992, however, only 8% of blacks and 6% of whites were shown with weapons in movie ads.

Other results from the study found the overall size of movie ads in newspapers increased significantly (133%) during the period of study, indicating that newspapers had become a more important advertising medium for the movie industry. Of the newspapers, the New Orleans Picayune carried the most movie advertising with weapons and sexual content, while the New York Times and Los Angeles Times had the least.

Movies rated "R" by the Motion Picture Association of America were found to have the highest percentage of weapons in newspaper ads (22%), while movies rated "G" had the lowest percentage (10%). Men overwhelmingly represented those depicted with weapons in ads (85%), compared to 10% for women.

"Ads play a major role in our perception, and acceptance of, violence in society," said Marcy Kelly, president of Mediascope. "The decrease is commendable. Now it's up to the filmmakers to reduce the numbers of weapons in movies, as well."

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) is dedicated to understanding and preventing violence, particularly adolescent violence. It is located in Boulder, Colorado.

Both the Center and Mediascope were founded in 1992 with grants from the Carnegie Foundation of New York.

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VIDEO GAME VIOLENCE

During the last several decades, interactive video games have emerged as one of the most popular forms of entertainment, particularly among adolescents. Globally, annual video game revenues now exceed \$18 billion.¹ In the United States alone, video game revenues total \$10 billion, nearly double the amount Americans spend going to the movies.² On average, American children who have home video game machines play with them about 90 minutes a day.³

In addition to the entertainment value of electronic interactive games, which is reflected in their enormous popularity, video game proponents point to their constructive uses in such fields as education and medicine.⁴

There are, however, trends in game playing that some observers find disturbing. A 1993 study, for instance, asked 357 seventh- and eighth-graders to identify their preferences among five categories of video games.⁵ The researchers found that the most popular game category is fantasy violence, with 32% of players preferring such games, followed by sports (29%), general entertainment (20%), human violence (17%) and educational games (2%). The study also found that boys who play violent games tend to have a lower self-concept in the areas of academic ability, peer acceptance and behavior. The results, according to the researchers, raise concern about potential "high risk" game-playing habits. Of particular interest is the possible link between playing violent video games and subsequent aggressive behavior. A number of studies have shown such effects, with younger children being particularly susceptible to influence.⁶

While the studies on video games and aggressive behavior must be considered preliminary, it may be reasonably inferred from the more than 1,000 reports and studies on television violence that video game violence may also contribute to aggressive behavior and desensitization to violence. Furthermore, the interactive nature of video games may increase the learning of game-playing behaviors, including aggression, especially considering the move toward real-life action and actors in the newer generation of video games. This increasing realism might encourage greater identification with characters and more imitation of the behaviors of video game models (Bandura, 1986).

In addition, the newer generation of video games often feature graphic and explicit depictions of violence, allowing players to participate in more realistic violent action than ever. This trend has intensified public concern regarding the potential harmful effects of electronic interactive games. As a result, legislative hearings on the issue have been held in several countries, and video game rating systems have been developed for use in the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Australia.

The Social Effects of Electronic Interactive Games: An Annotated Bibliography, available from Mediascope, contains abstracts of over 200 scientific studies about video games. Topics include: cognitive development and game performance; educational use and academic performance; elderly adults; game usage, habituation, and skills; gender issues; health issues; personality and motivation; violence and aggression; and research and literature reviews.

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Fox to Wade Deeper Into Sex and Violence

By BILL CARTER

Making more changes than any other network and reaching for programs deliberately aimed at breaking new ground in terms of sex, language and violence, Fox announced a fall television schedule yesterday with eight new series, including a reshaped, half-hour version of "Ally McBeal" that will play the night after the hour version.

The show (Tuesdays at 8) will consist essentially of old episodes of the series edited down to a half-hour. It is part of a growing trend in which networks reuse programs in the same week as a way of cutting costs.

Fox will also add a new comedy, "Action" (Thursday at 9:30), that will overtly use many of the words that have not previously been used on network television but will bleep the actual sound. The show is about a producer of action movies who is an egomaniac. It stars Jay Mohr.

The pilot of "Harsh Realm" (Friday at 9), a new drama from Chris Carter, the creator of "The X-Files," includes as heavy a quotient of violence as any show ever made, though



James Dittiger

Chris Carter of "The X-Files" has created the new "Harsh Realm."

Fox executives have promised the series will tone the violence down. The show is about an elaborate government virtual-reality game and a former American military officer's

efforts to solve it and stay alive.

The network also has its own version of the high school shows that are a dominant trend for the coming season, but with "Manchester Prep" (Thursday at 8), a spinoff of the film "Cruel Intentions," which was itself a teen-age take on the film "Dangerous Liaisons," Fox is emphasizing a much darker, sexually promiscuous side of teen-age relationships.

At the other end of the spectrum, Fox has a family show, "Malcolm in the Middle" (Sunday at 7), which will aim more for sweetness than spice as a family deals with the discovery that their 9-year-old son — their middle child — is a genius.

The network has a spinoff of its successful drama "Party of Five" in the show "Time of Your Life" (Monday at 8) in which the character played by Jennifer Love Hewitt runs away to New York City to search for her birth parents.

Another family show, "Get Real" (Wednesday at 9), fits the new trend toward hourlong shows more based in comedy than drama. The family in the show experiences an unending series of crises, like car accidents, a teen-ager's refusal to go to college, a child being beaten up by bullies, but

Featuring bleeped-out words never used before on network television.

all are handled in comic fashion. It stars Debrah Farentino as a decidedly young mother of this brood.

The final Fox drama is another show that bucks the current trend away from violence. "Ryan Caulfield" (Fridays at 8) is about a young man who stuns his friends by becoming a police officer instead of going to college. He experiences the hard world of police work, including a first case involving a gruesome murder scene.

Fox is rebuilding every night of the week but Saturday. Among the shows it is dropping are "Millennium," "World's Funniest" and "The P.J.s," though Fox promised the latter would be back later this season.

The network resolved its dilemma about which animated show to pair with "The Simpsons" by giving the 8:30 Sunday slot to "Futurama" and moving "Family Guy" to Thursday, where it will be paired with "Action" in a direct attempt to pull male viewers away from NBC's long-time comedy stronghold.

The Fox schedule:

SUNDAY

7 P.M., "Malcolm in the Middle"
7:30, "King of the Hill"
8, "The Simpsons"
8:30, "Futurama"
9, "The X-Files"

MONDAY

8 P.M., "Time of Your Life"
9, "Ally McBeal"

TUESDAY

8 P.M., "Ally"
8:30, "That '70's Show"
9, "Party of Five"

WEDNESDAY

8 P.M., "Beverly Hills 90210"
9, "Get Real"

THURSDAY

8 P.M., "Manchester Prep"
9, "Family Guy"
9:30, "Action"

FRIDAY

8 P.M., "Ryan Caulfield"
9, "Harsh Realm"

SATURDAY

8 P.M., "Cops"
8:30 "Cops2"
9, "America's Most Wanted"

UPN Adds Wrestling to Fall Lineup

By LAWRIE MIFFLIN

The madcap mayhem of pro wrestling has invaded broadcast television. UPN announced yesterday that it would give its two hours of Thursday night prime-time to "W.W.F. Smackdown," a production of the World Wrestling Federation.

Wrestling shows already dominate cable television, routinely taking 6 or 7 of the top 10 places on the Nielsen list of most-watched cable shows each week. The federation has shows on USA on Sunday and Monday nights. Two Turner networks, TBS and TNT, feature shows of a rival group, World Championship Wrestling.

"We look at it the way another network looks at football or basketball," said Dean Valentine, UPN's president. "If you want to

reach an audience of young guys, this is what they're watching."

He described it as "comedic soap opera for men," adding that Vince McMahon, federation chief executive, had agreed to tone down the violence and vulgarity "somewhat" for UPN.

UPN is also bringing back the comic actor Jaleel White ("Family Matters") in "The Grown-Ups," a new sitcom about young adults that the network says is different from those of other networks because its cast is interracial.

The show will be broadcast on Monday nights, after the network's popular family comedy "Moesha," starring Brandy, and a spinoff, "Mo'Nique," featuring Moesha's best friend, Kim, played by Sountess Vaughan, and her mother, played by the stand-up comedian Mo'Nique.

The animated "Dilbert" will

move to Tuesdays at 8 P.M.; the rest of Tuesday and Wednesday are intended to attract young male viewers. Wednesday's "Shasta McNasty," about three hip-hop singers living the cool life in Venice Beach, Calif., and "Secret Agent Man," an updated spy series, also both have interracial casts. On Thursdays, "Seven Days" and "Star Trek: Voyager" return.

Here is the UPN schedule:

MONDAY: 8 P.M., "Moesha"; 8:30, "Mo'Nique"; 9, "The Grown-Ups"; 9:30, "Malcolm and Eddie."

TUESDAY: 8 P.M., "Dilbert"; 8:30, "Shasta McNasty"; 9, "Secret Agent Man."

WEDNESDAY: 8 P.M., "Seven Days"; 9, "Star Trek: Voyager."

THURSDAY: 8 P.M., "W.W.F. Smackdown."

FRIDAY: 8 P.M., "Blockbuster Video's Shockwave Cinema."

HOME VIDEO

Peter M. Nichols



Record Type: Record

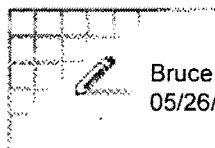
To: Ruby Shamir/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: FYI: NYT and AP on Springer

Can you draft a weekly item based on this story? I assume it will go under the rubric of Children and Families

----- Forwarded by Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP on 05/27/99 10:45 AM -----



Bruce N. Reed
05/26/99 10:06:14 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Neera Tanden/WHO/EOP@EOP

cc:

Subject: FYI: NYT and AP on Springer

good item for the weekly

----- Forwarded by Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP on 05/26/99 10:06 AM -----



Jeffrey A. Shesol
05/26/99 09:59:07 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc: Joshua S. Gottheimer/WHO/EOP@EOP

Subject: FYI: NYT and AP on Springer

May 26, 1999

TV Notes: Studio to Rein in Violence
on 'Jerry Springer'

By LAWRIE MIFFLIN and BILL CARTER

The studio that owns "The Jerry Springer Show" -- the daytime talk show notorious for violence, profanity and physical confrontation -- announced Tuesday that it will edit those three elements out of future shows.

Although its producers

had agreed to eliminate violence from the show starting last June, Springer voiced displeasure, since it was violence that had sent his show's Nielsen ratings and advertising revenues soaring. Soon, violent confrontations and bleeped profanity were back.

Now, Studios USA, the show's owner, is cracking down, apparently in response to renewed pressure from politicians, religious leaders and viewers in Chicago, where the show is produced.

"We will inform stations that we are not providing any Jerry Springer program if these standards cannot be met," a Studios USA statement said. Springer could not be reached for comment.

The Springer crackdown was the latest of several moves by television executives nervous about how far to go with violence.

Citing "the current climate," the WB network pre-empted the season finale of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" Tuesday night, showing a rerun instead.

Although "Buffy," a campy teen-age melodrama about vampires, is indisputably fantasy, and the scene causing concern showed a wicked high school principal transforming into a 60-foot serpent whom the students must slay, the network nonetheless felt pressure to pull it.

The "current climate" refers to the national anxiety about violence, particularly among young people, since the school shooting that left 15 dead in Littleton, Colo. Since that attack on April 20, several shows have been altered or pulled from the schedule, including an earlier "Buffy" episode, an episode of CBS's "Promised Land" and all of this week's episodes of Jerry Springer.

Last week, when broadcast networks unveiled their fall schedules to advertisers and the press, there were about the usual number of shows featuring violence, generally police or science fiction dramas.

But Leslie Moonves, president of CBS Television, said he had rejected a promising pilot about two Mafia families (loosely based on the film "Donnie Brasco") in part because of its gun violence.

And Doug Herzog, Fox's entertainment chief, took pains to assure reporters that the video clip they had just seen for "Harsh Realm," a new show from the creator of "The X-Files," had more violence than the series would have, and that the network would monitor it "closely."

These programmers seem caught in a bind: on one hand, they insist that television violence is far down the list of social ills that contribute to actual violence; on the other, they do not wish to alienate viewers or politicians who believe otherwise.

Moonves said Tuesday that while networks did not "bear responsibility for what happened in Littleton," they should still "police themselves." He pointed out that last year the industry had agreed to a ratings system (age-group categories with additional code letters for violence, sex or foul language) for use with a V-chip on new television sets, and that in response Congress had agreed not to pursue legislation to regulate the content of shows.

Moonves added that the industry should be "proactive" in showing gun violence negatively, as has been done with smoking or alcohol abuse.

Guns are not used in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." For WB, Tuesday night's episode apparently posed a timing problem. Jamie Kellner, WB's president, said the decision was influenced by the fact that the climactic scene occurred on a high school campus (Buffy's vampire-slaying heroics usually take place deep underground or late at night) and during commencement.

Even fantasy violence against a giant serpent, Kellner said, "is inappropriate to broadcast around the actual dates of these time-honored ceremonies."

Unfortunately for the show's creators and fans, Tuesday night's scheduled episode was the second of a two-part season finale -- the first part was shown last week -- and WB said it would broadcast both parts later in the summer.

Meanwhile, broadcast network executives have been holding brainstorming sessions to discuss how to respond to complaints about entertainment violence. On Monday, Jack Valenti, the industry's chief Washington lobbyist, held such a session in Hollywood with leaders of seven top movie studios.

"If you ask real people, in polls, what leads to this violence," Valenti said on Monday, "No. 1 is access to guns, No. 2 is inadequate parental supervision, No. 3 is lack of ethical and moral values in society. Entertainment

is way down the list."

But it is evidently high enough on the list that television programmers are thinking twice about violent content before giving it the go-ahead.

05/25/99- Updated 10:42 PM ET

Springer distributor halts fighting

NEW YORK (AP) - Jerry Springer fans will have to look elsewhere for fisticuffs. His television distributor issued an order on Tuesday: no more fights.

Studios USA, syndicator for The Jerry Springer Show, also replaced some scheduled episodes this week with tamer shows. The efforts are seen as another fallout from the recent school shootings.

"We will produce and distribute a program that we feel is responsible - no violence, physical confrontation or profanity," Studios USA said in a statement.

All three ingredients helped rocket Springer's talk show to the top of the ratings, with episodes often degenerating into hair-pulling, fists-flying donnybrooks.

Springer had no comment on the order, a spokeswoman said.

New programs will have to meet the no-violence standard and reruns will be edited to take out any fights, Studios USA said.

"We will inform stations that we are not providing any Jerry Springer program if these standards cannot be met," the studio said.

Studios USA pulled scheduled Springer episodes titled "Guess What? I'm Bisexual" and "I'm Proud to be a Prostitute" this week. They were replaced with shows about tall people and street kids.

"I just think you're seeing the reaction to Littleton, to last week's school shooting and the reaction to Jenny Jones," said Richard Kurlander, an expert on syndication for Petry TV. "Those three are coming together to move a lot of

people toward the center."

Earlier this month, a Michigan jury issued a \$25 million verdict against The Jenny Jones Show for negligence in the shooting death of a homosexual guest who admitted a crush on another man.

Several prime-time shows depicting violence have been yanked from the air by networks concerned about violence after the Littleton school shootings.

Springer's studio, while reaping the benefits of his high ratings, has tried to rein him in before. A year ago, the studio ordered Springer to have security guards move faster to defuse explosive situations.

The studio blamed its own staff, however, for doing a poor job of policing the show.

Message Sent To:

Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP@EOP
Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP@EOP
Michael Waldman/WHO/EOP@EOP
Jose Cerda III/OPD/EOP@EOP
Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP@EOP

Heather M. Riley

05/15/99 10:14:10 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: 5/15 Radio Address Paper

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:06 AM EDT
SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1999**

**President Clinton:
Challenging the Nation to Address Youth Violence
*May 15, 1999***

As part of his weekly radio address, the President outlines measures that the government and media can take to address youth violence. The President criticizes the Senate for its refusal to adopt simple measures to keep our children safe from guns, and he calls on the entertainment industries to take steps to reduce our children's exposure to gratuitous violence.

Challenging the Entertainment Industries to Reduce Youth Access to Violence. In his radio address, the President calls on those in the entertainment business to think carefully about the content of their products, and make movies, music, TV programs, and video games as if their own children were watching. The President issues three specific challenges to members of the entertainment industries:

Curbing the Use of Guns in Previews and Advertisements. The President issues a challenge to the entire entertainment industry to stop showing guns in any advertisements and previews children might see. The film industry currently prohibits the depiction of drug use in movie trailers viewed by children, on the view that these images can promote harmful behavior. Images of guns in advertisements and previews seen by children can act in a similar way to increase the allure of these objects. Many in the entertainment industries have said that guns are behind the problem of youth violence. Banning guns from ads and previews to which children have access is one simple step to help solve this problem.

Making the Movie Ratings System Work Better for Parents. The President also challenges the movie industry to re-evaluate its ratings system, with a specific focus on the PG-13 rating, to determine whether it is allowing gratuitous violence in movies viewed by children. When a movie is labeled PG-13, parents should not have to worry about their teenagers watching it. Yet many of these movies contain gratuitous and graphic violence -- violence of the kind that parents want to and properly should know about. In a recent national PTA survey, 80 percent of parents said that they wished the ratings system gave clearer information as to a film's level of violence.

Limiting Children's Access to Inappropriate Entertainment Through Tougher Enforcement. The President challenges theater and video store owners to enforce, strictly and

uniformly, the R-rating prohibition for underage children by requiring young patrons to show proof of age. Many children now see R rated films even though they should not be able to. According to a recent Gallup poll, half of American teens say they have seen an R rated movie in the last month, including 42 percent of those aged 13-15.

Challenging the Senate to Pass Common-Sense Gun Laws. Last year, over 4,000 gun shows were held across the country. An estimated 25-50 percent of the sellers at these shows need not conduct background checks: they can sell guns to criminals and youth with no questions asked. Twice this week, however, the Senate failed to close this gun-show loophole, and in fact created additional dangerous loopholes in our gun laws. Legislation approved by the Senate would (1) continue to allow some vendors at gun shows to sell guns without the background checks necessary to keep guns away from juveniles and criminals; (2) create a new "pawnshop loophole" for felons by exempting firearms redemptions at pawnshops from Brady background checks; (3) thwart law enforcement's ability to trace firearms sold at gun shows and later used in crimes; and (4) undermine the effectiveness of background checks by cutting the amount of time the FBI has to complete them from three days to 24 hours.

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Message Sent To: _____

Heather M. Riley

05/15/99 10:25:07 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: RESEND 5/15 Radio Address--sent old one

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Embargoed For Release
Until 10:06 A.M. EDT
Saturday, May 15, 1999

**RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION**

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. In the past few weeks, ever since that terrible day in Littleton, people all across America have searched their souls and searched for solutions to prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again, and to reduce the level of violence to which our children are exposed.

Last Monday, at our White House strategy session on children and violence, representatives of every sector of society agreed on one fundamental fact: making progress requires taking responsibility by all of us. That begins at home. Parents have a duty to guide children as they grow and to stay involved in their lives as they grow older and more independent. Educators have a responsibility to provide safe learning environments, to teach children how to handle conflicts without violence and how to treat all young people, no matter how different, with respect. They also need to teach them how to get counseling or mental health services if they're needed.

Communities have a responsibility to make sure that there is a village, as the First Lady said, that supports all its children -- especially those who don't get their

needs met at home. And the community needs to do more to get our kids involved in working with each other and serving the community, not being isolated from it.

And here in Washington we have a responsibility. We've got a responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. There's a broad national consensus on that point. At the White House conference the gun manufacturers agreed that we need common sense approaches. Everybody agrees except the U.S. Senate. For example, everyone knows we need a real law to close the deadly gun show loophole, through which thousands, indeed, tens of thousands of guns are sold each year without background checks -- even though they'd have to have a background check to be sold in a gun store.

Now, the Senate declined to pass that bill. Even worse, the Senate's substitute bill is riddled with new loopholes -- permitting convicted felons to get guns at pawn shops, no questions asked; and making it harder, not easier, for law enforcement to trace guns used in crimes. If the Senate wants to fix the problem, it should fix the problem, not make it worse. The American people deserve better. They know law abiding citizens don't need loopholes in our gun laws, only criminals do. I sure hope that in the coming weeks the Senate will step up to its responsibility and do the right thing by our children.

I've always said the entertainment industry must do its part, too. In 1993, shortly after I became President, I traveled to Hollywood and spoke there, to members of the community about their responsibility. I said then, you have the capacity to do good, to help change the way we behave, the way we think of ourselves; examine what together you might do to help us rebuild the frayed bonds of community, to give children nonviolent ways to resolve their frustrations.

After six years of work the entertainment industry is helping parents to limit children's exposure to violence, working with the administration on a voluntary rating system for television and the V-chip to enforce it; and on parental screening for the Internet and ratings for all Internet game sites. But there is still too much violence on our nation's screens, large and small. Too many creators and purveyors of violence say there is nothing they can do about it. And there are still too many vulnerable children who are steeped in this culture of violence, becoming increasingly desensitized to it and to its consequences and, therefore, as studies show, hundreds of them more liable to commit violence themselves.

By the age of 18, the typical American will see 40,000 dramatized murders. There are those who say they can or should do nothing about this. But I believe they're wrong. Every one of us has a role to play in giving our kids a safe future. And those with greater influence have greater responsibility. We should see movies and music, TV programs, video games and advertising for them made by people who made them as if their own children were watching. Members of the entertainment community can make a big difference.

Today, I want to issue three specific challenges to them. First, the whole industry should stop showing guns in any ads or previews children might see. Second, I challenge theater and video store owners all across our country to enforce more strictly the rating systems on the movies they show, rent and sell. You should check IDs, not turn the other way as a child walks unchaperoned into an R-rated movie. Third, I challenge the movie industry to reevaluate its entire ratings systems, especially the PG rating, to determine whether it is allowing too much gratuitous violence in movies approved for viewing by children.

Our administration is fighting to do all we can to protect children. The entertainment industry should do everything it can, too. Across America people are coming together, saying, yes, together we can change this culture of violence; together we can give our children a safer future and a culture of values we'll be proud to pass on to future generations. We can do it together.

Thank you.

END

Message Sent To: _____

June 16, 1998, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: Pg. ARC

LENGTH: 1109 words

HEADLINE: Moviemakers aim for the PG-13 market this summer

BYLINE: MARGARET A. MCGURK; The Cincinnati Enquirer

BODY:

Cinema summer is in full swing, and wherever you look, it's a PG-13 world.

The movie version of summer draws audiences from all across the age-and-gender map. However, two crucial groups become the target of special attention come warm weather: "middle-aged kids" and adult women.

Movie executives have found that children who are too old for "baby" movies (anything rated G) but too young for R-level mayhem want to see PG-13 fare.

Even the term "family film" is shunned by moviemakers. Terry Press, head of marketing for DreamWorks studio explained the phenomenon for the trade paper Variety last month, saying, "These days, you can't get an 8-year-old to go to a G-rated movie."

At the same time, film companies are trying to coax more adult women to theaters, hoping to re-create the success of movies such as "The Bridges of Madison County," "The First Wives Club" and "Waiting to Exhale." Women made those movies into hits, while rejecting ultra-violent action pictures and sexually graphic adult fare.

The result this year is a spate of action movies ("Godzilla," "Deep Impact") that are less gory than similar entries from the past, and adult romances ("The Horse Whisperer," "Hope Floats") devoid of frank sexuality.

More high-profile films are on the horizon, including "The X-Files," "Mulan," "Dr. Dolittle" and "The Mask of Zorro." Here is a run-down of content on first-run films in current release rated G, PG or PG-13.

September 23, 1998, Wednesday

SECTION: OPINION;

Pg. A08

LENGTH: 453 words

HEADLINE: Giving movie viewers a choice

BYLINE: Deseret News editorial

BODY:

If movie studios truly believed that the artistic integrity of their films was sacrosanct, they wouldn't allow for edited versions to be shown on television, aboard airplanes and in certain foreign countries. Any exception based on the viewing preferences of an audience, regardless of how much money is involved, would be an unacceptable compromise.

Of course, anyone who pays even the slightest bit of attention to Hollywood knows that argument is ridiculous. Even the most artistically inclined producers, for instance, play the ratings game.

The Los Angeles Times recently reported on the allure of the PG-13 rating. More and more studios are aiming for that rating because it will attract 8- and 9-year-old children who think it is cool to attend a grown-up movie but whose parents won't let them see anything rated R. And those children are the ones who generally see a movie again and again -- statistics show kids see movies at twice the rate of adults.

"The trick is to create a film that is smart or spectacular or even violent enough to attract adults -- to push the ratings envelope, in the words of one executive -- but still win a PG-13 rating," the Times story said. Find that formula, and chances are you have a blockbuster movie.

What? Profits take precedence over artistry? Most likely, that's the real reason why a gratuitous nude scene was thrown into the movie "Titanic." A simple PG rating just wouldn't have had the same allure. But that's also the reason why studios ought to drop their feigned indignation at efforts by private concerns in Utah that are sanitizing films.

One company in American Fork offers to snip "Titanic" into a PG film for \$5. Paramount Pictures has threatened to sue. The American Fork Theater stopped showing an edited version of the same movie earlier this year, also after threats from Hollywood. Meanwhile, Utah Valley State College is showing edited versions of modern films, but it has obtained the films from a supplier who distributes the versions edited for airlines.

Copyright laws are important. Private companies should not presume to change the content of someone else's creations. But by now it ought to be abundantly clear to movie studios that a lucrative market exists for films that are free from gratuitous sex and vulgarities. The company that edits "Titanic" has gotten requests from as far away as Alaska, New York, Florida and Hawaii.

Let's drop the pretenses. Movie studios want to make money. They willingly edit their products for certain audiences that wouldn't see them otherwise. Why, then, wouldn't they want to make even more money by providing edited versions of films for people whose personal standards demand them?

Copyright 1998 Times Mirror Company
Los Angeles Times

June 4, 1998, Thursday, Home Edition.

SECTION: Business; Part D; Page 1; Financial Desk

LENGTH: 1165 words

HEADLINE: ADVERTISING;
CONSUMER EDUCATION;
MARKETERS TARGET SCHOOLS BY OFFERING FACTS AND FEATURES

BYLINE: DENISE GELLENE
BODY:

Last week's current events quiz at a Moreno Valley elementary school asked students to name actor Eddie Murphy's new movie.

It wasn't a random question. To promote "Dr. Dolittle," an upcoming film starring Murphy, 20th Century Fox has turned to the classroom.

Splashy ads for the film appear on material provided free to schools to help teach current events. A photo of Murphy in a white-lab coat anchors a colorful poster that also lists newsy tidbits of interest to students. Along with the posters, teachers get prepared questions they can use to test children about the news items--and the ads.

Students in teacher Carol Fus' fifth-grade class at Bear Valley Elementary School easily recalled the "Dr. Dolittle" ad.

"I'm going to go see it," spouted Tanelle Johnson, 10. "Anything with Eddie Murphy is funny."

The Los Angeles company that creates the posters says they fill a need. Cash-strapped schools get free teaching aids while advertisers reach a captive audience of young consumers. Besides Fox, Vans sneakers, Paramount Pictures and Miramax and ABC, both units of Walt Disney Co., have advertised on the posters, distributed to more than 8,000 high and elementary schools nationwide each month.

In the case of "Dr. Dolittle," poster company Planet Report also supplied elementary schools with bookmarks bearing Murphy's picture to give to students as prizes or rewards.

"It is an interesting match," said Planet Report founder Jeff Lederman. "Teachers get something they can use and a marketing purpose is served."

Not everyone applauds the relationship. Karen McNulty of Consumers Union said ads don't belong in classrooms, where they can distract students from their studies.

"Is that what we want kids to pay attention to when they go to school--ads?" McNulty asked.

Some teachers have mixed feelings about the poster, which besides ads has about 60 facts on science, politics and culture. Venice High School social studies teacher Paul McDermitt said that although he has a poster in his classroom, he is uncomfortable with it.

"It is sort of commercial," he said. "The ads are pretty large. I don't think it will make kids buy products, but it gets them into the commercial culture."

"On the other hand," McDermitt said, "they see so many ads on TV, maybe it doesn't make a difference."

*

The poster is the latest example of how advertising is creeping into schools. Advertisers give away thousands of colorful book covers and bookmarks promoting movies, TV shows and products aimed at kids. A Los Angeles company prepares ad-supported custom lunch menus for 8,000 schools around the country.

The pitches are becoming increasingly sophisticated. The April menu from School Marketing Partners touted Warner Bros.' animated feature "Quest for Camelot." Besides ads for the movie, the menu had a detachable bookmark and a game based on the film. It listed a "Quest for Camelot" lunch that included a Devon hero sandwich, Sir Lionel peach cup and Kayley orange juice--foods named for characters in the movie. Students checking their school lunch menu on School Marketing Partners' Web site encountered more pitches for the movie.

*

Marketers are turning to schools because children are a tough audience to reach. Mass media is mostly ineffective with schoolchildren, who generally don't read newspapers or many magazines and don't listen to the radio. Next to television, which is expensive, schools offer one of the surest ways for advertisers to reach kids.

"For that demographic in general, schools are an important market for us to use," said Kris Coontz, vice president of advertising and media planning for ABC. The network used the Planet Report poster last fall to promote its lineup of family-oriented shows.

The poster is attractive to marketers because teachers using it are likely to leave it on display for an entire month, until the next poster arrives. By supplying a quiz, Planet Report nudges teachers to use the poster for a lesson, further ensuring that the ads get noticed. And Lederman surveys teachers and students, offering them T-shirts as incentives, to verify that schools are using the posters.

Teachers who use the poster say they do so to encourage reading among students. "The poster is big, and the reading level is not too high," said Esther Poole, a history teacher at Lakewood High School.

Poole says students often congregate near the poster in her classroom to read it. "Whatever we can get that encourages voluntary reading is a plus," Poole said.

Lederman edits the posters, which are compiled without attribution from newspapers, magazines and other information sources by an employee. He prepares two versions--one for high school students and another for students in elementary and middle schools. Except for the ads and the Planet Report logo, the posters are mostly black and white.

Trivia items are chosen carefully, Lederman said. Among the blurbs on last month's grade-school report was news that a bad-tempered elephant was transferred to a zoo in Seattle from one in Portland.

"I don't like to be negative," Lederman said. "Oklahoma bombing trial, drugs--I don't cover things like that."

Lederman says he is also choosy about the ads he accepts, though some parents may be chagrined to learn that a number of films advertised on the posters are rated for older viewers. High school versions of Planet Report have had ads for the R-rated films "Senseless" and "Ride," both produced by a unit of Disney. "Dr. Dolittle" is rated PG-13.

*

Representatives of Disney unit Dimension Films and Fox couldn't be reached for comment.

But Jack Valenti, chairman of the Motion Picture Assn. of America, which represents the studios, said ratings are meant to guide parents about movie content, not to curb advertising.

"How a movie is marketed--that is not within the rating system," Valenti said. Besides, he added, "how can you monitor every piece of advertising that goes out? You can't monitor every marketing program."

If the reaction at Bear Valley Elementary is any indication, the ads grab students' attention.

"The skateboard picture is cool," said fifth-grader Bryan Embry, 11, referring to an ad for Vans sneakers on the same poster with the "Dr. Dolittle" ad.

*

Classmate Michael Silva, 11, was also impressed with the Vans ad, which shows an airborne skateboarder. "I'm looking for that kind of shoe," he said.

"The ads are powerful," said Bear Valley fourth-grade teacher Dustin Strauch, who uses the poster in his room. Students seldom miss the quiz questions about the ads, he said. "The kids remember them, where they forget some of the other information."

But what students remember might upset some advertisers. Fus' fifth-graders incorrectly said the Eddie Murphy film was called "The Doctor Is In"--the slogan that appears in large, red letters.

"They got the name wrong," said Fus. "So I'm not sure the ads are really selling them."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: Poster promoting 20th Century Fox's "Dr. Dolittle" hangs in Moreno Valley classroom. It contains information as well as ads. PHOTOGRAPHER: IRIS SCHNEIDER/ Los Angeles Times PHOTO: Students read and play with the "Dr. Dolittle" poster. Advertisers say youngsters are a difficult audience to reach outside school. PHOTOGRAPHER: IRIS SCHNEIDER/ Los Angeles Times

October 7, 1997, Tuesday, Home Edition

SECTION: Calendar; Part F; Page 1; Entertainment Desk

LENGTH: 1827 words

HEADLINE: THE COMING PG-13 JUGGERNAUT;
TO THE STUDIOS, THE RATING THAT MEANS 'PARENTAL GUIDANCE' ALSO STANDS FOR 'PROFIT GOALS,' WITH MORE FILMS BEING MODELED ON THE SUCCESS OF 'MEN IN BLACK.'

BYLINE: AMY WALLACE, TIMES STAFF WRITER
BODY:

Judging by its apocalyptic title, "Armageddon," the \$100-million event picture coming from Disney's Touchstone Pictures next summer, won't be for sissies.

But how about for kiddies?

You bet, say Disney executives. The sci-fi/action movie, in which Bruce Willis tries to save Earth from an asteroid the size of Texas, will be loaded with explosive special effects to please male viewers, with a love story to cater to women and, if executives get their wish, with a key ingredient to lure young children: a PG-13 rating.

"Seven-, 8- and 9-year-olds are seeing more PG-13 films than ever before. That's what we're targeting," said John Cywinski, Disney's top film marketing executive, who says the studio will seek a PG-13 rating for "Armageddon" partly to "open the doors" to that preteen audience.

Disney is not alone. Especially in the wake of the enormous success of Columbia Pictures' "Men in Black," this summer's PG-13 film whose special effects and plot line were both kid-friendly and hip enough for all ages, movie studios are courting that rating as never before, tailoring scripts to comply with Motion Picture Assn. of America guidelines.

The trick is to create a film that is smart or spectacular or even violent enough to attract adults--to push the ratings envelope, in the words of one executive--but still win a PG-13 rating.

The reason is simple: Kids go to movies in droves. And if they like what they see, they go back--again and again. Children may pay less for tickets, but increasingly they are regarded as an essential part of what turns event films into blockbusters.

Among movies in production for release next year, New Line Cinema is banking on a PG-13 rating for "Lost in Space," based on the TV series. Sony's TriStar Pictures is aiming for the same rating with "Godzilla," the monster lizard picture, as is Paramount with "Deep Impact," the sci-fi/action adventure about a comet hurtling toward the Earth.

And although executives at 20th Century Fox could not confirm that "The X-Files Movie," due in theaters next summer, will seek a PG-13 rating, it's a safe bet that the thought has occurred to them, given the television series' popularity with teenagers.

In part, the studios are following demographic shifts. According to Peter Morrison, a demographer at Rand Corp., the ranks of America's 8- to 13-year-olds are growing at twice the rate of the population at large. About 23.1 million kids are in that age group now, and it will grow to 24.5 million by 2001, a 6.2% increase.

"That's nothing to sneeze at," Morrison said. "It's a market that's expanding."

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Studio executives are also watching past box-office performance. The bulk of movies made today are R-rated, meaning that children under 17 are prohibited unless accompanied by an adult. Of the 462 films considered by the MPAA's rating board from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31 of this year, for example, nearly 65% were R, as compared to PG-13 (16%), PG (15%), G (3%) and NC-17 (0.4%). But the biggest hits do not have R ratings.

"When you look at the top-grossing pictures of all time, they have one thing in common," said Tom Sherak, who heads distribution at 20th Century Fox, noting that all but one of the top 20 carried a rating lower than R (the exception is "Beverly Hills Cop," in 16th place). "That's the bottom-line reason why people want PG-13 rather than R." Chris Lee, TriStar's president of production, agreed.

"You can still do a tremendous amount of business with an R-rated picture. But it's more difficult," he said, calling the PG-13 rating "the Good Housekeeping seal for parents."

By avoiding an R rating, studios gain a few concrete things. First, their advertising options are greater--R-rated films cannot be advertised during network television programs that are aimed at families. Second, executives say, PG-13 films play better in the heartland.

"Really big movies get their big grosses from the heartland of the country, not from the coasts," said Sherak, adding that unlike the trend in such big cities as New York and Los Angeles, in the Midwest an R rating really keeps kids out. "Theater owners in smaller markets do watch more closely."

Said Disney's Cywinski: "If you hope to bring in kids and teens and you have an R rating, you're going to run into some struggles in small-town America."

*

Moreover, a PG-13 is now believed to have an intangible benefit--a coolness factor--that helps lure kids. Although it may seem tame to older teens, executives say, to more and more young children, a PG-13 rating says "must-see."

"Kids are so much hipper and more sophisticated than they used to be that younger kids want to see stuff that has a little edge to it," said Amy Pascal, president of Columbia Pictures. "These kids have been weaned on Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network. Stuff that's more babyish doesn't appeal to them."

At times, this tendency to view kids as tough customers has led filmmakers to spice up their movies to avoid a G rating. Last year, "Fly-Away Home" director Carroll Ballard admitted he added a four-letter word to his film to ensure a PG, and Jack Valenti, the MPAA's president, says that what Ballard did is not unusual.

"Some people think G is the kiss of death," Valenti lamented. "They get a little frightened that it will turn off an 8-year-old boy. So they throw a 'damn' or a 'hell' or a 'crap' in there so they get a PG."

Some producers say it's getting more difficult to convince studios to finance G-rated films. Kathleen Kennedy has produced five of the top 25 grossing films of all time--"Jurassic Park" and its sequel; "Twister"; "E.T., The Extra-Terrestrial"; and "Back to the Future"--all of them rated PG or PG-13. But even with that track record, she hit a roadblock with a recent proposal to make E.B. White's "Trumpet of the Swan" into a live-action film.

"I couldn't get it made," she said, conceding that the project had a hefty price tag because she wanted the swans to talk. "The common response was, . . . 'It will only appeal to very young children.' Because the demographic is considered to be narrow, the studios aren't willing to spend the money necessary to do it well."

*

With fewer G movies, PG and PG-13 films have become the de facto family films of the 1990s. And that affects films at the other end of the rating spectrum as well. As more children go to PG-13 films, studios are willing to tone down certain material just enough to make sure they have access to that young audience.

"We've edited scripts in order to . . . avoid the R rating," said Mitch Goldman, marketing and distribution chief at New Line. "When a script is green-lighted, one of the issues we deal with aside from casting and budget is ultimately what we're going to have to sell. . . . If we read stuff that is clearly going to give the picture an R, we deal with it then."

From the start, Goldman said, New Line developed "Lost in Space" with one rating in mind. "The script and production are designed to enthrall an 8-year-old and an 18-year-old," he said. "It's imperative that we get a PG-13."

Decision-makers at Beacon Communications, a independent production company, apparently felt the same way about its "Air Force One," the action-thriller about terrorists who commandeer the president's plane. The movie is graphic at times: Several people are killed execution-style and terrorists hold a gun to a little girl's head. Still, when the MPAA bestowed an R-rating for violent content, Beacon and the film's distributor--Columbia Pictures--appealed, taking the unusual step of sending the movie's star, Harrison Ford, to argue for a PG-13.

The MPAA appeals board upheld the R rating.

*

Valenti, the MPAA president, said that the ratings system is not designed to make decisions for parents but to help them decide for themselves. The dozen or so members of the ratings board try to put themselves in parents' shoes, but the process is inherently subjective, Valenti said, and not entirely precise.

"I don't think 'Men in Black' is going to disturb an 8- or 9-year-old," he said, saying that in his judgment, that PG-13 rated film was appropriate for young children. "But there are some PG-13 movies that I would recommend that kids not go to see."

Despite its terrifying premise, Disney's "Armageddon" might well win a PG-13 rating, Valenti indicated, because fantasy violence--what he called "asteroids, volcanoes, dinosaurs--is less likely to cause copy-catting. It's not human being killing human being. It's out of this world."

Not everyone is convinced, however.

"It's about the end of the world," New Line's Goldman said dryly. "Doesn't sound like family fun to me."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: An asteroid the size of Texas threatens Earth in "Armageddon," a film loaded with explosive special effects. PHOTOGRAPHER: Columbia TriStar PHOTO: (Scene from the motion picture "Men in Black.") PHOTOGRAPHER: FRANK MASI

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: December 21, 1998

September 3, 1997, Wednesday

SECTION: LIFESTYLE; Ed. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8; Pg. E-7

LENGTH: 1053 words

HEADLINE: Kids flocked to teen, adult film fare

BYLINE: Bruce Orwall; THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

BODY:

For parents who worry that their children grow up too fast, the summer movie season didn't provide much comfort.

More than ever, kids seem to be heading to movies intended for the next age group up. In doing so, they are playing a growing role in determining which mass-market movies become hits -- and which ones flop.

This summer, young children gravitated to both teen-targeted fare like "Men in Black" and obviously adult material like "My Best Friend's Wedding" and "Air Force One." That left a lot of traditional family movies -- like Universal Pictures' "A Simple Wish" or Warner Bros.' "Free Willy 3: The Rescue" -- gasping for air at the box office.

And even when kids actually attended films aimed at them, there were signs of a shake-up in the market. Two months ago, not many people would have predicted that Walt Disney Co.'s loopy live-action film "George of the Jungle" would top "Hercules" at the box office, but that's exactly what has happened. Both films are successes, but the triumph of King George signals a shift. In the past, kids might have attended the animated flick several times. Now, animation is no longer a sure bet to vacuum up the bulk of family moviegoing dollars each summer.

Cori Drasin and her daughters Dani, 9, and Alana, 6, are a case in point. Yes, the Beverly Hills family saw Disney's "Hercules" -- once. But the kids saw "Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery" seven times, adored "My Best Friend's Wedding" and on a recent afternoon lobbied to see Jennifer Aniston's romantic comedy "Picture Perfect." Alana, meanwhile, listed Warner Bros.' "Contact" -- perhaps the most highbrow Hollywood film this summer -- as a favorite and can even discuss the film's meaning: "You never saw (the aliens). That's what the movie was all about."

Influence from television

Her mother explains that television has had a dramatic impact on the family's moviegoing habits. "They're exposed to more mature things on TV, so when they go to the movies, they expect to see the same things," she says. Now, she adds, her kids demand more than "the formulaic, happy-ending Disney stuff."

The movie industry has done little formal research on the trend yet, but from Hollywood studio executives to heartland theater owners, people are taking notice.

"If it's a PG-13 movie, it's clearly not for kids by content and rating," says Bob Goodrich, president of the Grand Rapids, Mich.-based Goodrich Quality Theaters chain, which operates mostly in midsize Midwestern cities. "And yet there is an awareness that some 10-year-olds wouldn't want to see 'The Lion King' now. And some parents have a different view of the maturity level of their children."

Dave Smith, president of entertainment for the research firm Frank Magid Associates, says he sees the same thing every weekend at R-rated films in the Los Angeles suburb of Agoura Hills. "There's no shortage of 8, 9-, 10- and 11-year-olds sitting there," he said. The firm's research has turned up the same trend in television, as two new late-night talk shows -- "Vibe" and "The Keenen Ivory Wayans Show" -- are picking up noticeable numbers of viewers under 12.

Even when studios run adult-targeted TV ads, they reach kids. And the ubiquitous marketing campaigns for big "event" pictures are almost inescapable. "Pop culture washes all the way down," says Casey Silver, chairman of Universal Pictures, 80 percent-owned by Seagram Co.

A blurring of lines clear demarcation of what's for parents and what's for kids," agrees Universal executive vice president for marketing Kathy Jones. "We like the same music, we dress similarly." Just a couple of years ago, parents were fretting over whether some Disney animated movies were too scary for kids. Now, kids are successfully convincing parents to let them see heart-thumpers like Universal's "The Lost World: Jurassic Park."

"I liked the funny part where the dog barked at the dinosaur and the dinosaur barked back at it," said 7-year-old Keely Anderson of Los Angeles of "Lost World."

She didn't mention the fact that the barking Rover ended up as a snack for T. Rex.

But a movie didn't have to be frightening this year to have kid appeal. While some action movies like "Batman & Robin" fizzled fast, two pumped-up comedies -- "Men in Black" and "George of the Jungle" -- reeled in an array of youngsters, from teens to preschoolers. Los Angeles mother Katie Woods says the effects-laden "Men in Black" didn't scare any of her kids: "They could see that it was kind of fake."

"George," meanwhile, used special effects to create a loud thwap whenever its Tarzan-like hero crashed into something, which was frequently. Kids loved it so much that there were reports of them careening into the walls of theater lobbies as they exited.

Where it all leaves the animation business is hard to guess.

Hollywood stands poised to churn out more traditional animated fare than ever, as News Corp.'s Twentieth Century Fox, Time Warner Inc.'s Warner Bros. and DreamWorks SKG are all launching animation units to challenge Disney's domination. Some in the industry think parents have become so well-trained to buy animated films on video that they are increasingly skipping the theatrical runs. For all combatants, the challenge will be to create animation that can compete with the live-action spectacles children favored this year.

At Disney, executives publicly have defended "Hercules" and other recent animated films, which continue to bring in big profits even when they aren't as popular as "The Lion King." But looking ahead, they are subtly retooling their approach, hoping to make the films pop off the screen. Some future Disney offerings mix vivid computer graphics with traditional animation to produce a more compelling look. "A Bug's Life," another computer-animated film from "Toy Story" producer Pixar Animation Studios, is due in late 1998.

Not that the traditional family films will be abandoned. The key is to make something that's relevant, not sappy and formulaic, says Universal's Silver. Universal scored two years ago with the G-rated talking-pig tale "Babe," and next year the studio will be aiming to repeat with a "Babe" sequel. "If you make the great family picture, I believe they'll come," he says.

GRAPHIC: 1 PHOTO; MARSHA BLACKBURN / Disney Enterprises Inc.; The swing vote: Brendan Fraser is "George of the Jungle" in the recent Disney movie that signaled a shift in viewing tastes among children.

LA Times
10/17/97

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October 14, 1997, Tuesday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: PART II;

Page B06

LENGTH: 1690 words

HEADLINE: A RATING FOR SUCCESS / MOVIEMAKERS STRIVE FOR A PG-13 RATING TO ENSURE THAT KIDS WILL GO- AND BOOST HOLLYWOOD'S PROFITS GUIDELINES FOR RATINGS

BYLINE: By Amy Wallace. LOS ANGELES TIMES

BODY:

JUDGING BY its apocalyptic title, "Armageddon," the \$100-million picture coming from Disney's Touchstone Pictures next summer, won't be for sissies.

But how about for kiddies?

You bet, say Disney executives. The sci-fi / action movie, in which Bruce Willis tries to save Earth from an asteroid the size of Texas, will be loaded with explosive special effects to please male viewers, with a love story to cater to women and, if executives get their wish, with a key ingredient to lure young children: a PG-13 rating.

"Seven-, eight and nine-year-olds are seeing more PG-13 films than ever before. That's what we're targeting," said John Cywinski, Disney's top film marketing executive, who says the studio will seek a PG-13 rating for "Armageddon" partly to "open the doors" to that preteen audience.

Disney is not alone. Especially following the enormous success of Columbia Pictures' "Men in Black," this summer's PG-13 film whose special effects and plot were both kid-friendly and hip enough for all ages, movie studios are courting that rating as never before, tailoring scripts to comply with Motion Picture Association of America guidelines.

The trick is to create a film that is smart or spectacular or even violent enough to attract adults - to push the ratings envelope, in the words of one executive - but still win a PG-13 rating.

The reason is simple: Kids go to movies in droves. And if they like what they see, they go back - again and again.

Children may pay less for tickets, but increasingly they are regarded as an essential part of what turns event films into blockbusters.

Among movies in production for next year, New Line Cinema is banking on a PG-13 rating for "Lost in Space," based on the TV series. Sony's TriStar Pictures is aiming for the same rating with "Godzilla," the monster lizard picture, as is Paramount with "Deep Impact," the sci-fi / action adventure about a comet hurtling toward the Earth.

And although executives at 20th Century Fox could not confirm that "The X-Files Movie," due in theaters next summer, will seek a PG-13 rating, it's a safe bet that the thought has occurred to them, given the television series' popularity with teenagers.

In part, the studios are following demographic shifts.

Peter Morrison, a demographer at Rand Corp., said that the ranks of America's 8 to 13-year-olds are growing at twice the rate of the population. About 23.1 million kids are in that age group now, and it will grow to 24.5 million by the year 2001, a 6.2 percent increase.

"That's nothing to sneeze at," Morrison said. "It's a market that's expanding."

Studio executives are also watching past box-office performance. The bulk of movies made today are R-rated, meaning that children under 17 are prohibited unless accompanied by an adult. Of the 462 films considered by the movie association's rating board from Jan. 1 to Aug. 31 of this year, for example, nearly 65 percent were R, as compared to PG-13 (16 percent), PG (15 percent), G (3 percent) and NC-17 (0.4 percent). But the biggest hits do not have R ratings.

"When you look at the top-grossing pictures of all time, they have one thing in common," said Tom Sherak, who heads distribution at 20th Century Fox, noting that all but one of the top 20 carried a rating lower than R. (The exception is "Beverly Hills Cop," in 16th place.) "That's the bottom-line reason why people want PG-13 rather than R."

Chris Lee, TriStar's president of production, agreed. "You can still do a tremendous amount of business with an R-rated picture. But it's more difficult," he said, calling the PG-13 rating "the Good Housekeeping seal for parents."

By avoiding an R rating, studios gain a few concrete things. First, their advertising options are greater: R-rated films cannot be advertised during network television programs that are aimed at families. Second, executives say, PG-13 films play better in the heartland.

"Really big movies get their big grosses from the heartland of the country, not from the coasts," said Sherak, adding that unlike the trend in such big cities as New York and Los Angeles, in the Midwest an R rating really keeps kids out. "Theater owners in smaller markets do watch more closely."

Said Disney's Cywinski: "If you hope to bring in kids and teens and you have an R rating, you're going to run into some struggles in small-town America."

Moreover, a PG-13 is now believed to have an intangible benefit - a coolness factor - that helps lure kids. Although it may seem tame to older teens, executives say, to more and more young children, a PG-13 rating says "must-see."

"Kids are so much hipper and more sophisticated than they used to be that younger kids want to see stuff that has a little edge to it," said Amy Pascal, president of Columbia Pictures. "These kids have been weaned on Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network. Stuff that's more babyish doesn't appeal to them."

At times, this tendency to view kids as tough customers has led filmmakers to spice up their movies to avoid a G rating. Last year, "Fly Away Home" director Carroll Ballard admitted he added a four-letter word to his film to ensure a PG, and Jack Valenti, the association's president, says that what Ballard did is not unusual.

"Some people think G is the kiss of death," Valenti lamented. "They get a little frightened that it will turn off an eight-year-old boy. So they throw a damn' or a hell' or a crap' in there so they get a PG."

Some producers say it's getting more difficult to convince studios to finance G-rated films. Kathleen Kennedy has produced five of the top 25 grossing films of all time - "Jurassic Park" and its sequel; "Twister"; "E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial," and "Back to the Future" - all of them rated PG or PG-13. But even with that track record, she hit a roadblock with a recent proposal to make E.B. White's "Trumpet of the Swan" into a live-action film.

"I couldn't get it made," she said, conceding that the project had a hefty price tag because she wanted the swans to talk. "The common response was, . . . It will only appeal to very young children. Because the demographic is considered to be narrow, the studios aren't willing to spend the money necessary to do it well."

With fewer G movies, PG and PG-13 films have become the de facto family films of the 1990s. And that affects films at the other end of the rating spectrum as well. As more children go to PG-13 films, studios are willing to tone down certain material to make sure they have access to that young audience.

"We've edited scripts in order to . . . avoid the R rating," said Mitch Goldman, marketing and distribution chief at New Line. "When a script is green-lighted, one of the issues we deal with aside from casting and budget is ultimately what we're going to have to sell . . . If we read stuff that is clearly going to give the picture an R, we deal with it then."

Goldman said New Line developed "Lost in Space" with one rating in mind. "The script and production are designed to enthrall an eight-year-old and an eighteen-year-old," he said. "It's imperative that we get a PG-13."

Decision-makers at Beacon Communications, an independent production company, apparently felt the same way about its "Air Force One," the action-thriller about terrorists who commandeer the president's plane. The movie is graphic: Several people are killed execution-style and terrorists hold a gun to a little girl's head. Still, when the movie association bestowed an R-rating for violent content, Beacon and the film's distributor - Columbia Pictures - appealed, taking the unusual step of sending the movie's star, Harrison Ford, to argue for a PG-13. The association's appeals board upheld the R rating.

Valenti, the association's president, said that the ratings system is not designed to make decisions for parents but to help them decide for themselves. The dozen or so members of the ratings board try to put themselves in parents' shoes, but the process is subjective, Valenti said, and not entirely precise.

"I don't think 'Men in Black' is going to disturb an eight or nine-year-old," he said, saying that in his judgment, that PG-13-rated film was appropriate for young children. "But there are some PG-13 movies that I would recommend that kids not go to see."

Despite its terrifying premise, Disney's "Armageddon" might well win a PG-13 rating, Valenti indicated, because fantasy violence - what he called "asteroids, volcanoes, dinosaurs - is less likely to cause copy-catting. It's not human being killing human being. It's out of this world." Not everyone is convinced, however.

"It's about the end of the world," New Line's Goldman said dryly. "Doesn't sound like family fun to me."

Guidelines For Ratings THE PG-13 rating was created in 1984, after some filmmakers and viewers raised concerns about films that seemed too intense to be rated PG but not graphic enough to be rated R.

Increasingly, a PG-13 rating - "Parents strongly cautioned: Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13" - is seen by the industry as a key ingredient in the creation of a blockbuster. Below is a sampling of the guidelines the Motion Picture Association of America rating board uses to make its decisions: -Any drug use content initially requires at least a PG-13 rating. There are no scenes depicting drug use in PG-rated films. -Nudity of a nonsexual nature is OK for PG-13 movies. But if nudity is sexually oriented, the film will generally be rated R. -If violence is too rough or persistent, the film will be rated R. -A film can qualify for a PG-13 rating even if it includes what the association calls "one of the harsher sexually derived words" - but only one use, and only as an expletive.

If such a word is used multiple times, or even once in a sexual context, then the film will almost always be rated R. One recent exception is "My Best Friend's Wedding," in which Julia Roberts utters such a word in a sexual way. Originally rated R, the film was rated PG-13 after an appeal. - Los Angeles Times

GRAPHIC: 1) Fox Broadcasting Cover Photo- Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny from the "X-Files." 2) Gannett Photo Network Cover Photo -Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones from the movie "Men in Black" 3) Photo by Melinda Sue Gordon - scene from the movie, "Men in Black".

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: October 14, 1997

March 16, 1998, Monday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: LIFE;

Pg. 3D

LENGTH: 884 words

HEADLINE: Dance between panel, producers decides movie ratings

BYLINE: Andy Seiler

BODY:

While TV ratings are imposed by the people who actually make and broadcast the programs, movies are rated by an anonymous group of parents overseen by the Motion Picture Association of America.

Movies are rated by a rotating panel of 11 to 13 people in California who view 400 to 500 films a year, says Jack Valenti, the MPAA's president. The voluntary system started in 1968 and has evolved over the years. For instance, the PG-13 rating was added in 1984.

While a similar system might be preferable for television, it would not be practical, Valenti says.

"The TV ratings are rated by the producer and the distributor of their particular program because there's the equivalent of 1,000 two-hour movies a day on television," Valenti says.

Filmmakers and studios have no control over which rating the panel decides to place on a film, though films can be, and often are, re-edited to achieve a preferred rating.

Studios especially avoid the NC-17 rating, which prohibits anyone under age 17 from attending. For many, NC-17 has the stigma of pornography shared by the earlier X rating.

For example, the makers of *Two Girls and a Guy* repeatedly submitted ever tamer versions of their film to the MPAA, finally getting an R.

But movie marketing whiz Gerry Rich of MGM/UA managed to turn the NC-17 rating into a plus when selling *Showgirls* in 1995.

"I learned that it's possible to release an NC-17 film in a very wide and commercial way," says Rich, who has marketed films in every rating category. "And I learned that it is possible to advertise in every newspaper in the country with only minor exceptions."

But Rich says most studios will continue to avoid the rating because they don't want to close out the core teen-age audience, the lifeblood of the box office.

"They don't like NC-17 for the same reason that a lot of gamblers would rather play craps than roulette," Valenti says. "The odds are shorter on the craps table than at roulette. Exiling children under 17 lengthens the odds."

Then there's the matter of enforcement. For example, in New York City it is not uncommon to see young teen-agers at R-rated movies. An R rating is supposed to mean they cannot attend a spicy movie without their parents -- and few teen-agers want to see a spicy

movie with their parents. But Rich believes that theaters are "infinitely" more likely to enforce an NC-17 than an R.

Most horror films, action films and movies that contain nudity and sexuality get R ratings. But if studios want to attract families, it's better to tone down the material and go for a PG-13, as MGM recently did with *The Man in the Iron Mask*, because many parents won't take their children to an R-rated film, Rich says.

"I can pick out a lot of films with R's that do very well," Valenti says. "But if they had their druthers, they'd rather have a PG-13."

Teen-agers pay attention to ratings, Rich says, and would much prefer to go to a PG-13 film than a PG in many cases. "I think they feel like they're getting away with a little bit more."

And a G rating is strictly for little kids.

"You'd be extremely hard pressed to get a teen-ager into a G-rated movie," he says. "A G can be the kiss of death. They probably would say, 'Hell, no!'"

The film alphabet, from G to NC-17

These are the general guidelines the ratings board follows, according to Jack Valenti, the president of the Motion Picture Association of America:

G: General Audiences. All ages admitted. Contains nothing in theme, language, violence, etc. that would be offensive to parents whose younger children see the film. Some snippets of language may go beyond polite conversation, but they are common expressions. No stronger words are present. Violence is at a minimum. Nudity, sex scenes and drug use are not present.

PG: Parental Guidance Suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children. May contain adult themes, some profanity, violence or brief nudity. But these elements are not "deemed so intense as to require that parents be strongly cautioned." Contains no drug-use scenes.

PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. Contains more intensity than a PG film in theme, violence, nudity, sex, language or other elements, but not intense enough to require an R (restricted). Any drug-use content usually requires a PG-13. If nudity is sexual or violence rough or persistent, the film usually gets an R. With regard to profanity, the board pays particular attention to "one of the harsher sexually derived words." One use as an expletive requires a PG-13; more than one expletive use or any use in a sexual context requires an R, though these films can be rated less severely by special vote.

R: Restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. Contains adult material. May include "hard language, tough violence, sensual nudity, drug abuse or some combination of those."

NC-17: No One 17 and Under Admitted. No children can be admitted. Contains "patently" adult material, such as violence, sex, drug abuse or "aberrational behavior" that most parents would consider off-limits to children.

September 30, 1998 Wednesday, FINAL / ALL

SECTION: NEXT; Pg. 1F

LENGTH: 805 words

HEADLINE: THE MOVIE RATING SYSTEM;
AND WHO PAYS ATTENTION

BYLINE: By SAM KUNTZ

BODY:

The year was 1966.

Makers of the film "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" sought to use a sexually explicit word and phrase in their movie about a middle-aged professor and his wife.

The new president of the Motion Picture Association of America convened a committee and a three-hour meeting to discuss the shocking words.

As a result, the word was removed but the phrase was not.

And such was the beginning of the movie ratings system.

While "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" was certainly not geared toward teen viewers, many of today's films - with words and situations that explain their R ratings - are. Teen actors and celebrities are obviously hired to appeal to similarly aged viewers.

(And if "children" want to see such, you can bet they will have to fork over an adult admission fee for it.)

MPAA members think it's their job to keep watch over what youth and teens view. Theaters think it's theirs. Parents definitely think it's theirs. So where does that leave teens?

Apparently regulated, targeted by film marketers and unclear of what adult society deems appropriate viewing for teens.

It isn't against the law for children to view R-rated films. The ratings system was implemented by the MPAA, a lobbying group out of Washington, D.C., as a helpful tool for those in a position - like parents, guardians and theaters - to regulate the content youth and teens view.

Its ratings board comprises a group of parents based in Los Angeles. They decided the fate of the ship "Titanic." And this time, the decision was lenient.

The board decided on a PG-13 rating, despite the nudity, implied sex (to say the least) and scenes with an obscene amount of death. Young heartthrob Leonardo DiCaprio was among the dead.

And teens accounted for a huge amount of the film's profit.

Another unexpected hit this year was the R-rated "There's Something About Mary." Perhaps its makers are still hoping to snag younger audiences; a PG-13 version is rumored for possible release.

Last weekend saw the release of "Urban Legend," which seemed made for young movie fans. Horror films have been hot with teens recently. And this one stars Rebecca Gayheart, formerly of "Beverly Hills, 90210," and Joshua Jackson of "Dawson's Creek." But, sorry, it's rated R.

While it isn't the MPAA's job to enforce ratings restrictions, theaters do. Why?

Follow policy

Scott Jackson, manager at the Westwood Town Center General Cinemas in Rocky River, said "We follow the policy of General Cinemas and support the decisions made by the film ratings board."

It thus restricts R-rated films from viewers under the age of 17 and unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian. This also means parents can't buy the ticket and give it to their teen.

All theaters contacted said they follow such rules. Still, only younger teens say they generally receive a request for proof of age.

And what about teens who want to purchase R-rated films distributed on video?

Best Buy, at Great Northern Mall, admitted to being one store that does require purchasers to be at least 18 years old.

But other stores seemed to imply a double standard.

When asked if he sold R-rated videos to teens, one video store clerk who asked not to be identified, said if a clerk "said yes he would risk losing his job. And if he said no he would be lying."

The same chain, at a different location, continuously dodged questions about selling videos to teen customers, finally saying, "If a kid comes in acting like a moron, being wild and disrupting other customers, the clerk probably won't sell it to him or her. But if a kid comes in calm and respectful [or with his parents] and the clerk thinks he's mature enough, they will probably sell him the movie."

She added: "Most teens like campy comedies with Adam Sandler, and are too afraid to try [purchasing an R-rated film] anyway."

And teens shouldn't think they can be sneaky and try to check out an R-rated film from the public library. A librarian at the West Park branch of the Cleveland Public Library said, "No one under 18 can take out any video, even a G-rated one."

But just how seriously should anyone, including teens, take such restrictions, when the sexually explicit Starr Report was open reading for anyone with access to the Internet or even a daily newspaper?

Of course, there has been some talk about an edited version of the Starr Report on a kiddie Web site.

But 14-year-old John Noernberg, of Fairview Park, said, "Why would you try to make something appropriate for children that's not appropriate to begin with?"

And what's in store for the rumored "South Park" film? Will the ratings board cut off the film's targeted office? Will kids across America be influenced by the controversial ways of these cartoon kids? Once again, the expendable teenager lies in wait.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO(color) BY: No Credit The makers of the R-rated "There's Something About Mary" are still hoping to snag younger audiences. A PG-13 version of the film is rumored for possible release.

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THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

April 12, 1998 Sunday HOME EDITION

SECTION: AE;

Pg. 101

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HEADLINE: Screening teens;
Indianapolis movie theaters are hard-pressed to enforce the age-based ratings system.

BYLINE: BONNIE BRITTON

BODY:

G, general audiences, all ages admitted. There's no nudity, sex scenes or drug use. Violence, if present, is minimal.

PG, parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children. Brief nudity might be present, and horror and violence does not exceed "moderate" levels.

PG-13, parents strongly cautioned, some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. Some scenes of drug use might be present, although rough or persistent violence and sexually oriented nudity is usually absent. The movie might also contain harsh, sexually-derived words.

R, restricted, Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. The film may contain adult material, including language, theme, violence, sex or portrayal of drug use.

NC-17, no one 17 and under admitted. There could be explicit sex scenes, much sexually-oriented language, and/or scenes containing excessive violence. The rating does not signify that the film is deemed obscene or pornographic.

It's showtime: Do you know what movie your child is watching?

Maybe. Maybe not.

In Indianapolis, and in smaller Indiana cities and towns, theater enforcement of the R-rating - "Restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian" - appears to be a sometime thing.

Getting into an R-rated movie without an adult chaperone isn't always that difficult, according to teen-agers who've broken the barrier.

And while theater employees might make the effort to prevent unaccompanied young patrons from seeing R-rated movies, which might contain anything from bad language to full nudity, there's no legal

penalty if they don't.

Enforcement at theaters is purely voluntary.

So is the rating system.

Filmmakers are not required by law to submit their films for review to the Classification and Rating Administration to gain a G, PG, PG-13, R or NC-17 rating.

A "not rated" movie might mean that a rating wasn't sought because the filmmaker knew it would draw an NC-17 ("No one 17 and under admitted"), limiting its box-office potential. Or it could be that the low-budget moviemaker couldn't afford to pay the several-thousand-dollar rating fee.

Strictness triggered

Those in the theater industry said certain movies periodically trigger renewed efforts to keep unaccompanied-by- an-adult kids from attending R-rated films.

Starship Troopers, which came out last November, waved a red flag.

At the Sony College Park Theater, a girl who looked about 15 years old tried to buy tickets to Troopers, Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi fantasy, which includes extreme violence and a nude coed shower scene.

A sign posted in the ticket booth window mentioning Starship Troopers by name made it clear that the theater was trying to enforce the no-one-under-17 policy.

Stomping away emptyhanded, the teen-ager hurled some R-rated words into the air.

Her mother, waiting in a nearby van with at least two more teen-agers, wasn't allowed to sign a waiver form, a type of consent used by some theaters. By signing the sheet, the parent or guardian gives written permission for an under-17 moviegoer to see an R-rated movie unaccompanied by an adult.

Marc Pascucci, vice president of advertising and publicity for Sony/Loews Theatres, said ticket sellers are supposed to check IDs of patrons trying to buy tickets to R-rated films who look like they might be under 17, unless they're with an adult.

Even when they don't buy a ticket for an R-rated movie, "people can auditorium-hop once they're in a megaplex. In the case of NC-17 movies, like Showgirls (another Verhoeven movie), we'll post an usher at the auditorium door and then we do auditorium checks.

"It's funny. We get a lot more complaints from parents whose kids we stopped from going in. They drop their kids off and take off, and then we can't let the kid in. I don't think (in the last

five years) a complaint has ever crossed my desk from a parent saying, 'You let my kid into the wrong movie. '

It's always happened

Since the beginning of time, Pascucci added, kids have been sneaking into movies of which their parents might not approve.

Andy Engle, 19, a freshman at Indiana University, said he didn't have to sneak into R-rated movies before he turned 17.

"When we were in high school, we never had a problem. Even when I was a freshman. "

Engle, who said he used to go to General Cinema Clearwater, remembered seeing Sliver, a steamy R-rated Sharon Stone movie.

"That was about my freshman year. They didn't card us for that. "

Most of his moviegoing was on Friday or Saturday night, when the theater was extremely busy.

The ultra-violent Natural Born Killers is another film Engle and his friends saw without their parents.

"That was one movie I could have done without seeing. I hated it. I didn't really understand the whole point of it. I'd hope younger kids don't see that until they're mature enough to deal with it. "

Brian Callaghan, a spokesman for the Boston-based General Cinema Theatres, said the company tries to enforce the ratings policy as best it can.

But with hundreds or even thousands of patrons going through a theater every day, "it's pretty tough to police. "

Standard procedure

The usual procedure is to send underage patrons, when discovered, to the movie for which they purchased a ticket.

Callaghan said buying a ticket for one movie, then switching to the R-rated movie, is the typical way of sneaking in. Most General Cinema theaters have an alarm on the back door which goes off if someone tries to let friends in.

All of the onus can't fall on the theater, he said. Parents need to be the first line of defense.

At the Sony Cherry Tree Theater where she'd just seen the R-rated Good Will Hunting with her mother and a friend, Carol Wyllie, 13, of New Castle, said that in her hometown, "they let us go into R-rated movies. And they don't card you. "

She has seen Scream, I Know What You Did Last Summer and Scream

2 with her friends. All are very violent films marketed to draw a teen-age audience.

At Greenwood Park Mall, two teen- age boys said their friends let them in one theater's back door.

"If it's on the borderline of R or not rated, it's harder (to get in)," said one.

Buying tickets for a PG-13 movie and then slipping into an R-rated film is common, they added.

Also at the mall, Sarah Cummings, 17, and Katie Bilby, 18, of Mooresville, said they never had trouble getting into R-rated movies in Mooresville before they turned 17.

But, Sarah said, it's wasn't always a sure thing at other theaters. She remembers being turned away with friends when they tried to get into a very violent movie without their parents.

Trying to enforce policy

Ann Craft, general manager of Theatre Owners of Indiana, which represents 80 percent to 85 percent of the theaters in the state, said an Entertainment Tonight segment put theater chains on alert when children were allowed to buy tickets to R-rated movies in two or three locations in the United States.

Because of that, theater chains are trying to enforce the policy more vigorously.

Like Pascucci, Craft says parents sometimes question a theater's right to uphold the R-rating.

"One fellow just ripped a manager to shreds. He said, 'I'm an attorney, and I'll bring suit against you.' "

He didn't.

GRAPHIC: ILLUSTRATION; JOHN BIGELOW

LOAD-DATE: April 13, 1998