

S e p t e m b e r 1 9 9 5

The UCLA
Television
Violence
Monitoring
Report

UCLA Center for Communication Policy

Table of Contents

PART I. Introduction	5
A. Overview	5
B. Historical Background	6
PART II. The Study	16
A. Background	16
B. Independence	18
C. The Scope of the Monitoring	19
D. Methodology	23
1. Rationale and Definitions of Violence	23
2. The Monitoring Process	25
3. The Weekly Meetings	26
4. Criteria	27
E. Operating Premises and Stipulations	32
PART III. Findings in Broadcast Network Television	39
A. Prime Time Series	40
1. Programs with Frequent Issues	41
2. Programs with Occasional Issues	49
3. Interesting Violence Issues in Prime Time Series	54
4. Programs that Deal with Violence Well	58
B. Made for Television Movies and Mini-Series	61
1. Leading Examples of MOWs and Mini-Series that Raised Concerns	62
2. Other Titles Raising Concerns about Violence	67
3. Issues Raised by Made-for-Television Movies and Mini-Series	68
C. Theatrical Motion Pictures on Broadcast Network Television	71
1. Theatrical Films that Raise Concerns	74
2. Additional Theatrical Films that Raise Concerns	80
3. Issues Arising out of Theatrical Films on Television	81
D. On-Air Promotions, Previews, Recaps, Teasers and Advertisements	84
E. Children's Television on the Broadcast Networks	94
PART IV. Findings in Other Television Media	102
A. Local Independent Television Programming and Syndication	104
B. Public Television	111

C. Cable Television	114
1. Home Box Office (HBO)	116
2. Showtime	119
3. The Disney Channel	123
4. Nickelodeon	124
5. Music Television (MTV)	125
6. TBS (The Atlanta Superstation)	126
7. The USA Network	129
8. Turner Network Television (TNT)	130
D. Home Video	132
E. Video Games	136
PART V. Conclusions and Recommendations	141
A. Conclusions	141
B. Recommendations	145
PART VI. Appendix	
A. Scene Sheet	149
B. Television Series Monitored on the Broadcast Networks	151
C. Television Movies Monitored on the Broadcast Networks	155
D. Theatrical Films Monitored on the Broadcast Networks	160
E. Home Video Rentals Monitored	164
F. Television Movies and Theatricals Films Needing Advisories	166
G. Television Movies with Violent Titles	168
H. Description of the Center for Communication Policy	169

UCLA CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION POLICY

Television Violence Monitoring Project

Staff:

Jeffrey Cole, Director
Marde Gregory, Associate Director
Phoebe Schramm, Administrative Specialist
Kristin Soike, Assistant Project Coordinator
Michael Suman, Project Coordinator

Student Monitors:

Hani Abdelsayed
Whitney Boole
Ashley Byock
Carla Casmero
Darin Chavez
Sandra Cheng
Scott Davis
Lisa Gild
Paula Gild
Gretchen Krebs
Georgette Ryan Lang
Norman Lee
Laura Ling
Joseph Love
Kelly Mohre
Jane Park
Romus Lamont Reece
James Reynolds
Jean Roh
Jeff Shore
Linh Truong
Tamara Watkins
Jenna Wiggenhorn
Benjamin Yerushalmi
Julie Zampa

Acknowledgments

A project of this magnitude could not be completed without the help and advice of many colleagues and friends. At the Center for Communication Policy we are deeply appreciative of the hard work and long hours all of our student monitors contributed to this project. Ashley Byock, Darin Chavez and Jeff Shore worked all summer on the final stages of the study. Jim Reynolds was involved in all aspects of the project from monitoring to the completion of the report.

We also thank LEXIS-NEXIS for making its service available for background information and to verify the information in this report. At all hours of the day and night we relied on LEXIS-NEXIS to quickly and accurately answer our questions.

Five outside readers offered their time and energy to make this report as clear and comprehensive as possible. Although they had little time, their suggestions were invaluable and greatly improved these pages. Our readers were: Geoffrey Cowan, director of the Voice of America; Shale Horowitz of the UCLA Communication Studies Program; Ted Mitchell, dean of the UCLA School of Education; George Vradenburg, partner at Latham & Watkins, and Kim Wardlaw, partner at O'Melveny & Myers.

We are indebted to George Gerbner who provided much wise counsel as only someone who has been studying these issues for 30 years can do.

At UCLA neither this project nor the Center for Communication Policy would be possible without the support and guidance of Gayle Byock, Archie Kleingartner, John Kobara, Andrea Rich and Scott Waugh.

PART I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

When this research project was first announced, we received an enormous amount of public response. Letters, phone calls and faxes came in from all over the world. Many offered helpful advice, some provided constructive feedback and a few warned of potential hurdles. Most, however, wanted to be sure that we understood their definition or concept of media violence. Some insisted that the key problem rests with entertainment television, particularly prime time dramas and movies. An equally fervent view was advanced by those who say the real problem is not gun play or fist fights in prime time drama, but children's animation where no one really gets hurt. Others pointed out, with equal conviction, that the real problem with television is news, especially local news with its barrage of rape, murder and terror. Still others warned that indeed, it is prime time television's more realistic use of guns and fists commonly found on non-fiction reality shows that makes it difficult for the audience, particularly children, to make distinctions between reality and fantasy. Everyone agreed that this report could become an important step in dealing with media violence if only we would address the right part of the issue. Given the range of perspectives, it is unlikely that we will satisfy everyone. But this report represents our effort to address the right part of the issue.

From the very beginning, we realized that media violence is an issue about which everyone has an individual view. While it may take advanced training to conduct meaningful, original research in this area, television is so accessible and important in most people's lives that each person has a view about the unique relationship between individuals and their televisions. No matter what we say or how well we support it, this is a project that may contradict individual beliefs about the way in which the medium affects society.

During the past year as we have conducted this study, nothing has happened to diminish the importance of this issue. During his January, 1995 State of the Union address before Congress, President Bill Clinton received the longest and loudest standing ovation when he identified media violence as a cause of great concern to the country. In late May Senator Robert Dole (R-Kan.) attacked the messages that Hollywood sends out to the nation in its films, music and television programs. Over the summer, Congress and the nation debated the merits of technological solutions to the media violence issue. Television computer chips barring violence, sex and offensive language dominated much of the media news. Vice President Al Gore convened a conference on families and media in Nashville in July and almost all of the participants agreed that something needs to be done about the content of America's media. Both President Clinton and Vice President Gore indicated their support for the use of a computer chip (V-Chip) in all new television sets.

Media violence is a subject of passionate concern to many parents, Congress and the television industry itself. National polls clearly demonstrate that this is an issue about which people have strong opinions regarding what should be done. This report is intended to be completely accessible to all citizens, especially parents. While our methodologies and techniques are sound, the conclusions will only be fully meaningful if they are understood and used by the public. Although what we say will be closely scrutinized by members of the government, the television industry, the academic community and those who have a stake in the issue of violence, our most important audience is the American public.

B. Historical Background

Concerns about media violence have been with us since before television. Throughout the 19th century, moralists and critics warned that newspapers were the cause of juvenile crime. There was concern that the great flow of stories about crime and vice would lead people to imitate the vividly described immoral behavior. In the 1920s, many were alarmed at what they saw as rampant sex, violence and general lawlessness on the movie screen. During that era, the motion picture industry was not protected by the First Amendment. This protection did not come until the Supreme Court's Miracle decision in the 1950s. To forestall governmental regulation, the film industry created its own production standards under the supervision of Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). The man the MPPDA chose to supervise the film industry, Harding Administration Postmaster General Will H. Hays, became so powerful that the organization became known as the Hays Office.

The Hays Office Codes, which discuss sexuality as well as violence, established the following standards regarding criminal violence:

1. Murder
 - (A) The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.
 - (B) Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
 - (C) Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.
2. Methods of crimes should not be explicitly presented.
 - (A) Theft, robbery, safe-cracking and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc. should not be detailed in method.
 - (B) Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.
 - (C) The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.

The codes list brutality, gruesomeness and cruelty to children or animals as repellent subjects. In explaining the reasons for some of the codes, the Hays Office explained that crimes against the law must not:

1. Teach methods of crime.
2. Inspire potential criminals with a desire for imitation.
3. Make criminals seem heroic and justified.

The concerns embodied in the Hays Codes regarding the effects of film images, particularly on the young, led to the landmark Payne Fund studies (1933-1935). These studies concluded that movies contradicted social norms in regard to crime (and sex) and that motion pictures directly influenced youngsters to become juvenile delinquents and criminals.

When the production codes finally disappeared in the 1960s, they were replaced by the voluntary rating of motion pictures under the MPA. Originally created in 1968 as G, M, R and X, these ratings still exist today, with some changes, as G, PG, PG-13, R and NC-17.

After World War II, there was concern about violence and gruesomeness in comic books such as Tales from the Crypt, Haunt of Fear and Vault of Horror. The comic book industry was attacked for contributing to juvenile delinquency. This led to the establishment in 1947 of the Association of Comic Magazine Publishers, which drafted a code in the 1950s banning, among other things, torture, sadism and detailed descriptions of criminal acts. A seal of approval then was printed on the cover of acceptable comics.

Significant penetration of television into American households began after World War II. By 1960, 150 million Americans lived in homes with television. Homes with children were more than twice as likely to have a television than those without children. By 1960, children were spending more time with television than they were with radio, comic books, babysitters or even playmates. As television became a staple of the American home, concern grew over what effect the medium might have on children. Would it stimulate or stunt intellectual development and creativity? Would it make kids passive, aggressive, friendly or empathic? Would it corrupt children by introducing them prematurely to an adult world of sex, smoking, liquor and violence; or would it make them better able to cope with the world around them?

[Congressional interest in the subject of televised violence officially began in 1954 when Senator Robert Hendrickson held the first hearings on the topic of juvenile delinquency and television programming. When Senator Estes Kefauver took over Hendrickson's position as chairman of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency in 1955 he continued to hold hearings. Senator Thomas Dodd held the first extensive hearings on the subject of violence on television in 1961 and 1962. He was supported by President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. In this context there was talk among the networks of reducing the amount of violence on television. The Attorney General even promised to push for antitrust immunity if the three networks got together in an effort to reduce violence in their programming, but President Kennedy was assassinated and Robert Kennedy resigned as Attorney General before any progress could be made.]

There were concerns in the 1950s and early 1960s about the violence in television series such as **The Rifleman** or **The Untouchables**. In 1961, the results of the first major investigation of the effects of television on children in North America were published. Television in the Lives of Our Children (Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle and Edwin Parker) presented the findings and conclusions from 11 studies conducted in 10 American and Canadian communities between 1958 and 1960. This investigation covered a wide variety of topics and research areas, including the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral effects of television on children. The study addressed the most common concern about television: that it contributed to delinquent and violent behavior. The researchers found the content of television to be "extremely violent." Fighting, shooting and murder were common, as were themes of crime.

Violence constituted an important part of programs in more than half of the hours monitored. The researchers argued that television could contribute to violent and delinquent behavior in some cases. This might result, for example, in the case of a child who confuses the rules of the fantasy world, as seen on television, with the rules of reality, or an already aggressive child whose aggression is increased by identifying with a successful "bad" character on television. But

the researchers cautioned that television was, at most, a contributing factor in causing violent and delinquent behaviors, or any behaviors for that matter. For example, they noted: “Delinquency is a complex behavior growing usually out of a number of roots, the chief one usually being some great lack in the child’s life--often a broken home or a feeling of rejection by parents or peer groups. Television is, at best, a contributing cause.”

Schramm and his associates summed up their conclusions in regard to the possible behavioral effects of television as follows: “For *some* children, under *some* conditions, *some* television is harmful. For *other* children, under the same conditions, or for the same children under *other* conditions, it may be beneficial. For *most* children, under *most* conditions, *most* television is probably neither harmful nor particularly beneficial.” They also stressed that parents had little to fear from television if they provided their children with a warm, loving, interesting, secure family environment.

The 1960s was a tumultuous decade in the United States. Violent street demonstrations relating to the civil rights movement, inner-city turmoil, student activism and antiwar protests shook the country. The rate of violent crime soared. Major political assassinations occurred. Americans saw brutal images of the world on their television sets, including the Vietnam War (called “The Living Room War” by Michael Arlen), the suppression of antiwar demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 and the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. In June 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in response to concerns about domestic violence and the recent assassinations, convened the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. While looking at all sources of societal violence, the commission, through a media task force, devoted much attention to the mass media, particularly television. This effort produced the massive Violence and the Media (1969), edited by Sandra Ball (now Ball-Rokeach) and Robert Baker. The third part of this three-part work focused on entertainment television and the issue of violence. It included summaries of past research assembled by experts in the field and new research prepared specifically for the report.

The media task force was concerned not only with the quantity of violence on entertainment television, but also with its quality. In other words, how was the violence portrayed? Who killed whom? Which weapons were used? Where did the violence take place? Was the violence justified? Were the aggressors rewarded or punished? Were the consequences of the violence fully shown? To conduct a content analysis of entertainment programs on television, the task force contacted Professor George Gerbner of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the leading experts who had already been studying violence in the media for several years. Gerbner defined violence as “the overt expression of force intended to hurt or kill.”

It is important to reiterate that Gerbner and his staff analyzed both the extent of violence on television and the qualitative world of the violence. They not only quantified what portion of crime, comedy and cartoon shows contained violence, they also qualitatively examined the context in which the violence occurred. They noted, for example, that most violence was portrayed as serious rather than funny, and that most occurred between strangers at close range and involved weapons. They found that the consequences of television violence were unrealistic

since little pain or gore was visible. They distinguished the violence of good guys from that of bad guys (good guys were as violent, but did not suffer negative consequences). Among their other qualitative findings were the following: Police officers were nearly as violent as criminals. Criminals usually received violent punishment from their enemies or the police rather than from the judicial system. Most violence was committed by young or middle-aged unmarried males. Nonwhites and foreigners also committed more than their fair share (and were usually villains). Violence was rarely punished. Historical setting was another important contextual factor analyzed. Nearly three-quarters of programs set in contemporary settings contained violence. But almost all programs set in the past and the future contained violence.

From Gerbner's content analysis, the media task force established what it saw as the basic messages or norms in regard to violence that were portrayed on broadcast television. Overall, they concluded that violence was shown as a useful means of resolving problems and achieving goals. Viewers learned from television that conflicts are best resolved through use of violence. There was a notable absence of alternative means of conflict resolution, such as debate, cooperation and compromise.

From a comprehensive review of the effects-related research, the task force concluded that television portrayal of violence was "one major contributory factor which must be considered in attempts to explain the many forms of violent behavior that mark American society today." The media task force report was criticized for making assertions that were not well grounded in the data. There were many suppositions and conjectures in their conclusions. Nevertheless, the work [was considered important and] stimulated further research.

Many felt that the report of the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence pointed to the importance of the link between media violence and violence in the real world but that a more detailed examination of the issue was desirable. [*Delete sentence: The issue of television violence had also entered the political arena. This contradicts our earlier statement that the issue was in the political arena since the 1950s (Hendrickson Congressional hearings).*] [In the political arena,] Senator John Pastore (D-R.I.) argued that a "public health risk" might be at stake. If television was responsible for making the children of America more aggressive, he asserted, then government might have to step in and force the industry to clean up its act. The First Amendment prohibited government censorship, but scientific evidence showing a link between television violence and real world violence might be used to convince the industry to restrain itself. With this in mind, Congress appropriated \$1 million to fund research studies focusing on television violence and its effect on children and adolescents.

The result was a massive, six-volume work known as the "Surgeon General's Report," which includes both extensive reviews of the relevant existing literature and specially commissioned research. The project was managed by the U.S. Surgeon General and coordinated and administered by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). An advisory committee composed of distinguished scholars was created to draw conclusions from the earlier research and the specially commissioned papers.

Content analysis in the Surgeon General's Report was again provided by George Gerbner. He compared programming in 1969 with the results of the analyses he had completed for 1967 and

1968. Again, he applied both a quantitative and qualitative analysis. One important conclusion of his work was the lack of reality in television violence. The people, relationships, settings, places and times of television violence, he argued, all differed dramatically from those in real life.

Muriel Cantor (“The Role of the Producer in Choosing Children's Television Content”) and Thomas Baldwin and Colby Lewis (“Violence in Television: The Industry Looks at Itself”) reported on interviews with television professionals to provide insight into how television content is created. The professionals tended to see violence as synonymous with action which they argued was the best tool to keep the interest and attention of viewers, young and old. They claimed that they limited violence to those places where it was contextually appropriate, such as where it was essential to plot or character development. They insisted that violence was portrayed as immoral unless it was used for self-defense or by law enforcement officials and that heroes only resorted to violence when absolutely necessary, and, even then, always acted in accord with the law. Generally discounting criticism of television violence, they argued that television violence accurately reflected the real world, and cited influences other than television as responsible for the real violence in society. They also criticized parents for blaming television while ignoring their own responsibilities.

In a major effects-related study Robert Liebert and Robert Baron (“Short-Term Effects of Televised Aggression on Children's Aggressive Behavior”) found that viewing a violent scene increased the willingness of children to be an aggressor in a laboratory situation. Liebert, summarizing the research from his own and other studies within the Surgeon General’s Report and 54 earlier experimental studies, concluded that children who view media depictions of aggression that is rewarded, subsequently become more violent in their own behavior.

Monroe Lefkowitz and his associates (“Television Violence and Child Aggression: A Follow-up Study”) conducted a 10-year longitudinal study that found the television habits that an 8-year-old boy had established would influence his aggressive behavior throughout his childhood and into his adolescent years. The more violence an 8-year-old boy watched, the more aggressive his behavior would be at age 8 and at age 18. The link between his television viewing at 8 and his aggressive behavior at 18 was even stronger than the link between his television watching at 8 and his aggressive behavior at 8. Carefully controlling for other variables, Lefkowitz and his associates concluded that viewing media violence regularly seemed to lead to aggressive behavior.

This is but a brief taste of the many different studies that constituted the Surgeon General’s Report. Surveying the whole report, the advisory committee concluded: “Thus the two sets of findings (laboratory and survey) converge in three respects: a preliminary and tentative indication of a causal relation between viewing violence on television and aggressive behavior; an indication that any such causal operation operates only on some children (who are predisposed to be aggressive); and an indication that it operates only in some environmental contexts. Such tentative and limited conclusions are not very satisfying [yet] they represent substantially more knowledge than we had two years ago.”

Each of the individual studies can be criticized, especially for methodological flaws. For example, one can question whether findings from a laboratory experiment can be applied to the

“real world.” In some instances, the samples studied were quite small. In many instances, a host of additional variables might account for the correlations found. Moving beyond individual studies, the report can be faulted for its general focus which was on short-term and direct effects. One could argue that the most profound influences of television are long-term and indirect. Nevertheless, overall, the accumulation of evidence supported the hypothesis that viewing of violence on television increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior.

There was some criticism that the conclusions of the advisory committee were overly tentative and cautious. In Senate hearings looking at the committee’s conclusions, the Surgeon General himself, Jessie Steinfeld, expressed his view:

While the Committee report is carefully phrased and qualified in language acceptable to social scientists, it is clear to me that the causal relation between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. The data on social phenomena such as television and social violence will never be clear enough for all social scientists to agree on the formulation of a succinct statement of causality. But there comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come.

During the 1970s there were a number of widely publicized crimes attributed to imitation of televised violence. In 1977 Ronnie Zamora, a 15-year-old Florida youth, was charged with the murder of his neighbor, an 80-year-old woman. His attorney, Ellis Rubin, used “television intoxication” as Zamora’s defense, arguing that a steady diet of violent television caused him to act as he did. Believing that television could not be held accountable for the crime, the jury was not persuaded and Zamora was convicted of first-degree murder. About the same time, in Boston a young woman was beaten to death and burned in a vacant lot by a group of youths. When arrested for her murder, the youths claimed they had gotten the idea for the crime from television the night before. Fearful of the potential effect of television, interested groups began protesting against television violence. The American Medical Association argued that it was a threat to the social health of the country. The National PTA sponsored forums on its effects. The National Citizens’ Committee for Broadcasting identified advertisers with the violent content they sponsored.

In the summary of the Surgeon General’s Report of 1971, the advisory committee called for investigation into previously unexplored areas of television’s influence, such as its influence on prosocial behaviors and the study of its effects in the home environment rather than in the laboratory. The scientific community responded to this call with a huge outpouring of research. So much information was produced, over 3,000 titles, that Surgeon General Julius Richard suggested that a synthesis and evaluation of the literature be conducted by the NIMH. This project began in 1979 and was coordinated by David Pearl of NIMH. This report consisted only of reviews of the existing literature and its focus was much broader than that of the 1971 Surgeon General’s Report. The two-volume report, Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties, was edited by Pearl, along with Lorraine Bouthilet and Joyce Lazar, also of NIMH.

In the 1970s there was more of an emphasis on field studies, in part because many researchers believed that links between violent programming and aggressive behavior had already been well established in the laboratory. Two field investigations conducted by J.L. Singer and D.G. Singer related children's viewing habits at home with their behavior during free-play periods at day-care centers (Television Imagination and Aggression: A Study of Preschooler's Play, 1980). Those children who watched a lot of violent television at home tended to exhibit much more unwarranted aggression in free play. A field study by E.D. McCarthy and his associates showed that watching television violence is related to fights with peers, conflict with parents and delinquency ("Violence and Behavior Disorders," Journal of Communication, 1975). L.D. Eron and L.R. Huesmann found a significant positive relationship between viewing television violence and aggressive behavior in both boys and girls in the United States, Finland and Poland ("Adolescent Aggression and Television," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1980). This study was especially significant because in earlier research the relationship had only been found for boys.

Not all of the research reviewed supported the causal relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior. One significant study that did not was conducted by J. Ronald Milavsky and his associates (Milavsky, Ronald Kessler, Horst Still and William S. Rubens, "Television and Aggression: Results of a Panel Study"). They did not disagree that viewing television violence is associated with short-term aggressive behavior, but they did argue that their findings disputed the contention that a long-term, cumulative relationship exists.

Some still doubted that the existence of a link between viewing violence and aggressive behavior could be shown. Nevertheless, many scientists argued that researchers should move beyond the accumulation of further evidence establishing a link, and instead shift the focus to the processes that are responsible for this relationship. Therefore, researchers were urged to develop theories that explain why and how that relationship exists.

Observational learning theory, which deals with the imitation of an observed model, was tested in field studies and expanded, and was linked to other factors, such as age. Some researchers attempted to link observational learning with how the brain learns and stores information (cognitive-processing psychology). They showed how certain aggressive behaviors may be learned and stored in the brain for future reference. For example, a young viewer watches a violent television episode. Later in life, when a situation arises similar to the one seen on television, the young viewer may retrieve and perform the violent act once viewed. One study analyzed cases in which youths apparently imitated criminal acts they had viewed on television (C.W. Turner and M.R. Fern, "Effects of White Noise and Memory Cues on Verbal Aggression," presented at meetings of the International Society for Research on Aggression, 1978). In each case, specific visual cues that were present in the television portrayal were also present in the environment in which the criminal act was imitated.

Attitude change theory also received attention. Some of the research suggested that the more violent television a child watches, the more that child tends to have favorable attitudes toward aggressive behavior. This seemed to occur largely because viewers of much televised violence come to see violent behavior as normal.

Some scientists contended that television violence leads to aggressive behavior by overstimulating children. In this regard, some research suggested that aggression can be stimulated by large amounts of action programming, even without a high level of violent content. Others claimed that children are anesthetized or desensitized by the same overloading process. One study showed that boys who watch a lot of violent television programming tend to exhibit less physiological arousal when shown new violent programs than do boys who regularly watch less violent fare (V.B. Cline, R.G. Croft, S. Courier, "Desensitization of Children to Television Violence," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1973).

There was some discussion of the catharsis theory which argues that viewing violent behavior serves to "release steam" and dissipate the need or desire to be aggressive. This theory predicts that watching violence on television will reduce aggressiveness. Some have argued that this explains the low levels of social violence in Japan, a country with a high level of media violence. But the Japanese case is probably better explained by cultural variables, and the relevance of catharsis theory is questionable. Since most studies point to an increase in aggressive behavior from viewing violence on television, the available data tend to contradict catharsis theory.

This is not an exhaustive review of the theories that explain the relationship between aggressive behavior and television violence. But these theories do indicate that researchers moved beyond trying to establish that a positive relationship exists to the matter of explaining why that relationship exists.

It was very significant that the NIMH report moved beyond the violence theme to deal with many other effects of television. Prosocial behavior was one area that received considerable attention. The report concluded that television portrayals of prosocial behavior, such as friendliness, cooperation, delay of gratification and generosity, can lead to similar behaviors in viewers. Both laboratory and field studies tended to confirm that observational learning applies to good behaviors on television as well as bad, suggesting television's power as an overall socializing force. An example of this prosocial modeling behavior, which was looked at by other studies beyond the NIMH report, was the television industry's emphasis of showing people fastening their seat belts before driving. Evidence suggests this may have had an important effect on encouraging viewers to buckle up. The television industry has made similar strides in deglamorizing the use of cigarettes and alcohol.

Not only did the NIMH report expand the focus beyond the violence issue, it also shifted from examining short-term direct effects to long-term indirect effects. Television was presented as an educator, albeit an informal one, that helps construct the social reality in which we live. The following statement from the summary captures the report's overall conclusion:

Almost all evidence testifies to television's role as a formidable educator whose effects are both pervasive and cumulative. Television can no longer be considered as a casual part of daily life, as an electronic toy. Research findings have long since destroyed the illusion that television is merely innocuous entertainment. While the learning it provides is mainly incidental, rather than direct and formal, it is a significant part of the total acculturation process.

Despite the healthy redirection of energy, the popular media uniformly focused on the single conclusion that children who watch violence on television might be influenced to behave aggressively. (For a more thorough review of the television-effects literature see Lowery and DeFleur's Milestones in Mass Communication Research, 1995, upon which much of the above discussion is based.)

Although research has continued over the past decade, the overall conclusions have changed little.

While skeptics remain, most social scientists find the evidence from so many studies compelling. Taken together, the many different studies point to a statistically significant connection between watching violence on television and behaving aggressively. In 1992, the American Psychological Association issued a report entitled "Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society." The report concluded that: "The accumulated research clearly demonstrates a correlation between viewing violence and aggressive behavior. Children and adults who watch a large number of aggressive programs also tend to hold attitudes and values that favor the use of violence."

Some researchers have gone so far as to assign a numerical value to the connection between violence on television and violence in the real world. Leonard Eron has stated that 10% of societal violence is attributable to exposure to violent [television] images.

The accumulated scientific evidence is compelling, but the complex relationship between violence on television and violence in the real world must not be oversimplified. Many of the nuances, qualifications and complexities of the research have, out of necessity, been omitted from the foregoing discussion. Scientific evidence strongly suggests that there is a link between violence on television and that in the real world. The degree and nature of that link is not so clear. More of the possible effects are known than the probable effects. It is known that television does not have simple, direct stimulus-response effects on its audiences. It is further known that the way television affects people is influenced by many other factors, including: habits, interests, attitudes and prior knowledge; how individuals and our institutions use television; and the socio-cultural environment in which the communication occurs. As television has a different impact on different types of cultures, the same television program has different effects on different people. When the impact of television is discussed or when television is blamed for having caused something to happen, it should never be suggested that television alone is a sufficient cause. Anything as complex as human behavior is not shaped by a single factor. Each behavior is caused by a large set of factors. In different individuals, the same behavior might well be caused by different factors. Given these difficulties, the precise influences of television are very hard to determine.

There are others who believe that focusing on whether media violence directly causes social violence is a mistake. These critics argue that long-term indirect effects are of more importance. They believe that the accumulated perceptions and attitudes acquired from watching violent television content in the long run are of greater significance. For example, George Gerbner contends that the wrong question is being asked. "The contribution of television to the committing of violence is relatively minor, maybe 5%. Whereas the contribution of television to the perception of violence is much higher. People are almost paralyzed by fear" (The New York

Times, December 14, 1994). Gerbner argues that frequent television viewers tend to suffer from the “mean world syndrome.” They are more likely to overestimate the amount of violence that is actually in the world than those who watch less television. They are more likely to believe the crime rate is rising, whether it actually is or not. They are also more likely to believe that their neighborhood is unsafe and that they might encounter violence there. With these fears, they are more likely to take self-protective measures, such as purchasing and carrying a gun.

Though our study seeks to address the problem of television violence, it also acknowledges the very real danger of making television into a scapegoat for violence in America. A focus on television violence must not divert attention from deadlier and more significant causes: inadequate parenting, drugs, underclass rage, unemployment and availability of weaponry. Compared to problems of this magnitude, television is a tempting target simply because it is so easy to attack. Television’s role in contributing to violence in America must be kept in perspective. It will take much more than sanitizing the television schedule to begin to deal with the problem of violence in America.

Although we have been reviewing the scientific literature on the effects of television violence, this report is not an effects study. The public is concerned about media effects and it is important to know what science says about these matters. The effects research serves as important background information for our study. We acknowledge that television violence is a potential danger. If it were not, we would never have been asked to conduct this study. But our effort is a content analysis of television, with a focus on programming which may raise concerns with regard to violence. We make no attempt to draw inferences about the behavior of audience members based on the content of the programs.

To a significant extent, our contextual examination builds on the qualitative analyses conducted by Gerbner and his associates beginning in the late 1960s. Specifically, we expanded upon the idea of delineating the qualitative world of television violence using a detailed contextual analysis of every scene of violence in a program. Every scene is subjected to a whole panoply of contextual criteria as will be described. Ours is probably the most thorough application of a qualitative contextual analysis of violence on television to date.

For over a century, the issue of violence in the media has been a prominent area of concern for government officials, academics and the general public. Research has been conducted and conferences convened, but the issue remains as contentious as ever.

PART II. THE STUDY

A. Background

Concerns about the messages of mass media, particularly television, have come not just from the academic community, but also from citizens and public interest and advocacy groups. Action for Children's Television (ACT), founded by Peggy Charren and succeeded by the Center for Media Education, was a constant thorn in the side of those who resisted quality children's television. Rev. Donald Wildmon and the American Family Association (AFA) were unhappy with the amount of sex and violence they saw in television and film. In the 1980s Michigan housewife Terry Rakolta, alarmed at **Married with Children**, mounted a well-publicized campaign to inform advertisers about the program content they supported. The Center for Media and Public Affairs and The National Coalition on Television Violence have conducted studies examining what they see as problems with television violence.

Reacting to criticism from Congress, the scientific community and advocacy groups, the four television networks took a series of steps to deal with the issue of television violence. Until 1990, antitrust laws prohibited the networks from meeting and working together on any cooperative efforts. Democratic Illinois Senator Paul Simon sponsored legislation that created a special three year exemption from the antitrust law allowing the networks to coordinate their policies on television violence. In December 1992, the networks issued a uniform set of 15 guidelines on the subject of television violence. The networks agreed that, "All depictions of violence should be relevant to the development of character, or the advancement of theme or plot." Banned were scenes that glamorized violence, that showed excessive gore or suffering and violence that was used to shock or stimulate the audience. The networks also agreed to avoid portrayal of "dangerous behavior which would invite imitation by children." Sen. Simon called the agreement "a first big step" in addressing the problem.

Despite Sen. Simon's hopes that the network efforts would eliminate the need for more legislation, the issue of television violence reached a fever pitch during the May 1993 "sweeps" period. The sweeps months of February, May and November are critical periods in which ratings are conducted in every locality, creating the basis by which television stations set their advertising rates. Doing well in a sweeps period enables a station to charge more for advertising. To win a sweeps month, stations and networks air programming most likely to attract a large audience. Such programming often consists of highly popular theatrical films, special episodes of television series and original television movies or mini-series. Sweeps are the most competitive periods of the television year. Network-originated television movies with violent titles and themes in the May 1993 sweeps included the following: **Ambush in Waco; Terror in the Towers; Stephen King's The Tommyknockers; Murder in the Heartland; Love, Honor and Obey: The Last Mafia Murder** and **When Love Kills**. Some of these television movies featured detailed and graphic scenes of murder and other crimes of violence.

National attention was focused on the violent content of broadcast television. Called before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the top network executives promised less violent programming in the future. At the end of June, the networks announced a plan to place parental advisories at the beginning of programs containing violence and on promotions that featured that programming.

The plan was unveiled at a Capitol Hill press conference that included Sen. Simon and Democratic Congressman Edward Markey of Massachusetts, a leader in the fight against television violence and then chairman of the House subcommittee that regulated the television industry. Except when special circumstances warranted different warnings, the advisory would read: "Due to some violent content, parental discretion is advised." Rep. Markey called the agreement "the dawning of a new era."

Throughout the entire summer, the issue of television violence and its effects was hotly debated. On August 2, 1993, the National Council for Families and Television sponsored an Industry-Wide Leadership Conference on Violence in Television Programming in Beverly Hills, California. The costs of the conference were underwritten by all four broadcast networks, many cable networks and all of the major Hollywood motion picture studios.

Sen. Simon, the keynote speaker at the conference, recommended ways in which the television industry could positively address the issue of violence:

Some sort of ongoing monitoring of the status of television violence is needed, and I would prefer that the federal government not be involved. If those gathered here would form a committee of respected citizens--perhaps called the Advisory Office on Television Violence--who would employ a small staff, headed by someone who has an understanding of the field, and that committee would report to the American people annually, in specifics, it would indicate a desire to sustain better programming. Those specifics should let us know whether glamorized violence is increasing or decreasing, on each of the broadcast and cable networks, and whether there is an attempt to avoid the time periods when children are more likely to observe. They should tell us what is happening with the independents, affiliates, syndication and with the entire industry...

Sen. Simon put the television industry on notice that if it did not quickly and adequately deal with this issue, there were others in Congress who would. The debate about the respective roles of government and the television industry in addressing television violence consumed the rest of the year. Sensing that the political climate might be conducive to legislation, the broadcasters worked hard to convince Congress they were seriously addressing concerns about violence on the television screen. They pointed to the 1992 guidelines on violence and the 1993 agreement on the use of advance parental advisories as evidence of their important efforts to deal with the problem.

Early in 1994, the broadcast and cable networks reached an agreement with Sen. Simon. If they would hire an independent monitor as outlined in his August, 1993 speech, the industry would be given another chance to demonstrate that they can regulate themselves. In the interim he would do his best to forestall any governmental initiatives. In June of 1994, Sen. Simon and the broadcast television networks chose the UCLA Center for Communication Policy to conduct the monitoring of broadcast television over the following three television seasons. The cable networks chose MediaScope to conduct a parallel study of cable, also over three years. (*Should we address the fact that Sen. Simon failed in his efforts to forestall government initiatives. And should we talk about how the first year's study has already been conducted and this is the second year.*)

B. Independence

Before agreeing to undertake the project, UCLA and the Center for Communication Policy secured an ironclad agreement that the researchers would have total independence in selection of methodology, conducting research and formulating and presenting the conclusions. Neither the Center for Communication Policy nor the University itself would take part in this project if research independence was not guaranteed throughout the entire process. Nothing that follows in this report will have any significance if the issue of UCLA's independence on this project is not so clearly stated that, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "no honest man can misunderstand me and no dishonest one successfully misrepresent me." This project was, and is, free to raise any issues, examine any programming or move in any direction whatsoever without any interference or guidance from the government, the television industry or anyone else. This is absolute.

That the four broadcast networks are paying for this project raises some issues which must be directly and fully addressed. This is an industry-funded project, not an industry initiated one. People unfamiliar with the details of the project might see a similarity between the networks paying for this research and studies conducted by the tobacco industry which have tended to minimize the role of cigarette smoking in causing health problems.

The television networks did not initiate this project. It came about only because of the 1994 agreement between governmental officials and the television industry. Were there not the fear of governmental legislation, the monitoring that we conducted over the past year probably never would have occurred. Since it is the television industry which is being challenged to do more to address the issue of television violence, it is fitting that they, rather than the taxpayers, pay for the research. We completely support this view as long as there are proper guarantees of independence. After elaborating our own non-negotiable demands of independence in the agreement with the networks, that agreement was reviewed by Sen. Simon's office and by relevant officials on the UCLA campus. We guaranteed our independence from anyone who might attempt to influence the findings in the following ways:

- * Once the scope and terms of the agreement were set, they could not be altered by the television networks, no matter how much they might wish to do so. This applies to the entire three years of the project. We were not obligated to communicate with the networks unless we chose to do so.

- * After the scope of the monitoring was agreed upon, we reserved the right to monitor "any other programming deemed important." In several instances we have exercised this option.

- * The Center would independently, without interference from the television networks, determine the content of the report and all matters relating to its release.

- * The networks would not be able to read the report before its public release. Then they, like any other party, could issue a response.

To their credit, the television networks have not attempted to change the terms of the agreement or to interfere in any way. Every request for information or explanation has been handled quickly, fully and agreeably. Whenever we have needed information about a specific area of

television programming, such as on-air promotions, the networks have always made the relevant material and staff available to us.

Were this report funded by the government, a foundation or the University itself, not one single word would be changed, added or deleted. We knew from the first day of the work that we had complete independence and conducted the project and all its inquiries with this knowledge consistently in our minds. This report is not motivated by a desire to please the television industry, the government or any other interested party. Our commitment is to the standards to which our University is dedicated: a fair and impartial quest for truth.

C. The Scope of the Monitoring

Although we examined all varieties of television programming, this is primarily an intensive look at broadcast network television. Today's video signals come not only over the air but also through cable, satellites, home video cassettes and even through video game cartridges. Even though there are a number of different sources, each with different rules and obligations under the law, most people still think of anything they watch on the set as "television." Few viewers make distinctions between network and syndicated programming, or even, in many cases, between broadcast and cable programming. Even fewer make distinctions between programming supplied by the broadcast networks or by their local affiliates. We approach this study aware of the fact that to most of the world it is all just "television." Therefore, although this is primarily a broadcast network study, we have taken a look at [other] television sources including the following:

- * The four traditional broadcast networks
- * The two new broadcast networks (as of January 1995)
- * Local independent stations
- * Public television
- * Basic cable
- * Pay cable
- * Home video
- * Video games played on television
- * Network-owned local stations
- * Advertising and on-air promotions in all of the above

We did not examine video sources such as CD-ROMs which play on a home computer instead of a television set. Relatively new services, such as Direct Broadcast Satellite (DirecTV and USSB [add *Primestar?*]), use revolutionary delivery systems, but their content replicates that of broadcast and cable. Should that change, we will examine their programming in subsequent years.

1. Broadcast Networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC)

The primary purpose of the study is to examine the content of broadcast network television during the hours of prime time and Saturday morning. We reserved the right to extend these

boundaries when necessary and, in many cases, we did so. Even though the audience share of network television has gone from a high of 90% in the mid-1970s to a more modest 60% in 1995 [*use new figure from 1996*] (and this is now divided among four networks instead of three), [a majority of people still spend most of their viewing time watching] network television[.] is still viewed by the largest number of people. It is the form that produces the most original programming (with the highest budgets) and it is still the program source most people watch and talk about the next day. When Congress and most of the nation think about television, they are [for the most part] thinking about broadcast network television. Therefore, the monitoring study placed its heaviest emphasis on the four broadcast networks. As noted above, the cable television industry has concurrently contracted with MediaScope to study cable television, a project for which we did not submit a proposal.

The project examined every television program scheduled during the hours of prime time and Saturday morning except those shows produced by the networks' news divisions. Those times were as follows:

Monday through Friday, from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (and later when prime time was extended such as in the case of a long-running theatrical film)
Sunday, from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Saturday morning, from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Every regularly scheduled show was monitored at least four times. If, after four examinations, no issues of concern about violence were raised, the show was no longer regularly monitored, although we continued to record every episode of the show. Mid-season shows no longer regularly monitored were monitored one additional time to look for changes in theme and content. We reserved the right to continue to monitor any show at any time for any reason and in several instances we did so. Shows that ran fewer than four times were examined each time they aired. Every television movie, mini-series, theatrical film and special for the 1994-1995 television season was examined. We felt that we could generalize about some of the series after a minimum of four airings, but all one-time-only programming had to be monitored because we could not make generalizations about such programming. Television series that did raise issues of violence were monitored more than four times. We continued examining such series until we felt we could generalize about their content. Some shows were monitored for the entire season. The season was defined as running from the premier of a new episode in September or October 1994 through the end of the May 1995 sweeps. (A complete list of all the programming we examined and the number of times it passed through our system is found in the appendix).

2. Independent Stations

The economics of the syndication market dictate that a show cannot be successfully syndicated unless it is bought for the second biggest American market, Los Angeles. Therefore, we concluded that examining all three Los Angeles independent VHF stations would yield a fairly complete picture of syndicated programming specifically and independent television programming generally. A randomly drawn two-week sample of programming on television stations KTLA(5), KCAL(9) and KCOP(13) was monitored, examining prime time and Saturday morning hours as we did with the broadcast networks.

In January of 1995, both WB (Warner Bros.) Network and UPN (United Paramount Network) began airing original programs. They intended to compete for the niche of youth-oriented programming that Fox has been so successfully targeting. UPN aired on Monday and Tuesday nights in Los Angeles on KCOP. WB aired on Wednesday nights on KTLA. When KTLA and KCOP were airing WB and UPN programs, we treated them exactly like the other four commercial broadcast networks and examined their programming at least four times. For those periods when these stations did not air original network programming, we treated them like other independent stations, monitoring a sample two-week period.

3. Public Television

Public television station KCET(28) was monitored for a randomly selected two-week period during prime time and Saturday morning hours.

4. Cable Television

Eight cable channels (three pay and five basic) were monitored for randomly selected two-week periods during the hours of prime time and Saturday morning. The channels monitored and the reasons for their selection were as follows:

Home Box Office and Showtime were selected because of their strong position in the pay cable area. Unlike the broadcast networks, their programming is primarily unedited theatrical films, but includes original television movies and other original programming as well.

TBS and USA were selected because of their strong position in the basic cable area and because they too run theatrical films, television movies and original programming.

MTV, Nickelodeon and The Disney Channel were selected because of their strong appeal to young audiences.

TNT (Turner Network Television) was selected because it runs so much original programming.

The eight cable networks monitored were carefully chosen as the ones most closely resembling the broadcast networks or because of their youth appeal. There was little reason to include stations not relevant to the study of television violence, such as C-SPAN, The Weather Channel and The Nashville Network, or other cable channels not significantly different from those above.

5. Home Video

Although home video replicates theatrical content in most instances (occasionally extra scenes are added), the VCR is attached to a television set and therefore is part of the world of television. We examined the top ten home video rental titles as listed by Billboard magazine each quarter. We began with the August 1995 list and continued with the lists of November 1995, and February and May 1996. A complete list of the 40 films is in the appendix. In several instances a

film such as *[insert updated film if applicable]* **Jurassic Park** was both a top ten home video (in 1995) and aired on broadcast television (in 1996). In those instances it was monitored in both forms.

6. Video Games

Our examination was limited to the video games that play on the television set and therefore can also be construed as a form of television. The two most popular companies producing these cartridge video games are Sega and Nintendo. Other game formats requiring computers, CD-ROMs, virtual reality goggles or other special, non-television paraphernalia were not examined. We monitored the top five video games of the year as listed by the NPD *[stands for?]* Group. In most instances those games were available in both Sega and Nintendo formats.

7. Additional Programming

On our own we added programs in the prime time access rule period (PTAR) and the fringe period from late afternoon until prime time. In May, 1994 the Center for Communication Policy conducted a survey of leaders of the entertainment industry with U.S. News & World Report (attached in the appendix). When asked to name the most violent programs then on television, many identified shows in the access or fringe periods such as **Hard Copy**, **A Current Affair** or **Real Stories of the Highway Patrol**. To see if these charges had merit, we added a wide sampling of earlier time-period shows to the monitoring.

8. What We Did Not Monitor and Why

a. Late-Night Programming

Programming after 11:00 p.m. at night was not monitored because of the small number of children in the audience [at that time] and the fact that most original, late-night programming, such as **The Tonight Show** and **Late Night**, was extremely unlikely to raise any issues of violence. Although the independent stations do run theatrical films and made-for-television movies in those periods, this content was accounted for through prime time monitoring. *[delete: on the broadcast and cable networks.]*

b. Talk Shows

We have little doubt that television talk shows would top most Americans' list of problematic programming in 1996. While these shows might raise important questions of taste and judgment, [especially in regard to sex,] *[we could cite our poll here]* rarely do they raise issues of violence important enough to justify their monitoring on the scale of other programming. Occasionally, there is pushing or shoving on these programs (it is unclear whether the producers provoke these altercations or not), and at least one murder was linked to a talk show. But for the most part, violence is not depicted on these shows. The issues raised by and associated with television talk shows deserve a clear and intensive examination, but not in a report on television violence.

c. News

The agreement between Sen. Simon and the networks precluded the monitoring of television news. While we understand and respect the First Amendment rights of journalists, we also know that many people feel that this programming contains some of the worst violence on television. The May 1994 UCLA-U.S. News & World Report survey clearly demonstrated that many people feel news, especially local news, is a problem. We did everything we could to treat the definition of news as narrowly as possible. We did monitor the television tabloid programs.

Each night, many local news programs lead with reports on murder, rape and mayhem. [*Time frame problems. Rework with more timely examples.*] During the entire period of the monitoring, the O.J. Simpson case appeared daily on television. One problem with monitoring television news is that violent stories such as the Rodney King beating or war in Bosnia might be construed as problematic programming. Some recent studies on television violence have criticized stations for airing reports on Rwanda or other strife around the world. This is a dangerous precedent. To serve as an important source of news and information, broadcasters must be free to report these stories, no matter how unpleasant they are for the audience. But broadcasters should guard against gratuitous images shown merely because they exist as good tape. Many critics do feel that "if it bleeds, it leads." It is our judgment that network news (ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN) rarely panders to those tendencies. In far too many instances local news and syndicated tabloid shows do. We believe a comprehensive study of local news across the country--big markets and small, network owned and operated stations, affiliates and independent stations--should be conducted in the near future.

D. Methodology

1. Rationale and Definitions of Violence

The rationale and methodology of this monitoring project are based on the belief that not all violence is created equal. While parents, critics and others complain about the problem of violence on television, it is not the mere presence of violence that is the problem. If violence alone was taken to be the problem and V-Chips or other methods did away with violent scenes or programs, viewers might never see a historical drama like **Roots** or such outstanding theatrical films as **Beauty and the Beast**, **The Lion King**, **Forrest Gump** and **Schindler's List**. In many instances, the use of violence may be critical to a story that actually sends an anti-violence message. Some important stories, such as Shakespeare's Hamlet, a history of World War II or a biography of Abraham Lincoln, would be impossible to convey accurately without the use of violence.

For centuries, violence has been an important element of storytelling and violent themes have been found in the Bible, The Iliad and The Odyssey, fairy tales, theater, literature, film and, of course, television. Descriptions of violence from the Bible have been important for teaching lessons and establishing a moral code. The lessons of brotherly love and responsibility are learned from the story of Cain and Abel. Early fairy tales were filled with violence and

gruesomeness designed to frighten children into behaving and to teach them right from wrong. It was only when fairy tales were portrayed on the big screen by Walt Disney and others that the violence contained in the stories was substantially sanitized.

The issue is not the mere presence of violence but the nature of the violence and the context in which it occurs. Context is key to the determination of whether or not the use of violence is appropriate. If parents could preview all television, film and literature for their children, we do not believe they would remove all violence regardless of its [nature or] surrounding context. Parents know that violence can be instructive in teaching their children important lessons about life. What parents would do if they could preview all content for their children is remove or modify the inappropriate or improper uses of violence. Examples of these are applications of violence which glorify the act or teach that violence is always the way to resolve conflict. Our discussions with parents indicate that they know violence is a part of storytelling, but that there are appropriate and inappropriate ways of depicting violence. For example, the consequences of violence should be shown and those using violence inappropriately should be punished. We would also note that when violence is used realistically, it is probably more desirable to accurately portray the consequences than to sanitize the violence in a manner designed to make it acceptable.

Over the years, scientific research has focused both on the quality and quantity of violence on television. For example, the most important and prominent scholar to investigate this issue, George Gerbner, whose work stretches back into the 1960s, conducted extensive quantitative and qualitative analyses of violence on television. Most attention, however, was focused on the quantitative aspect of the content analyses of Gerbner, including his mechanism to determine whether the amount of violence was increasing or decreasing. Although many television executives felt the issue was still unclear, most researchers felt that Gerbner's work firmly established that there was a problem with the amount of violence on television.

Some of the early quantitative research that counted acts was limited in its ability to examine the context of television violence. The same is true of the numerical counts often favored by public interest groups. (Numerical counts generate big headlines but we believe they do not fully address the issue of television violence.) That work required elaborate and exact definitions of violence to determine whether the act was counted or not. It was necessary to decide if verbal violence should be counted or whether comedic violence such as cartoons (what Gerbner calls "happy violence") would be registered. A precise definition determined whether the particular act would be counted. Everything had to be neatly included or excluded so that the final analysis of the amount of violence would conform to the definition of violence.

No matter how well the definitions were drawn, there would be those who felt that some important aspect of the problem should or should not have been included. Almost everyone has his or her own definition of violence and they have often attempted to validate or invalidate quantitative research based on how much the scholar's definition resembled their own. Children's animation is a good example of this phenomenon. Consider a cartoon in which a character is hit over the head with a two-by-four, a funny sound effect is heard, the character shakes his head and merrily continues on his way. Many people consider this the worst type of violence because it is unrealistic, there are no consequences and it might encourage children to

imitate it precisely because it shows no consequences. Others feel they watched these cartoons growing up and did not imitate them because they knew they obviously were not “real.” Scholars have had to decide whether to count this type of violence and they usually have included it. Anyone who feels this is silly would reject the entire definition and might ignore the conclusions of the research. The same is true with slapstick humor. Sports programming provides yet another example. Many feel that violent sports such as football or hockey make violence an acceptable or even desirable part of American life. Whether to count unrealistic cartoon violence, slapstick humor or sports within a definition of violence is a difficult decision.

Looking at violence within a contextual framework makes these definitional distinctions far less critical. There is less need for a precise [*should be*: narrow] definition because the focus is not on inclusion or exclusion in a count. We avoid the problems associated with narrow definitions by defining violence broadly. We put our focus not on establishing a correct, narrow definition of violence, but rather on distinguishing between violence that raises issues of concern and that which does not. Our broad definition includes sports violence, cartoon violence, slapstick violence--anything that involves [or immediately threatens] physical harm of any sort, intentional or unintentional, self-inflicted or inflicted by someone or something else. [More precisely, violence is the act of, attempt at, physical threat of or the consequences of physical force.] [*Delete rest of paragraph.*] We even included verbal threats of physical violence, although these were of secondary importance. Verbal phrases such as a teenager exclaiming, “If I don’t get home by midnight, my dad’ll kill me,” were rarely dealt with--unless the teenager’s father was a homicidal maniac.

Our broad definition might yield high numbers of scenes of violence on a given show. However, this of and by itself is not important since our focus is on whether the violence raises concerns within the context of the show. For example, it is possible that a situation comedy such as **Home Improvement** or **Murphy Brown** might yield several scenes of “violence.” But the nature of the violence and the context in which it occurs might lead us to conclude that none of these scenes was inappropriate.

In sum, all violence, in our view, is not created equal. The focus of the project is not on counting the number of acts of violence but on the contextual analysis of each of these acts. We examine acts of violence and the context in which they occur to distinguish between uses of violence which raise concern and those acts which, because of their nature and the context in which they occur, do not, in our view, raise similar concerns.

2. The Monitoring Process

All of the programming described in the previous sections was videotaped at the Center’s headquarters on a daily basis. The television networks and others offered to provide the programming, but we felt it was better and more reliable to obtain the programming on our own. Furthermore, we wanted to examine the advertising, promotions and other content which surround the programs themselves. We were curious to see what material the local stations in Los Angeles inserted into the schedule of programs. Since the local network stations in Los Angeles are all owned and operated by the broadcast networks themselves, we also examined some programming from affiliates in other cities (stations that run network programming but which are independently owned).

[Need to update process of getting monitors.] During the spring and summer of 1994, the Center interviewed students for the position of project monitor. Each of the selected students was affiliated with UCLA's Communication Studies Program, one of the most academically selective programs on campus. From day one, the students were outstanding. The students reported to an assistant project coordinator, Kristin Soike, who reported to the project coordinator, Dr. Michael Suman. The project was administered by the associate director of the Center, Marde Gregory, and our administrative specialist, Phoebe Schramm. All reported to the director of the Center, Dr. Jeffrey Cole.

When the monitors reported to work, they were randomly assigned a tape to examine for violent content. From the beginning, a decision was made that no monitor would specialize in any type or format of prime time programming. No one could pick their favorite programs or focus on a specific network, genre or evening in prime time. All monitors watched all types of programming and never knew what they would be monitoring until they reported to work. Logistical reasons dictated that each tape contained two successive days of programming from the same network or channel.

Once assigned a tape, a student would sit at a video monitor and examine the content of the programming. We created Scene Sheets (attached in the appendix) for the students to use in their monitoring. These sheets allowed each student to "brief" a scene of violence. The sheets asked a series of questions about every scene of violence. These questions will be discussed in detail in a later section of the report.

After completing scene sheets for the entire program, the student monitors then filled out a program report. That form asked for their written summary of the program and the number of violent scenes which required a scene sheet. Some series or movies required as many as 55 full scene sheets. Clearly this was an extraordinarily time-consuming process, but a necessary one to properly examine the violence and the context in which it occurred.

When the student had finished one program, he or she went on to the other programming on the tape. The students filled out separate forms for on-air promotions or advertisements. When the entire tape was finished, it and the scene sheets were prepared for the weekly meeting.

3. The Weekly Meetings

Once a week, the monitors and the entire staff met in the monitoring room to examine the programs that had been reviewed. After the first four months, we had reporters, writers, producers, television executives, academics, members of advocacy groups and others as guest observers. Although these meetings often lasted more than four hours, everyone involved felt they were a fascinating and invaluable part of the process.

The highly trained students were an important part of the project. At no time, however, did they have any control over decisions about, or definitions of, violence. They were trained to include all types of violence in their sheets. [We asked students to fill out a scene sheet for any act of

violence falling within the very broad definition that we had established.] At the meetings a student would sit at a monitor and say something like the following:

I watched NBC on Sunday night. The first program I examined was [*replace program:*] **Earth2**, which contained four [scenes] of violence. The most intense was the second scene, which aired at 7:16 p.m. It involved the lead character shooting a ray gun at an aggressive alien.

The monitor would offer more detail setting the context. Members of the group would ask questions such as:

- * What came immediately before?
- * What were the consequences?
- * Was the scene necessary to tell the story or develop the character?
- * Did the violence in the scene need to be as long as it was?
- * Was the act of violence contextually appropriate?

After a short discussion, the monitor would show the scene to those at the meeting. Sometimes it would be watched several times. Then more questioning would ensue. The purpose of the meeting was to ultimately decide whether or not the program raised concerns about television violence ([the criteria involved will be] discussed in the next section). Nothing could be declared a problem without a direct ruling from the director of the Center. In many instances, the senior staff of the Center decided to review the entire program themselves.

4. Criteria

Essential to a strong, contextual analysis was the establishment of a set of criteria that could be applied to every scene we monitored. From these criteria we could derive a comprehensive understanding of the context of that scene. The goal of this criteria was to make [*delete:* the following] ultimate distinctions between programs which:

- * contain no violence;
- * raise no concerns because of the of appropriateness of the violence in the context of the story;
- * raise concerns because of the inappropriateness of the violence in the context of the story.

The analyses from the scene sheets coupled with the viewing and discussions from the weekly meetings allowed us to make the above distinctions which result in the conclusions found in parts III and IV of this report.

As previously indicated, our definition of violence is so all-inclusive that any program deemed to contain no violence is so free of problematic content [that it would] [*delete:* so as to] be acceptable to almost anyone. The real burden of our work is to look at those programs that do

contain violence and determine whether the violence raises concerns within the context of the story.

The ultimate decision as to whether the program raises concerns regarding its use of violence is contingent on whether it is deemed contextually appropriate. This determination is based on the application of the following criteria:

1) What time is it shown? Children are less able to determine context than adults. The earlier the show is aired, the more likely it is for violence to raise concerns. Conversely, the later the show is aired, the less likely it is for the violence to raise concerns. Shows aired at a later time, appealing [more to] adults, deserve more latitude to use violence to tell the story. Nevertheless, only in a few instances can time slot alone become a decisive factor.

2) Is an advisory used? If a program contains scenes of violence, an advisory is considered an important warning, especially for parents and their children. An advisory alone does not excuse all that follows, but it does provide important information for viewers. While an advisory by itself seldom alleviates concerns, the lack of an advisory in some instances can raise concerns.

3) Is the violence integral to the story? Violence historically has been important in the telling of some stories. If violent scenes are included, they should be used to move the story or in some way add to viewers' understanding of the characters or the plot. Violent scenes should not be included only to attract some viewers. Some programs use only one scene of violence but repeat it as many as 11 times. If the same violent scene is shown repeatedly, it must continue to be contextually relevant. Whether the violence was integral is the measurement of gratuitousness. A frequent test of gratuitousness was the question whether anything in the story would be lost without the violence. [*Motives and justification could be discussed here, including: Justified violence, i.e., good guy done wrong defending herself, is more likely to produce aggressive behavior in the viewer. This type of violence is more likely to be imitated and lessens inhibitions against aggression. Unjustified violence is more likely to scare people and increase their level of fear.*]

4) How graphic is the violence? Graphicness in and of itself is not a problem. In **Psycho** it is necessary to see Norman Bates' decomposed dead mother to understand the full depths of his mental illness. In that scene, the graphicness adds something important to the story. If scenes are graphic just to illustrate gore or demonstrate some cinematic special effect, that graphicness may raise concerns. We endorse the network's 1992 statement which said that graphic violence should not be used to shock or stimulate the viewer. It must have a contextual purpose [*delete: so as*] to not raise concerns. A few of the scenes monitored this season showed throats being slowly slit or spikes driven into knees or eyes [*spikes were last season*], but added nothing important to the story. Graphicness for the sake of graphicness was a frequent problem. [*We might want to mention that repeated graphic portrayals may desensitize the viewer and promote the "mean world" syndrome.*]

5) How long are the scenes of violence? The scenes should be as long as they need to be to tell the story. There is no standard for appropriate length. If the scene containing violence seems elongated simply to fill out the story, it may raise concerns. Some series routinely end with

scenes of violence as long as five minutes, while some theatricals have finales as long as 15 minutes. If the scene continues to add to the story, it is less likely to raise concerns. A related concern is the repetition of the same scene throughout the program. One program, **Hard Copy**, repeated the same scene of violence 11 times.

6) How many scenes of violence are included and what percentage of the show did they comprise? This is the closest the research gets to counting. Normally, a judgment is made about [a violent act or acts within] the context of an individual scene. The number of scenes becomes a concern when there are so many acts of violence that the context of the show is little else but violence. There is no magic number for how many violent scenes are appropriate. “Tonnage” can be a problem when there are so many scenes of violence that they serve as the thread holding the story together. This is seen in some action theatrical films such as the Rambo films and a few television series. [*We might want to mention in regard to amount of violence that too much can desensitize the viewer and promote the “mean world” syndrome.*]

7) Is the violence glorified? Does the story serve to make the violence exciting? Music can frequently enhance or mitigate the sense of excitement as can sound effects and other techniques. How do the other characters in the story feel about the use of violence? [*Not clear. Do we want to say something like: Are the other characters shown supporting the use of violence?*] Is that decision [*What decision? Do we want to use the word “position” instead?*] ratified and supported or do the other characters disapprove? What does the viewer learn about the acceptability of violence? Glamorized violence can be seen in the James Bond films, particularly when the acts are accompanied by [exciting] theme music [*delete: in the background*].

8) Who commits the act of violence? Is it a hero [or appealing character] with whom the audience identifies or is it an unsympathetic villain? Audiences naturally identify with the hero. If the hero easily uses violence or does not carefully consider his/her actions, violence may be affirmed as a desirable tactic. Conversely, a sympathetic character’s reluctance to use violence, or decision to use it only as a last resort and with some measure of restraint, sends an important message to viewers and raises fewer concerns. A hero committing acts of violence, particularly without examining alternatives, such as the leads in the Dirty Harry or Billy Jack films, does raise concerns. [*Another important point: If a character is like the viewer in terms of sex, age, race, etc., the viewer is more likely to imitate that character.*] [*Another important category might be who is the victim of the violence? Research shows that if the victim is appealing or similar to the viewer, the viewer is more likely to buy into the “mean world” syndrome.*]

9) How realistic is the act of violence? Few viewers expect animation to be very realistic. Shows that contain a “realistic” sense[, however,] are under an obligation to portray acts of violence close to how they would occur in real life. Most police shows, reality shows and anything that purports to show life “the way it is” are examined for the realistic nature of violence. A show resembling “real life” in all other ways would also be expected to be realistic with regard to violence. **Grand Canyon**, Lawrence Kasdan’s story about life in Los Angeles in the 1990s, would be held to a standard of realism in its use of violence and it does portray the shooting of Steve Martin in the leg very realistically. The same would be true of some combat films such as **Glory**, but not many contemporary action films. Anything that makes realistic violence seem less serious than it really is raises some concerns. [*Good point, but last sentence tacked on. Flow problem.*] [*Might want to mention: Studies show that portrayals perceived as*

realistic are more likely to cause aggressive behavior, possibly because of identification. Also, more realistic portrayals induce more fear in the viewer.]

10) What are the consequences of the violence? [Closely related to realism, *What does this mean? This needs to be reworded.*] those shows that portray real life (most urban police shows, for example) should also demonstrate the realistic consequences of violence. Few would expect to see excessive bleeding in a cartoon or situation comedy, but would, in some instances, in a police drama. Psychological or emotional consequences can be as significant as physical consequences in dealing with scenes of violence. [*Might want to mention: Studies show that the portrayal of consequences, i.e., pain and suffering, elicits sympathy, inhibits the learning of violent behavior, and decreases the likelihood that the violence will be imitated. Also should probably address rewards and punishments in this category.*]

11) Is the violence used as a hook to attract viewers? Is it the promise of violence coming from a promo or theatrical advertisement that is attracting the viewer? Some programming uses violence as the salable quality of the show. This is true of many martial arts films. In some instances, there is a commercial break just before or in the middle of a scene of violence. Is the violent scene used as a vehicle to ensure the viewer continues watching? [*Do we need a statement as to why this is a problem?*]

12) Are alternatives to violence considered? Is violence a knee-jerk reaction or do the characters consider alternatives to violence? The use of violence as a well-considered action after other alternatives have been exhausted raises fewer concerns than merely reflexively resorting to violence. [*Maybe this should be included under point #3 (Is the violence integral to the story?).*]

13) What kinds of weapons are used? Do characters respond with much more force than is necessary? Do they use unusually brutal weapons designed to inflict the maximum amount of pain and damage? Is the use of excessive weaponry endorsed or glorified? The police in urban dramas such as **NYPD Blue** use realistic weaponry, while the Dirty Harry films are filled with enormous guns capable of overwhelming fire power. [*Maybe we should mention that studies show that portrayal of weapons, e.g., knives and guns, can possibly cue aggressive thoughts and behaviors. Imitation is also a possibility, especially when cars or household implements, e.g., scissors, poisins, needles, are depicted.*]

14) Is the violence intentional or reactionary? Do the lead characters resort to violence freely, or only when provoked? A character resorting to violence only when provoked raises fewer concerns than a character who instigates the violence or deliberately seeks a confrontation. Self-defense is also considered here. [*Self-defense, of course, relates to the issue of justification--justified vs. reactionary or malicious violence. This also fits under point #3.*]

All of these factors are weighed together. No one factor determines [whether a] program does or does not raise concerns. For example, the simple use of an advisory does not excuse all that follows. If it did, then [the] networks could use advisories and [*delete: then*] air anything under their protection [*delete: of that advisory*]. Similarly, a programmer cannot air gratuitous violence at 10:00 p.m. without raising concerns simply because the show aired in a later time slot. All criteria are considered and related to the specifics of the show and, as a consequence, each

program is treated uniquely. There are some similarities between **Beavis and Butt-Head** and **The Simpsons** (they are both animated and contain subversive humor). It [might be tempting] to evaluate them similarly. However, the programs are quite different in the level of satire [they use]. Moreover, close scrutiny reveals that **Beavis and Butt-Head** uses an advisory and runs at 10:30 p.m., while **The Simpsons** runs at 8:00 without one. Thus they warrant separate treatment. Similarly, the presence of graphic violence itself does not necessarily mean that a show raises concerns. That decision is based on why the program contains graphic violence and how it is integrated into the story. As mentioned earlier, **Schindler's List** does contain graphic violence but may not raise significant concerns.

All the above factors are part of a formula that leads to the decision of whether a show raises concerns. We recognize this is not as clean or simple as counting acts of violence [*delete:* and releasing our results]. At times when we were buried in scene sheets or mired in endless discussions applying the above criteria, we longed for the ease and clarity of counting. Even though our method necessitated long, difficult applications of standards, we feel it ultimately produced the kind of results people need in order to assess the problem of media violence. We are particularly sensitive to the concerns of parents. Unfortunately, parents in America in the 1990s do not have the time or the opportunity to preview all programming for their children. This report aims to provide illumination for parents on the issue of televised violence. In fact, our methods are quite similar to those of a parent previewing television programming for his or her child.

From a practical point of view, there are four types of programs containing violence:

- 1) Shows that raise concerns and almost everyone agrees they raise concerns. These are shows such as slasher movies or films such as **Faces of Death** (even though it has only been available on home video), which is a collection of real people being killed on camera.
- 2) Shows that contain scenes of violence but almost no one would feel they raise concerns. This would [include] shows like **Home Improvement**, which contains workshop “accidents” within a wholesome family comedy.

These two categories are easy to deal with. They produce near unanimous agreement. Harder to achieve consensus on are:

- 3) Shows that do not have high levels of violence or in which the violence is not graphic, glamorized or gratuitous, but, because of context, the violence does raise concern. These are shows such as [*Include more timely examples.*] the **American Comedy Awards**, which included a **Pulp Fiction** clip of a man’s brain splattered across the rear window after being shot in the head, or even **America’s Funniest Home Videos**, which is elaborated upon later in the report. These are the shows that are likely to produce the “Oh, come on” response from some.
- 4) Shows that contain high levels of violence or very graphic violence, but in which the violence is appropriate to the story and therefore does not raise concerns. This is where **Schindler's List** or the television series **M*A*S*H** fits in. The violence is absolutely necessary to tell the story.

Television violence is a complex issue and everyone approaches it differently. Trying to deal with an equally difficult subject, pornography, Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart threw up his hands in frustration and declared, "I know it when I see it." Although we sympathize with his dilemma, it is not enough that we know problematic violence when we see it. Our goal is to explain this problem in a way that has meaning for everyone concerned about the issue. Therefore, as readers examine our results section, they will be able to look over our shoulder and evaluate how our decisions were made. Most other research on this issue was written for either the academic community or special interest groups and then interpreted for the public, usually by the media. It is our strong desire that this study--its purpose, methodology and results--be accessible and understandable to anyone interested enough to read this report.

E. Operating Premises and Stipulations

There are some fundamental premises that must be understood before one can examine whether an act of violence within the context of a story [raises concerns]. Understanding these basic premises helps the reader to understand the monitoring process and the ultimate decisions that were made. Our operating premises have been as follows:

1. There is no such thing as an accident in fictional programming.

In the course of the monitoring, questions would frequently arise about accidental violence. Examples of this would include a tree falling on someone during a hurricane or someone losing [his or her] footing and falling down the stairs. Clearly this violence is non-intentional and unprovoked. Nevertheless, in the world of fictional programming everything is created by a screenwriter (with input by, and perhaps at the instigation of, the network, producer or director). There are no real "accidents" in these cases. A screenwriter had to decide that there would be a hurricane and that a tree would fall on the character in a particular way. Then the screenwriter would have to decide on the extent of the resulting injuries. In fiction, a screenwriter has a whole range of choices and the decision to have something violent happen is only one of a variety of options. [*Nevertheless, motivation is important. In our contextual analysis, accidentally running into a wall is less serious than a character consciously and intentionally hitting someone else.*]

The obvious exception is non-fiction programming. In those cases, the screenwriter is following a set of facts established by what really happened. Although decisions are still made about how to interpret the actual event and how much dramatic license to take, there does not exist the wide variety of choices available in creating fictional programming. In fiction, all violence is the result of writers' and producers' decisions that violence should occur.

2. Violence is sometimes necessary in character and plot development to establish the bad guy as the bad guy.

Establishing the villain as a key character in many stories is important. Even stories that virtually no one would find objectionable feature a villain. Disney's **Beauty and the Beast** needs to establish why Belle could not possibly be interested in Gaston, the handsome muscle man who is determined to make her his wife. Viewers know that Belle is interested in ideas and books and not just an attractive partner. We learn Gaston's villainous nature when, to the tune of his song, he punches innocent townspeople in a bar and acts as an all-around brute. These scenes are necessary to establish what kind of person he is and why Belle will turn her attentions later to a far less attractive but more caring and sensitive beast. Likewise, in **Schindler's List**, the commandant of the camp is shown exploding in rage and shooting prisoners without purpose or warning. We also see him shoot random human targets with his rifle from his balcony. All this is necessary to demonstrate his character and how evil and vicious the Nazis were.

While we respect creators' needs to demonstrate why and how certain characters are bad or evil, this, of course, has its limits. In **Beauty and the Beast**, a family entertainment, establishing Gaston's brutishness allows him to engage in violence but does not include entitling him to break townspeople's necks or sever their heads. [*Update this example:* On the other hand, at least two programs that aired this season graphically depicted decapitated Jamaican drug lords, clearly exceeding the limitations of character development.]

3. Audiences like to see the bad guy "get it good."

After watching a series for an hour, a film for two hours or a mini-series for as long as eight hours, there is a natural tendency for the audience to want to see the conflict resolved and the villain punished or killed[, getting what he or she deserves]. The worse the villain, the more the audience wants some kind of catharsis or final resolution. Sometimes viewers even want to see the bad guy die a gruesome, brutal death. Everyone has been to a movie theater and witnessed the audience cheer as the bad guy is shot, knifed or impaled. Two recent [*still recent enough?*] period-piece films, **Rob Roy** and **First Knight**, end in such a celebration of violence to the delight of moviegoers. In both films, the villains are dispatched by the hero in dramatic sword fights.

While we recognize this need for audiences to get a final "pay off," this too has its limits. [*Need to update following example.*] Earlier this season, CBS televised the theatrical film **Ghost**. In that film, the villain arranges for the murder of Patrick Swayze's character and then, later in the film, threatens Swayze's character's widow, played by Demi Moore. There is a dramatic need for the villain to "get it good in the end." And he does. At the end of a fight with the ghost of Swayze's character, he falls onto a window sill where a large shard of glass falls, protruding through his torso. It is an extraordinarily graphic scene of violence, well deserved in the eyes of the audience. Although there is some editing of the scene for television airing, the camera lingers on this bloody, gory scene for a full eight seconds. The same impact could have been achieved in less time. There is a need to see the evil villain punished, but there are limits as to how this should be depicted on television.

4. Time period does make a difference.

The earlier a program is shown, the more likely children are to be a significant part of the audience. For the networks, prime time television consists of the three hours from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. On Sunday, network prime time begins at 7:00 p.m. On Fox, prime time ends at 10:00 p.m. [*Update the following:*] (This is being written as the FCC has just announced that at the end of a year, the Prime Time Access Rule {PTAR} will be eliminated. There may be more hours in prime time in the future.) A network can demonstrate its responsibility by scheduling its more violent programs later in the evening. Such responsibility has been exhibited when prime time has been extended to 11:30 p.m., in order to accommodate a theatrical film with violent themes. (Television movies are produced to run with commercials in a two-hour block. Theatrical films, however, are made for the movie theater with no such constraints and, when commercials are added, they may end up at odd lengths for the purposes of television.) Extending prime time usually incurs the wrath of affiliates which have turned their 11:00 hour into a lucrative franchise with advertising revenues that are not shared with the networks. If prime time were not extended, films with violent themes would have to start at 8:00 or 8:30. This has been a particular problem for Fox Broadcasting. Since it does not have a 10:00 block of prime time, it must start its theatricals and television movies at 8:00.

Under the soon-to-expire [*already expired?*] FCC rules, television networks can have an extra hour of prime time (Sunday 7:00-8:00 p.m.) if they use that time for news, public affairs or children's programming. [In this regard], Fox is not currently considered a television network. (To legally qualify as a network an entity must program more than 15 hours of prime time programming. Fox programs 15.) While Fox is not subject to the FCC mandate, we believe 7:00 p.m. is a time when many very young children are in the audience and, therefore, Fox should be held to the same standards as the other networks. Only one television network, CBS, adheres to the spirit of the FCC requirement. **60 Minutes** is a news program and thus meets that requirement. [*Update with current examples:*] During the 1994-95 season, NBC aired **Earth2**, ABC ran **America's Funniest Home Videos** and Fox scheduled either **Fortune Hunter** or reruns of **The X-Files**. Since none of these are news or public affairs shows, they all must be made suitable for children. As the next section will indicate, all of these shows have raised concerns with respect to violence and may be a questionable use of a 7:00-8:00 p.m. time period.

Time is an important consideration on Saturday morning children's programming as well. Networks schedule the tamest programming at 7:00-8:30 a.m. when the youngest children dominate the audience. When their older brothers and sisters start watching at 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning, they [*delete: begin to*] see more action and violence. Viewers would not expect to see the most intense programming in the earliest hours and, in most cases, they do not.

Back in 1975, Chairman Richard Wiley of the FCC and the broadcast networks tried to establish the earliest hour of prime time as a "Family Viewing Hour." While many in the nation applauded this goal, it had the effect of censoring situation comedies like **All in the Family** and **M*A*S*H**. The creative community filed suit, charging that the rule violated the First Amendment. After the courts struck down the hour, the networks announced a voluntary effort to be sensitive to family viewing concerns during the earliest hours in prime time. The 8:00 p.m. period was seen as a

time when families could sit down together and watch programming free of most violence and sexuality. But the voluntary effort never really worked. Fox runs **Melrose Place** and **Beverly Hills 90210** at 8:00. Audiences responded favorably to these shows at 8:00 and NBC responded by scheduling its popular adult situation comedy **Mad About You** at 8:00. CBS ran **Due South** and ABC switched **Roseanne** to 8:00. Most of the issues raised by these shows involve matters of sexuality which are beyond the scope of this report. In terms of violence, we think that the networks should be sensitive to the fact that there are a large number of children in the 8:00 audience. There are other time slots, especially 10:00 (except at Fox), that can be used for more adult programs. Often programs with some themes of violence are appropriately scheduled at the 10:00 time period. [*Update:*] Many of these programs are of high quality and reached new levels of popularity in the 1994-95 television season.

5. Consequences or punishment must occur within the specific episode for context to have an impact.

In some shows, the consequences or punishment might not come until several or many episodes later. But the nature of television does not ensure that the viewer who watched a violent act will definitely be watching to see it punished or resolved several episodes or months later. The consequences or punishment have to occur within a particular episode of the program or movie. While there is no guarantee that the viewer who watched a violent act will be there 15 minutes later when it is resolved, without this assumption there would be no way to allow for normal plot and character development. The only exception to this is the mini-series in which there is a reasonable expectation that the person who watches the beginning installment will also watch the final episode. [*Here we might want to address the Mediascope controversy about whether kids need to see the reward or punishment directly after the violent act as opposed to at the end of the program.*]

6. Advisories do what they are intended to do.

There are issues regarding the way advisories are used and whether they are used at all. We would like to see advisories used more often than they are, especially in the case of theatrical films aired on television. Many critics, with a tinge of cynicism, argue that advisories promising scenes of sex and/or violence actually do the opposite of what is intended: They encourage people who might not otherwise watch to do so. [In fact, a recent study by Joanne Cantor suggests that for boys, particularly those aged 10-14, parental discretion advisories and PG-13 and R ratings make movies and programs more attractive. (“Ratings and Advisories for Television Programming: University of Wisconsin, Madison Study,” National Television Violence Study, 1995.)] Advisories are designed to provide warnings to concerned viewers, especially parents. [*In light of Cantor’s study and our reconsideration of the issue re: what exactly advisories are intended to do, the rest of this section needs to be re-worked.*] There is no reliable evidence to indicate that advisories encourage viewing. But even if they do encourage some such viewing, we accept them as primarily providing beneficial warnings to prospective viewers, although they might be more effective if they were made more available ahead of time in printed materials describing upcoming programming, such as TV Guide. (We know that there

is some reluctance to use advisories because of advertiser concern about what might be perceived as problematic or controversial content.)

7. Music is a very important part of context.

Music adds texture to the story and [often, in regard to violence,] a nonvocal cue to warn or reassure the viewer. Sound tracks can exaggerate, intensify or glorify the violence on screen. Scary movies are not nearly as frightening without the music and some viewers turn off the sound during some scenes to lessen their fright. On the other hand, music can trivialize the seriousness of violence or make it seem acceptable.

It is impossible to separate the violent shower scene in **Psycho** from the musical score that accompanies it. The music sends a message about the evil and appalling nature of the crime. Similarly, the James Bond theme frequently accompanies shootings, chases or other scenes of violence and tends to glamorize or glorify the acts on screen.

Television music is equally important in telling the viewer about what he or she is watching. Light or funny music implies that what the viewer is seeing is not so serious or profound. The same scene of a shooting or stabbing can leave vastly different impressions [depending upon] the music in the background. In our monitoring meetings, there were frequent discussions about music. We often looked to the music to discern the producer's intent or goals. Music helps viewers understand the context of a scene or program.

Some shows use music as an important, if not essential, part of the show. **New York Undercover** uses hip-hop and rap music to establish an urban grittiness. **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers** uses fast, upbeat music to energize the scenes of combat and involve the audience while **America's Most Wanted** uses music to create a sense of foreboding or impending danger. The music on **Murder, She Wrote** serves to minimize the fact that the show is about murder. Some of the violence in **Due South** is emphasized and underscored by the heavily orchestrated music.

8. Cinematic techniques can also affect the context of violence.

Many cinematic techniques are used in an attempt to lessen the impact of the violence or to make it seem more artistic. On **Melrose Place** and other dramas, slow motion is used to emphasize or draw attention to an act of violence. Police dramas like **Homicide** use a stroboscopic effect to break up the horror of a murder scene. The strobe simulates a police photographer rapidly snapping pictures to create a record of the scene. Sound effects also are used in a variety of shows, especially comedies, to attempt to mitigate the impact of "funny" violence. These sound effects are a staple of **America's Funniest Home Videos** where they are used to accompany people getting hit in the head or crashing into objects. **Walker, Texas Ranger** also uses sound effects to add emphasis to punches during fist fights. Enhanced sound encourages the audience to cringe at the stabbing of a leg in **Due South**. Sound can be used to trivialize serious violence or to enhance the impact of a violent scene.

We found that the use of sound in **America's Funniest Home Videos** and **Walker, Texas Ranger** tends to aggravate the violence and increase concerns, while the use of the flash technique in **Homicide** tends to lessen concerns about the scene. Therefore, it is not possible to draw hard and fast rules about whether the use of these different cinematic techniques tends to raise or to reduce concerns. Their use is examined on an individual basis. In many cases they constitute a crucial contextual factor heavily influencing our overall judgment of the violence of the scene.

9. "Pseudo" guns are only slightly better than real guns, if at all.

This was an issue that we did not fully resolve until we had monitored many different shows over the course of the year. In some television movies and science-fiction series, such as [*Update examples:*] **Mantis** or **Earth2**, characters shoot ray guns or freeze guns. In **Mantis**, the victim is frozen in his tracks and is usually never seen again. It is unclear exactly how much damage is done to the people shot by these "guns." Some networks and producers argue that using these kinds of guns is an improvement over regular guns with bullets or that the futuristic context fictionalizes the gunplay, in either event, making it less realistic and, therefore, less likely to be imitated. After all, a child cannot use his or her parents' ray gun. This raises a potential problem since a child cannot grab his or her parents' ray gun, but he or she may grab their real gun. Moreover, the scene still involves a gun and shooting and, therefore, we treat these kinds of weapons the same as real guns. At most, in our judgment use of non-realistic weapons represents only a slight improvement and, in most cases, not even that.

10. "Real" reality vs. re-creations.

After reaching a high point in popularity several seasons ago, the reality genre on television seems to be diminishing in appeal. [*Update:*] Next season promises to see even fewer reality shows. Within the reality genre, there are shows such as **Cops** or **America's Funniest Home Videos**, that use actual footage of a crime or some other situation, and there are shows that re-create situations, such as **Rescue 911**, **America's Most Wanted**, **Unsolved Mysteries** or **True Stories of the Highway Patrol**. Shows using real footage need to responsibly edit and cannot use the fact that "it really happened" to justify showing anything on television. Nevertheless, we did hold shows using re-creations or re-enactments to a higher standard in determining whether their use of violence raised concerns for the following reasons.

In many instances, real film comes from situations in which there is no pre-planned intent to use the tape on television. There is a compelling human interest in seeing the real tape of the real situation with real people. Programs such as **Cops** provide a more genuine view of what police are like and how they handle the pressures of the job than shows with actors as police. Since **Cops** is real and uses actual film, we gave it more latitude to make its case. Still, producers must exercise care in their editing.

Re-creations, however, have all the choices in the world. Unlike “real” tape shows, they hire actors to portray characters. This allows them to influence how viewers process the scene. Producers can choose between sympathetic actors who will elicit support or unattractive “thugs” who incur anger. Producers of re-enactments can decide how close the camera will get during a crime and whether there should be a gallon of blood or a thimble-full. Producers of “real” tape shows cannot make these decisions; they are bound by the tape. Re-enactment shows have a wide range of options and alternatives not available to the other shows and we, therefore, hold them more accountable for what ends up on the screen.

PART III. FINDINGS IN BROADCAST NETWORK TELEVISION

Broadcast network programming is the primary focus of this study. Our monitoring has been concentrated on this aspect of television, which still accounts for a majority of what is watched on television. The other aspects of the television world--cable, syndication, home video and video games--have been sampled for the purpose of comparison.

Network television has been divided into five areas, each of which was thoroughly examined:

1. Prime time series
2. Made-for-television movies and mini-series
3. Theatrical films shown on television
4. On-air promotions and other promotional campaigns
5. Saturday morning children's programs

It is probably to the networks' disadvantage that 1994-95 is the first year of this study. Had this project commenced 10, or even 5 years ago, the amount of programming with problems with violence, especially series, probably would have been larger. The areas the networks control most, series and television movies, reflect some important positive signs. Two other areas, theatrical films on television and on-air promotions, do not. Children's television offers some promising signs but also some worrisome trends. For the purpose of this and future reports, the 1994-95 television season becomes the baseline of the study.

Series still make up the majority of a network's programming. They are what most distinguish network television from cable and other video media. More people watch television series than any other format. Some series such as **Murder She Wrote**, **Married with Children**, **M*A*S*H** or **Cheers** continue to attract viewers weekly for close to 10 years or more.

Of the television series we examined, there are 10 that raise frequent concerns about the manner in which they deal with violence. Five have already been canceled, although one may return as a mid-season replacement. A brief, unscientific look at past seasons shows that in some years, as many as 25 programs might have raised frequent concerns. Even some of the shows that raise frequent concerns in the 1994-95 season, such as **The X-Files**, go to great lengths to reduce some of the worst elements of violence. There is almost no killing in prime time series, but there still is a lot of fighting. The effort of the networks' practices and standards departments is what is most responsible for what we see as positive signs in series. Violent images that might have routinely been shown years ago, such as bullets entering the body, are in little evidence in 1995.

The television series discussed below deal with violence in a variety of different ways. The report makes a real effort to understand each show, its goals and style and the manner in which it deals with violence. Of particular importance is understanding the context of each show in which violence occurs. Placing the show on a top ten list with other shows without explaining its style and context, does a disservice to the viewing public.

Television movies also demonstrate some important positive signs. This season saw few television movies similar to those shown in the May 1993 sweeps. The influence of the practices and standards departments is also evident with television movies. Of the 161 television movies monitored (every one that aired this season), 23 raised concerns about their use of violence. This is less than 15%. Most raised concerns because of a variety of factors: lack of advisory, violent theme, violent title or inappropriate graphicness of a scene. Unlike theatrical films, television movies are a format over which the network has complete control. They decide what gets made and how it appears on the screen. Though there are still some television movies that raise concerns, it is clear the networks are using their power to make some improvements in this area.

Theatrical films on television do not demonstrate the hopeful signs seen in the above two areas. The problem is as bad as it has ever been. Of the 118 theatrical films monitored (every one that aired this season), 50 raise concerns about their use of violence. This is about 42%. Theatrical films are made for a different medium and have to be retrofitted into the world of broadcast television. This is a difficult, and frequently impossible, task and our findings verify that. Some of the films monitored contained well over 40 scenes of violence. Although the networks edit these films for broadcast, it is not always possible to edit them in a way that does not either leave in far too much violence or reduce the film to incomprehensible stories. Frequently, the result is that only the worst parts of the worst scenes are removed and the resulting film is still one whose theme remains very violent. There are also a number of problems with advisories and time periods. When one is talking about violence on television in the 1994-95 season, most of it, especially the most gruesome violence, is in theatrical films shown on television.

On-air promotions also reflect a continuing, if not worsening, problem. Some series may contain several scenes of violence, each of which is appropriate within its context. A promo for that show, however, will only feature those violent scenes and without any of the context. The result is a world of promotions and theatrical film advertisements filled with only the worst scenes of violence from all the programming. Often these violent promos are aired during programming for children or during completely non-violent programming. Even shows that contain no violence are culled for whatever “accident” or scene of comedic violence can be compiled into a promo.

Children’s television reflects both promising and worrisome signs. On the positive side, only a few shows use intense violence or combat as part of their overall theme. Many shows are not about combat or fighting and whatever “violence” is used is very minor. More ominous and increasingly worrisome are a number of shows that do use what we call sinister combat violence, featuring combat as the theme of the show. The characters are usually happy to fight and frequently do so with little provocation. The promise of confrontation is the signature of these shows.

A. Prime Time Series

As described in an earlier section, every series on broadcast television during the 1994-95 television season was monitored at least four times to see if it raised issues with regard to violence. Shows that continued to raise issues were monitored more than four times. Some shows that regularly raised issues of concern were monitored throughout the season. Shows monitored

for the full season (or a large part of it) can be determined from the list of monitored shows in the appendix. Series that ran fewer than four times were monitored every time they aired. We monitored approximately 121 prime time television series on the six television networks, 10 of which had frequent problems with violence and 8 of which had occasional problems.

The findings on prime time series are divided into:

- 1) Shows with frequent issues
- 2) Shows with occasional issues
- 3) Shows that raise interesting or special issues
- 4) Shows that deal with violence well

1. Programs with Frequent Issues

Walker, Texas Ranger (CBS)

Violence is completely integral to the concept of this series. Chuck Norris plays a laconic ranger who uses his martial arts skills to help catch Texas bad guys. Norris is best known for starring in action films such as **Delta Force** and **Missing In Action**. Virtually every episode of **Walker** features Norris in prolonged, graphic scenes of hand-to-hand combat. Even one episode in which Norris was in a coma for the entire program managed to use dreams and flashbacks to ensure that there were scenes of violent action.

The show seems to be simply a vehicle for Norris to demonstrate his physical abilities. While the fight scenes are always a part of the story, they are excessively long and graphic only to showcase Norris' impressive fighting skills and have little to do with character or plot. Each episode of **Walker** usually contains from five to 10 violent action scenes, many of which feature kicking to the upper parts of the body. Several **Walker** made-for-television movies that aired during the season contained even higher levels of violence including more guns and explosions. The fight scenes resulted in many head injuries. Law enforcement officials seldom demonstrated restraint. Some of the fight scenes used slow motion to extend and enhance the violence. Rarely were the consequences of the violence realistically illustrated. Some of the fight scenes were nearly three minutes long. In many instances, Walker could have walked away and avoided a fight, but such behavior would conflict with the basic premise of the show. A viewer quickly learns that fighting is the way to settle one's problems.

Almost every episode of **Walker** uses the same formula. While the producers would probably argue that the violence is cartoon-like and the show airs at 10:00 p.m. on a Saturday when few children are watching, the action on **Walker** is still chronic and unrelenting. All the contextual criteria clearly point to **Walker, Texas Ranger** as a show that consistently raises concerns in the way it portrays violence. Of the 15 times this show was monitored, it raised concerns 12 times.

Mantis (Fox)

Mantis is a science fiction, fantasy-adventure show about a biophysicist who is made paraplegic by a mugger's bullet. Dedicating the rest of his life to the cause of striking fear in the hearts of criminals, he has invented a mechanical exoskeleton that enables him to shed the confines of his wheelchair and become a crime fighter called the Mantis. Although the show bills him as a superhero of sorts, he is, in truth, a super-vigilante who works outside the law because "there are some criminals who the police just can't handle." Despite the efforts of the police to apprehend the Mantis for his illegal and violent means of dispensing with the criminal element, police condemnation of his tactics diminish as they realize that there really are criminals they cannot handle.

While the intensity of the scenes is considerably less than that found in **Walker**, there are far more scenes of violent action in **Mantis**. This series consists of a great deal of comic book-type action crammed into a one-hour format. Each of the scenes are generally relevant to the plot, but the sheer number demonstrates that the plot serves the violence rather than the violence serving the plot. This is violence for the sake of violence. Much of the violent action is clouded in a dark, ominous atmosphere that only makes the violence more sinister.

Some episodes of **Mantis** have as many as 19 scenes of violence in one hour. This show was the first of the season to raise what we call the "tonnage" argument. While there are some individual scenes in **Mantis** that are prolonged or glorified, the major problem tends to be the sheer number of scenes of violent action. That a typical show is made up of 12-20 scenes of violent action (one every three or four minutes) clearly illustrates that violence, albeit non-graphic violence, is the context of the show. Monitors consistently felt the program was little more than a string of violent scenes. The "tonnage" argument does not kick in at any magical number, but the number and type of scenes here raise little doubt that this is a show about violence and little else.

It is also of note that occasionally the key scene of violence would be reprised over the closing credits (10/7/94). Of the 17 times **Mantis** was monitored, it raised concerns 12 times.

The X-Files (Fox)

This was the most difficult program of the season to monitor. Like **The Twilight Zone**, **The X-Files** is an anthology program that uses unusual visuals and music to create a "creepy" or eerie feeling in the viewer. The intent is to make the audience uneasy and unsure about what to expect. It succeeds quite well in this regard. More often than not, it leaves the impression of violence without an actual scene of violence. Quite often we applauded its ability to contain suspense and an aura of violence without actual violence. Fast-cutting, intense music and unusual story lines all served to substitute for violence on many occasions. Nevertheless, in some instances it used real violence and did raise concerns.

The premise of the program revolves around two FBI agents, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, who are assigned the task of investigating cases of strange or supernatural phenomena. Many of the cases hint at the possibility of alien influence and are labeled as "X-Files." Mulder, who believes his 8-year-old sister was abducted by aliens when he was a child, is the believer, bent on

uncovering the existence of UFOs and the government conspiracy to cover them up. Scully is the pragmatic skeptic assigned to work with Mulder on cases and to try and debunk his fantastic claims.

The cases they work on always deal with violence in some form, typically involving some violent alien or supernatural force which harms people. Many times, the perpetrators of the violence are presented as victims themselves, e.g., victims of psychosis induced by an array of bizarre causes ranging from alien abduction to viral infection. Mulder and Scully themselves are non-violent characters who always seek to avoid violence in favor of reason. Consequently, the violence is never portrayed in a heroic or admirable manner and is instead treated as an evil that needs to be stopped. At times, **The X-Files** serves as a textbook case of how to treat violent themes without violence.

The underlying intent of **The X-Files** seems to be to make its viewers uncomfortable. It does so by utilizing several techniques. The first of these is to treat the violence as more realistic than action-oriented. Secondly, several episodes included particularly disturbing types of violence and weapons that tended to make viewers squirm. For example, in one episode a serial killer murdered her victims with a straight razor and carved the word "Sister" into their chests (1/6/95). In another, an alien assassin killed his prey by stabbing them at the base of their skull (2/10/95). A final example is an episode in which an exorcism was attempted and part of the ceremony included a woman attempting to cut open the palm of a young boy with a dagger (4/14/95). Although they are very contextualized and consequences are shown, these are truly horrific forms of violence. Another way in which **X-Files** seeks to disturb its viewers is by using very realistic-looking graphic images. All of these factors combine to make the show extremely intense. This intensity also seems to be present even when there is no violence occurring because, by way of story line and production values, the program has an ever-present, ominous feel that effectively winds the viewer up tighter and tighter, giving him or her a "fear" of pending violence. This fear should not be mistaken for actual violence.

In strange juxtaposition to these oftentimes graphic and disturbing violent acts, is a remarkable restraint with regard to inconsequential violence. There are no scenes of violence which do not further the plot or up the intensity level sought, nor are there prolonged gratuitous fight scenes. In several instances, less integral acts of violence, which may have been necessary to the story but not so necessary that we actually had to see them, were cut just before the violence occurred so that the viewer knew what happened without having to witness the actual violent act.

In one episode, a group of military men were attacked by aliens (11/13/94). We see the attack from the point of view of the aliens. As the aliens approach, the men begin to scream and we see flashes of light. We know they are being attacked but the show cleverly uses special effects to create the horror of violence without showing the violence itself. In many ways, **The X-Files** is commendable in its ability to avoid conventional violent images.

Frequently, however, **The X-Files** does cross the line and create images that do raise concerns. It pushes the envelope of violent programming and sometimes pushes too far, creating images too disturbingly violent for network television. For example, in one show about poltergeists, a father

was hanged by his tie on a garage door opener (4/14/95) and we watch as he very graphically flails while hanging. The same show featured four other acts of prolonged violence.

During most of the season, **The X-Files** was scheduled at 9:00, the latest time available to the Fox network. After Fox's Sunday at 7:00 show, **Fortune Hunter**, was canceled, reruns of **The X-Files** filled that slot for part of the season. Although Fox is not bound by the FCC's requirement that Sunday at 7:00 be used for news, public affairs or children's programming, **The X-Files** at 7:00 is a clear violation of the intent of the rule. The show does not belong at 7:00 on Sunday night, the most popular viewing night of the week.

The largest issue that is raised by **The X-Files** is that it always includes several disturbing, violent scenes in every episode and does not seem to be able to produce a show without them. There is much to commend: the violence is portrayed as an evil in need of containment and the two protagonists have a strong aversion to violence. They only resort to violence when totally necessary and always to subdue rather than kill. But in creating uneasiness in the viewer, the show frequently goes too far and raises concerns about violence. The show was examined 34 times and raised such concerns 12 times.

Due South (CBS)

This is a police show with large doses of humor. The plot concerns a straight-laced Canadian Mountie who moves to Chicago where he is teamed up with a street-wise American cop. The humorous element arises out of the conflicting personalities and styles of the Mountie and the cop. As a police show, violence is inherent in the theme. The show averaged five to nine scenes per episode. Frequently, the program ends with a highly choreographed and excessively long scene of violence. Many times the violence seems incongruous with the lighter tone of the show.

Frequently, the show features unrealistic violence which is very exciting. Men jump out of windows and dive through glass doors. Slow motion is often used to intensify scenes of action, such as bodies flying through the air as the result of an explosion. The violence is, at times, accompanied by light-hearted or exciting music which tends to either trivialize or enhance the act.

Occasionally, straying from the comic, unrealistic tone, a very graphic, disturbing scene of violence appears. In one of the early shows, the Mountie chased an escaped convict and they battled on the roof of a building. At the end of the altercation, the convict pulls out a knife and brutally stabs the Mountie in the knee. The viewer clearly sees the knife enter the knee and hears a "squish" sound (10/6/94).

Sometimes the violence is even humorous. All of the customers in a small store whip out guns and blast away in an attempt to stop a robber (3/8/95). In another scene, an officer trying to stop a car and get a ride is hit by the car. In an obvious attempt at humor, he is shown flying off to the side of the road (2/9/95).

Much of the time the show successfully blends police action with humor. This is basically a light-hearted comedy that sometimes goes overboard in utilizing ugly, graphic images of violence.

Occasionally, the concluding and predictable final scene of violence lasts over five minutes. Complicating all the contextual considerations is the fact that **Due South** runs on Thursday nights at 8:00. The show is far more violent and raises more concerns than most 10:00 programs. In no way is this an 8:00 show. **Due South** raised concerns six out of 16 times.

Lois and Clark (ABC)

Originally conceived as a light, romantic love story between Lois Lane and Clark Kent (Superman's secret identity), the show took a darker turn during its second season. Starring the very popular Terry Hatcher and Dean Cain, **Lois and Clark** is frequently surprising in its dark use of violence. Some level of violence is present in every show.

The show fulfills all the demands of its genre--comic book heroism. A threat of violence is constantly at work to overrun the city and the audience is reminded repeatedly that only Superman is able to prevent this from happening. Thus, the violence is almost always initiated by the bad guys, who are portrayed as truly evil. Superman responds with just enough violence to prevent the villains from getting away. The genre of the show makes it less problematic because the violence is often cartoonish and falls within carefully delineated lines of good vs. evil. The show portrays Superman as a man of impeccable character, thus we are less inclined to question the nature of his methods.

There are moments of surprising violence, particularly for this kind of cartoon-like program. This violence is not very graphic. The number of violent scenes in the shows that raised concerns ranged from seven to 19. They are generally unrealistic, comic book-like scenes that are not the emphasis of the show. Usually criminals or thugs initiate the violence, which typically involves someone getting hit in the face or some other form of physical contact. Guns are used in the program but never successfully against Superman. On 10/23/94, Superman, forced to remain undercover as a policeman, engaged in a fight with thugs wielding baseball bats and other weapons. Superman successfully eludes their blows, causing them to hit one another. Superman seems to enjoy watching the befuddled criminals striking each other when the action is interrupted by a commercial. The fight continued after the break. The entire premise of another episode (4/2/95) was based on a theme of violence. That show was filled with guns and knives. In a climactic fight scene, Lois is attacked by a crazed, knife-wielding Jimmy Olsen before she is saved by Superman. The preview at the beginning of the show featured a machine gun being fired and the opening credits highlighted an explosion.

No one scene of violence in **Lois and Clark** is excessively graphic or mean-spirited. This is an 8:00 Sunday program (a time period in which all four networks have programs containing violence). This is a program that appeals to kids with its cartoon approach to crime and action. However, in its surprisingly frequent use of intense violence, it raised issues seven out of the 21 times it was watched.

Fortune Hunter (Fox)

Another of the early Sunday night programs that raises concerns was **Fortune Hunter**. The spy-thriller bears a remarkably strong resemblance to Ian Fleming's James Bond. The program revolves around protagonist Carlton Dial, a former British secret operative who has gone into the profitable business of "recovering" stolen goods, ranging from exotic animals to top-secret weaponry. It was replaced early in the season by **The X-Files**, **Get Smart**, **The Simpsons** or **Encounters**.

In an attempt to appeal to children, the show relies heavily on exaggerated scenes of violent action and a wide array of far-fetched but interesting high-tech gadgets. One of the most interesting to us is the sleeping-dart gun that is used by the hero in lieu of a real gun because of a new "no-killing" policy adopted by his agency. We determined that although this is an effort to make the show's violence appear less lethal, it is only a small improvement from using a real gun. We assert that the dart gun looks just like and is used just like a real gun and that its targets fall as though they had just been shot by a real gun. This, plus the point that it is only a dart gun is not clear in every episode, makes it little better than a real gun.

The 7:00 opening credits on 10/2/94 highlighted the action-oriented theme of the show by promoting shootings and explosions that would fill the next hour. Few of the scenes were overly graphic, but the sheer volume of them created a context that was an hour full of little but action and violence. Many of the scenes of violence seemed completely gratuitous and served little purpose to further the story. Of the five times **Fortune Hunter** was examined, it contained issues twice.

Tales from the Crypt (Fox)

This program raises interesting issues because, like Fox's **Dream On**, it was made for cable network HBO. As a pay cable service, HBO has tried to create original television series that can do things that exceed the limits of what is seen on broadcast networks. This translates into programs with nudity (especially female breasts), profanity and higher levels of violence than seen on the air.

Tales from the Crypt is based on the horror comic books of the 1950s that at that time raised concerns about children reading these violent, yet moralistic fables of right and wrong. HBO turned the concept into a highly stylized and graphically violent anthology, frequently using big name directors or actors. Fox faced a huge challenge in converting the program to broadcast television. The nudity could simply be cut (and it was), but the violence was a more difficult issue. Recognizing this, Fox did issue an advisory about the program on several occasions. The program aired as early as 8:00 and as late as 9:30. The program on 10/28/94 concerned a vampire. We see graphic scenes of vampires drinking blood, but we also see a stabbing and other gruesome acts. On 3/26/95, after earlier scenes of violence, the climactic scene graphically showed the villains being run over by a car. This program was watched seven times and raised concerns about its use of violence three times.

VR-5 (Fox)

A late-season entry for Fox, **VR-5** examines the oftentimes confusing and hard to follow world of virtual reality. The violence on the program works on two levels: the violence which takes place in virtual reality and the violence of actual reality.

The 4/21/95 episode typified **VR-5's** use of realistic violence. The opening of the show consisted of a series of five murders entirely without context. The murders are not shown and an opportunity for graphic violence is avoided. The murders are explained within a few minutes of the opening and their context creates the plot. The violence in actual reality begins to blend itself into the surreal virtual reality, making the scenes more suggestive than graphic.

The realistic violence works to emphasize the psychological effect much more than it tries to be graphic or exciting. There are, however, many examples of contextually unnecessary violence. In the 3/17/95 program a "bad guy" was killed in a situation in which there was no risk or danger to the shooter. In this case, the bad guy is only bad by virtue of her connection to the "evil" power structure which is out to get the "good guy." The scene is hardly explained and its consequences are never shown. Violence is portrayed within the show as disturbing and problematic by nature; however, it is used by both the good guys and the bad guys.

Because the violence is used ambiguously, there is little reference to punishment or outcome. This is especially true during scenes of violence in virtual reality. Some characters "die" within the virtual reality world, but we do not see the consequences of this "death." The problem with this virtual violence is that it is meant to be intense, but its consequences do not have to be realistic. Because the violence is portrayed in terms of its psychological impact, this is a program very consciously using violence in ways not seen elsewhere on television.

Two particular elements raise concerns about violence: first, the show tends to repeat unsettling scenes of violence, especially a very disturbing drowning scene that was shown at least four times over several episodes. Although the scene is repeated to demonstrate how disturbing it is to the psychology of the protagonist, it tends to continue to shock and upset the viewer.

Second, the violence seems to exist in a vacuum. It often takes place in an imaginary setting, making the disturbing psychological effects of the violence vivid but unrealistic. This kind of violence is employed to illustrate how the protagonist's (Lori Singer) memory haunts her. However, this kind of violence does not operate, for the most part, in terms of morality. The show does not condemn or praise those who use it quite as much as it simply puts it forth to show the psychological effects. A lot of the program is spent showing how violence and conflict in daily life parallel the violence and conflict of the lead character's past and memory.

In almost no instances was the considerable use of violence rewarded or punished. Little judgment was ever made about the violence. Hence, the overall feeling is disturbing.

The time period of the show, Friday at 8:00, also raises a concern. This is a time when the audience is especially full of children and yet the real understanding of how the violence is used would require a more sophisticated mind. Children in the audience would just see the violence

as exciting action and miss the deeper context that the show sometimes provides. This is a show with very mature themes and ideas, unlike any other program on television. That is why the 8:00 scheduling is a matter of concern. It was examined 10 times and raised issues six of those times.

Marker (UPN-United Paramount Network)

In January of 1995, Warner Bros. and Paramount decided to enter the arena of broadcast network television. UPN began its network on Monday and Tuesday nights and in Los Angeles used television KCOP(13) to launch the network. KCOP was monitored as a local syndicated station on Wednesday through Sunday, but on its two network nights it was treated as a network.

Marker is a typical action-adventure show. Much of the violence resembles that of a slightly toned-down version of **Walker, Texas Ranger**. Richard, the show's protagonist, is the son of a deceased millionaire who lives in Hawaii. Before his father accrued a vast fortune, he gave out "markers" to the people who helped him along the way to be exchanged for assistance some time in the future if they were ever in need. With his father's passing, Richard has taken over the duty of repaying people by helping them out of sticky situations. Backed by a team of hired Samoan musclemen, Richard deals with the various unsavory characters who harass the people who helped his father. As Richard deals with this assortment of bad guys, there are many fight scenes and much gunplay.

Marker seems to follow a typical formula of four to eight scenes of varying degrees of violence, culminating in one final, prolonged fight filled with graphic and intense violence. Much of the violence could be eliminated or minimized without detracting from the story, but the use of violence, like many old-style law enforcement shows, is central to the entire concept of the show. **Marker** was watched 12 times and raised concerns about its use of violence in eight instances.

America's Funniest Home Videos (ABC)

That this program inappropriately deals with violence is the finding most likely to produce a loud "Oh, come on!" from readers of the report. Clearly, this is not the type of violence governmental officials and many critics are thinking of when they criticize television violence. But **America's Funniest Home Videos'** portrayals of violence do raise concerns.

This is often a show about people, frequently children, bumping their heads, falling down or running into things. These videos are accompanied by exaggerated sound effects and camera shots of audiences laughing uproariously. Several years ago, Howard Rosenberg, Pulitzer-prize winning television critic for The Los Angeles Times questioned how many children were hurt or put at risk to create one of **America's's Funniest Home Videos**.

The first set of clips on the first show of the 1994-95 television season featured children in perilous situations. The very first scene of the entire season depicted brothers playing by diving onto a bed. After two "successful" dives, a brother miscalculates, jumps too far and his head crashes into the bed's headboard. A loud "BOINGG" is heard and we learn that there is nothing

to be alarmed about because the audience is laughing. The same set also features a game of sandlot football where one player, concentrating on the ball, runs at high speed into a metal pole. Each program is filled with dozens of clips, many featuring people unexpectedly hit by bicycles, stray basketballs, slingshots, mailboxes or whatever.

According to our methodology, considerations of context are essential in determining whether a scene of violence raises concerns. **America's Funniest Home Videos** is a compilation of video clips sent in by viewers devoid of context. It is impossible to ask whether the scenes are integrated into a plot. This is a show about decontextualized accidents. Ironically, this is also a program designed to qualify as children's programming for the Federal Communications Commission because it airs in the 7:00 p.m. Sunday time slot.

Undoubtedly, some would consider these clips nothing more than slapstick. But in fact, they are merely decontextualized violence as humor. All too often this show features people in painful and potentially harmful situations as the butt of the joke. In the process, violence and effects are completely trivialized. This program was monitored 41 times and raised concerns on 20 occasions.

2. Programs with Occasional Issues

America's Most Wanted (Fox)

One of the Fox network's earliest hits, this show focuses on criminal cases in which the perpetrators are still at large. The program uses actors to recreate the crime and then posts pictures of the wanted suspect on the screen urging anyone who has seen that person to call. The show, hosted by John Walsh whose son Adam was kidnaped and murdered in the 1980s, has an extraordinary success rate at capturing wanted criminals.

While the program has noble goals and can point to many successes, it uses very graphic and disturbing images to portray the scenes of violence. Camera angles, close-ups, special effects and other cinematic techniques are all used to emphasize the violence of the crime and to disturb the audience. These images shock the audience and do not assist or move the story. Music, in particular, is used to accentuate the sense of unease and dread. In many instances the use of violence crosses the line and is far more graphic than the scene or the premise of the show requires. Frequently, under the rationale of demonstrating how cruel and senseless the crimes are, the show resorts to extremely detailed and unsettling images. On 1/14/95, there was a re-enactment of a shooting in which a victim was pushed up against a wall by a gang member and shot in the head. The actual shooting occurs off-screen (we hear it), but the scene cuts back to the victim as he falls, leaving blood splattered all over the wall. The gang member then turns to shoot at the victim's fleeing friends, but the camera ultimately returns to the victim's fallen body laying in an oozing pool of blood. This is a re-creation, not a real video of the shooting. Someone had to decide there should be blood everywhere and it serves only to disturb the viewer.

On 9/17/94, there was a story of a man who stabbed his girlfriend repeatedly. In the scenes before the stabbing, he is shown in the kitchen staring at the knife that will later be used in the assault. The camera shot emphasizes the shiny and sharp nature of the knife. This is done in a very “creepy” and sinister fashion to create a strong sense of foreboding. The stabbing itself is overly long and very graphic.

One of the unique problems with **America’s Most Wanted** is that some graphic scenes are repeated several times in the show. They are used as hooks or promotions to entice the viewer to watch the entire show. There are countless examples where a graphic or disturbing scene is repeated. One program (10/29/94) was geared especially to children. It contained warnings to children about the dangers of Halloween which followed the show two days later. The show, however, was filled with inappropriate images for children (discussed later in the report). Another episode on 11/2/95 detailed a murder during a bank robbery and a brutal rape of a woman at home alone. The rape scene showed the intruder tricking his way into the woman’s apartment and very graphically illustrated the crime. A final segment was a highly clinical piece, with no pictures, on chemical castration. The segment examined whether castration was an effective way of dealing with repeat violent sex offenders. Only the third segment received an advisory. There were no warnings about the senseless murder or the horrifying rape, only the clinical chemical castration story.

America’s Most Wanted occasionally raises concerns about the use of re-creations. The nature of the program affords an opportunity to examine very violent crimes. Its goal of catching criminals at large gives the show a measure of latitude in recreating crime. Some of the time, however, the extremely disturbing use of graphic images and music crosses the line of reasonable context and creates excessively violent images. This is a show that could benefit from an increased use of advisories. It raised concerns 11 out of 36 examinations.

SeaQuest (NBC)

Sometimes referred to as “**Star Trek** underwater,” this is a science-fiction, fantasy show. Like **Lois and Clark**, this show seems to take a meaner turn after its first season. Last year **SeaQuest** began as a story of peaceful explorers charting and investigating unexplored ocean regions, emphasizing the science-fiction, futuristic nature of the show. This season it frequently featured violent action segments. Imaginative and scientific themes have been replaced by more action filled and violent ones.

SeaQuest is basically a science-fiction cop show. The role of the protagonists is to use violence when needed to defend themselves and others. The nature of the show and its use of violence tend to change from week to week. Sometimes the style is consistent with the science-fiction genre and other times it is dependent on themes of violence not typical for the science-fiction genre.

The action in the more violent episodes tends to take the form of a constant struggle between good and evil much like **Star Trek**. But a lot of it is violent confrontation. Violence is used

much more extensively than is necessary. The 12/11/94 episode was filled with dark, unrelenting and graphic violence. Although this is a program designed to attract young viewers, it contains images far too disturbing for children. The final scene features a mean-spirited and prolonged fight. This is yet another show that features violent and disturbing images in the early prime time hours of Sunday.

Whether coincidentally or by design, the violence was more disturbing later in the season. The most problematic episode of **SeaQuest** was the final one (5/21/95). It not only contained many violent scenes, but the majority of them were very troublesome, especially for children. It was reminiscent of a blockbuster, action-adventure film: wall-to-wall confrontation and violence. Following extended scenes of laser gun battles in which many people are shot, virtually the entire cast is involved in a huge explosion and only two characters appear to survive. The episode was clearly aimed at maintaining a high level of excitement which will encourage viewers to tune in next season. This episode illustrates that not only is the show uncritical in its use of violence, but in fact uses violence to carry the show.

During the course of the season, violence became increasingly integral to the theme of the show. Much of the violence, particularly during sweeps periods, seemed to be violence for the sake of violence. **SeaQuest** raised violence issues five out of 21 times.

Unsolved Mysteries (NBC)

Using re-creations to illustrate its cases, **Unsolved Mysteries** is a lot like **America's Most Wanted**. Like other re-creation shows, the same scene of violence is often featured three or more times within the same episode. On 12/16/94 the same scene of a truck ramming a motorcyclist was used at the beginning of the show (preview), just before a commercial and then in the actual scene itself. Clearly, these are the scenes the producers think will best keep the viewers tuned in by grabbing their attention. Most of the re-creations on the show do not raise contextual concerns about violence. But when **Unsolved Mysteries** does contain scenes of violence, those scenes are used as consistently and conspicuously as possible. A discussion of the use of violent scenes repeatedly can be found in the Promotions section of the report. Of the 13 times the show was monitored it was determined to have violence issues three times.

The Watcher (UPN)

The Watcher is another anthology program in a similar vein as the old **Alfred Hitchcock Presents** and the current **Tales from the Crypt**. The program's only recurring character is "the Watcher," played by rap star Sir Mix-A-Lot, an all-seeing purveyor of moralistic messages who is able to view all the goings-on of Las Vegas via security monitors throughout the city. Mix-A-Lot serves as a host and commentator for the several tales of depravity and human weakness that he presents in each episode, which typically includes such vices as murder, drug abuse and other sordid affairs.

There is violence in every episode of **The Watcher** and it is often grisly and gruesome. The transgressors, who are always condemned by the Watcher, are often duly punished in a horrible fashion. The show has a very dark feel to it as we gain an intimate perspective into the sordid aspects of human nature.

Despite the heavy consequences incurred by characters in every episode, the grim undertone, sometimes graphic violence, chronically violent themes and high likelihood of a young audience due to the popularity of the show's host, all combine to raise occasional concerns about the violence featured in **The Watcher**. This show was monitored 10 times and it raised concerns on three occasions.

Rescue 911 (CBS)

This is another reality show using re-creations of emergency situations in which 911 is called, thereby saving a life. Like **America's Most Wanted**, **Rescue 911** claims responsibility for the saving of many lives. We applaud it for this public service function.

In a few instances, however, in recreating a scene, extremely unnecessary and graphic images of accidents are depicted. The 2/28/95 episode features graphic and gruesome footage of a little boy falling into a moving lawn mower. The graphicness is far more explicit than the scene warranted. The same issue arose on the 1/31/95 episode when two hikers fell into a canyon. Like other reality shows, the viewer sees the same scenes of violence several times in the same show. **Rescue 911** was looked at 18 times and was considered to have issues of violence on three occasions.

Earth2 (NBC)

Earth2 is a serial, science-fiction drama that airs on NBC Sundays at 7:00. Although this places the program in a designated children's time slot, it would be a mistake to classify this as a show for kids. Many of the plot lines which span several episodes and the issues they address are overly sophisticated and too dry to sustain the interest of many children. What may entice some children viewers are occasional uses of very graphic and intense scenes of violence.

The show's premise is a group of futuristic pioneers investigating whether the planet on which they have crashed landed 22 light years from Earth will serve as a suitable habitat. The colonists encounter many threats as they traverse the continent in search of a land mass they call New Pacifica. These dilemmas range from dealing with hostile environmental conditions to conflicts with other inhabitants of the planet, one of whom is a human convict exiled to the planet.

The show typically contains some violence but it seldom raises contextual issues of concern. The show's protagonists are a peaceful group on the whole who are, however, capable of violence. They do attempt to refrain from acts of violence when possible. The violence used by the colonists is always in an effort to save or protect one another and they are never the initiators. The violence shown is intense and has consequences. It is usually dealt with in a responsible and

non-glorified manner. The issue of concern with **Earth2** is that many of the story lines require violence and are too intense for the Sunday 7:00 time period. Graphic images of decaying flesh, people being pulled into the ground screaming and a man being choked to death by hostile aliens are images that cause concern in **Earth2**. There is also a tendency to prolong the scenes in an effort to heighten the intensity and drama. This is yet another problem show in the early hours of Sunday evening. Of the 22 times **Earth2** was examined, it brought forth issues of concern six times.

The Simpsons (Fox)

This is an animated satire of American life. The problem in regard to violence is that this is a program very clearly geared to children. It airs on Sundays at 8:00 (many times during the 1994-95 season, reruns aired during the 7:00 hour). Everything about the show--the animation, the voices, the character Bart who talks back to his parents--appeals to kids and kids respond by watching in huge numbers. The contextual problem is that, in some instances, the show uses extraordinarily graphic violence to make a point of satire that is completely over the heads of children. The satire works for adults, but the uncomprehending children are left simply with very graphic scenes of violence.

The best example of this is the cartoon mouse and cat, Itchy and Scratchy. They are characters in the most popular cartoon on Krusty the Clown's after-school cartoon show. Based on Tom and Jerry, Itchy and Scratchy are a spoof of the ultra-violent cartoons with which many kids grew up. They take the extreme violence many people saw as children and raise it to a new and ridiculous level. Within this context, adults can appreciate the satire. Children only see Itchy and Scratchy as extremely violent cartoons that Bart, Lisa and even Homer love. Several seasons ago, Marge (the mother) registered her dismay at these violent cartoons and, in a satire of Terry Rakolta, wrote to advertisers protesting their sponsorship of such violent programming. The sponsors listened and the cartoons disappeared, but Marge realized that she had gone too far and had become a censor, which was never her intent. In later seasons, Itchy and Scratchy make a movie which is filled with nothing but violence. This season the cartoon mouse and cat opened a theme park, Itchy and Scratchy Land, "The Violentest Place on Earth." As an adult satire this probably works. For children, it may be nothing more than ultra-graphic images of violence.

The first episode of the season (9/4/94) featured an Itchy and Scratchy cartoon in which Scratchy was walled up by Itchy and released as a very old cat 3,000 years later by Itchy's descendants. He is well treated, groomed and fed by the mice. Although puzzled why his traditional foes would treat him so well, after 3,000 years behind a wall, he is happy. Only later does he realize their real intent. They put him in an arena as in the days of the Roman gladiators with an audience of mice. Out of nowhere a large sword-like blade flies through the air directly at him and he is sliced into many pieces. Viewers first see his internal organs and rivers of blood and then Bart and Lisa laughing at the gruesome cartoon. The satirical intent is clear, but that intent is lost on a large part of the audience. In any context, the violence is excessive and crosses the line as to what is acceptable for children.

Another example occurred on 11/13/94. The episode opens with what viewers later learn is a scene from the film “McBain” being watched by Homer, Bart and Lisa. McBain is an action-adventure character based on and sounding like Arnold Schwarzenegger. McBain pops out of an ice statue at a dinner honoring organized crime kingpins. The criminals are unveiling their newest product “Swank,” more addictive than marijuana. McBain shoots and kills all but one of the bad guys. The shootings are extremely graphic. We see bullet holes and blood liberally pours from their bodies. McBain stands in the center of the table in a pool of blood, dead bodies and smoke everywhere. It is an extremely effective satire of 1990's action films. But to kids in the audience, it is merely graphic violence.

The Simpsons works as an adult satire and if it were programmed for adults and had mainly adults in its audience, it would raise few concerns. There is no way to ignore or not take seriously these images which are some of the most violent on television. The only thing that mitigates them is the satirical premise, which is lost on the children who comprise a large part of the audience. Of the 28 times **The Simpsons** was monitored, the show raised such concerns nine times.

The Marshall (ABC)

This show raises many of the same issues as **Walker, Texas Ranger** although not as often. Action is built into the basic premise of the show. Each episode features a number of violent scenes, sometimes as many as 14. Usually two or three of these violent scenes are prolonged and much more violent than the context of the story requires.

Rarely are any of the individual scenes highly graphic. It is the sheer volume on some occasions that raises the question of whether the plot merely serves as a vehicle to connect scenes of violence. **The Marshall** was monitored 13 times and raised violence issues three times.

3. Interesting Violence Issues in Prime Time Series

Chicago Hope (CBS), **E.R.** (NBC) and Issues on Medical Shows

E.R. was the breakout hit of the 1994-95 television season. It finished number two in the Nielsen ratings for the entire season. Produced by author, director and physician Michael Crichton, it was the first medical show in years to become popular and restored much of the lost luster to television drama. **Chicago Hope** was produced by David Kelley, the Emmy Award-winning writer and producer of **L.A. Law** and the creative force behind **Picket Fences**.

Both series run at 10:00 (**Chicago Hope** moved to 9:00 for a short time) and raise interesting issues of definitions and contextual violence. Both are set in hospitals and **E.R.**, of course, is specifically set in an emergency room. It is one of those odd coincidences that both also take place in Chicago. It is not surprising, in light of the producers' intent and approach, that both shows deal with and necessarily show very graphic portrayals of the consequences of violence.

Very early in the season, we had to deal with scenes of doctors using scalpels cutting into patients to begin an operation. We had to decide whether these were scenes of violence and, if so, how to classify them. This is where the soundness of the contextual analysis of violence became most apparent. We clearly felt that under no circumstances could a scene with a doctor using a scalpel to save someone's life ever be construed as a scene of violence. Early in the season we saw an episode of **Chicago Hope** in which a doctor performs a long incision on an abdomen before surgery. The camera zoomed in very close and, as the scalpel moved, the viewer could see blood rise to the surface of the skin. It was an extraordinary special effect likely to make many of those watching squirm. While it was an extremely graphic image, it cannot be categorized as violent. The context lets us know this is a beneficial act designed to save a life. The same scene of a scalpel cutting, however, would have been one of the most horrific scenes of violence possible if the knife had been held by a terrorist or a murderer. The difference between non-violent and horrific violence has nothing to do with the close-up itself. It is the surrounding context of whether it is a life-saving or a sadistic act that determines how it is interpreted.

Medical shows during the season frequently contained similar scenes which were not considered violent. Internally, we dealt with them as graphic, and sometimes excessively graphic, images. But they do not raise contextual concerns of violence. We expect to see scalpels and blood in medical shows as part of the context. In both shows, there was only one case in the entire season that raised some concerns, **Chicago Hope** on 10/20/94. A man walks into the hospital and opens fire with a gun. The scene depicts overly graphic and disturbing images of blood spurting and gushing from the victim. Although the show is based on realistic themes and wanted to demonstrate consequences, the extraordinary amount of gushing blood served more to illustrate special effects than to advance the story. Together the two shows were examined 33 times and raised some concerns only this one time: an impressive record.

Hardball (Fox) and Glorified Violence

Hardball was a baseball comedy on Fox that aired between **The Simpsons** and **Married With Children**. It had a short life on network television. In the first episode of the season (9/4/94), the team's mascot, Hardball, a man wearing a large baseball head, is replaced by a new mascot, the Pied Pioneer. At the end of the show, the team realizes its mistake and Hardball returns as mascot. In a comedic but glorified scene of violence, we hear exciting music as Hardball marches toward home plate from the bullpen. Suddenly, the crowd realizes "It's Hardball" and begins chanting. As Hardball reaches the plate, the crowd is in a frenzy and Hardball sees the mascot who took his job and whom he now replaces. He pushes him on the ground and begins punching him brutally as the team owner is smiling. The crowd is cheering as the show ends with Hardball restored to his rightful place. While comedic, everything from the music, to the crowd to the close-ups serve to glorify Hardball's vicious attack on the Pied Pioneer. It is portrayed as socially acceptable violence and is one of the best examples of its kind.

Friends (NBC) and Comedic Violence

This is yet another of the new hits of the television season. It is based on the relationships of three men and three women who are friends now but with the possibility of romantic entanglements in the future. In the episode on 10/13/94, one of the characters was watching a hockey game when he got hit in the face with a puck. It is a scene played completely for comedy and is not intended to raise issues of violence. While it seemed out of context for the overall purpose of the show, it did not raise serious issues with regard to violence. The camera, however, takes the point of view of the puck and it is a jarring moment when the puck hits the face. Ten minutes later in the same show, the puck makes a reappearance with the same “puck point of view” when it hits a nurse in the face. While comedy does deserve (and gets) some latitude, somewhere a scriptwriter decided that there would be two instances in which someone is hit by a puck and that the audience would laugh. This incident raises the issue of laughing at people getting hurt. Of all the ways we can be made to laugh, this is the one the producers choose in this episode.

Blue Skies (ABC) and Repeated Comedic Violence

Blue Skies portrays two men who run an L.L. Bean-type catalog company. One of the characters is constantly getting himself into accidental situations that raise some small issues of violence. This happened four times on 10/24/94. The first time, he is sharpening the blade of an axe when he accidentally cuts his thumb. Blood spurts like a gusher over everything. Rather than being shocked or worrying about his cut, the viewer, encouraged by the laugh track and the character’s unrealistic reaction, laughs and thinks of the whole scene as funny. Then the same character falls into an elevator shaft and we laugh again. Several minutes later, he falls into the same shaft yet again. Finally, he intentionally jumps into the shaft. All of this is designed to be funny. Once again it raises the issue that, with all the things at which audiences can laugh, producers choose to have the viewer laugh at pain and misfortune.

Muscle (WB) and Comedic “Real” Violence

At the end of the 5/24/95 episode of **Muscle**, in a scene reminiscent of a parody of an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie, several characters were brutally shot in a gym during a wedding by a woman toting a machine gun. It is a fantasy scene allowing one of the characters to relieve much frustration. While it is a fantasy and “never really happens,” the audience is supposed to laugh as characters are brutally murdered, recognizing in themselves the occasional urge to gun down everyone who drives them crazy. We see bullets enter the bodies and laugh because it is so extremely exaggerated and ridiculous that we know no one would actually resort to such actions. The context of the show is comedic, but the violence is excessive and is out of character for what is intended to be a light comedy.

Beverly Hills 90210 (Fox) and Shows That Rarely Contain Violence

Sometimes a show that rarely deals with issues of violence will air a program with a violent theme. This raises a very interesting question. The show develops a reputation as one that seldom, if ever, raises issues of violence. Viewers get used to this, rely on it and perhaps it is a major reason they like the show. When, because of violence, a particular episode is out of context with the entire series, is it inappropriate because it is not what viewers expect? Or because the show so seldom raises these issues, is it afforded a measure of latitude occasionally to expand its themes or move in a slightly different direction?

This issue was examined on a **Beverly Hills 90210** episode aired 1/18/95. The show is about the interpersonal relationships of a group of college students attending California University in Los Angeles. Rarely does the show deal with issues of violence. In the past there have been occasional episodes dealing with timely subjects such as date rape. One of the themes of the show this season was the way in which Dylan McKay dealt with losing all his considerable wealth to swindlers. The viewer sees him return to alcohol and engage in very self-destructive behaviors. Toward the middle of the season, he learns that the couple who stole his money are in a Latin American country. He travels there for a confrontation to recover his wealth.

The entire episode is very much out of character for **Beverly Hills 90210**. Dylan hooks up with a somewhat shady investigator and the show more closely resembles a B-grade detective film than an episode of **Beverly Hills 90210**. The show culminates in a fight scene with fists flying, sword fighting and gun fire. A later episode in the season witnesses Dylan, in a hypnotic spell, reliving a past life in the Old West and there, too, there is gun play and shooting. Dylan himself is killed in the final scene.

Violence is out of character for these kinds of shows, but they deserve a measure of latitude, particularly as they search for new directions. While it is out of the show's context to engage in violence, the level of violence must still be fairly non-graphic and tame. It is held to the same standards of consequence and necessity to the plot. While the **Beverly Hills 90210** episode in Latin America never came close to raising concerns, the show based on the 19th century West came much closer.

The Fresh Prince of Bel Air (NBC) and "Real Violence" on a Comedy Show

The Fresh Prince is about a likable Will Smith who lives with his relatives in Bel Air in a show reminiscent of the old **Beverly Hillbillies**. It is a comedy that draws heavily on the considerable talents of Smith who plays off of his rich and stuffy relatives and friends. Although it uses a fair amount of slapstick comedy, it never raises serious concerns about its use of violence.

In a two-part episode (2/6/95, 2/13/95) Will was shot. These episodes add a somber and scary note to an otherwise lighthearted show. Even though it was out of character for the show, in no sense does the violence of the shooting raise any concern. It might catch young viewers off guard and add an element of unpleasantness into an otherwise pleasant show. This is exactly the intent of the producers and they do it well. The violence is jarring. Viewers do not expect to see our

favorite characters shot, just as they do not expect to see their friends or family members shot. The shooting is not sensationalized and the consequences of the act are seen. Will and his family learn first-hand about the devastating effects of violence. Everything in this “special” episode is an attempt to deal responsibly with violence in our everyday lives. While the intrusion of violence into comedies may disturb some viewers, responsibly portrayed violence is exactly the kind of thing television should do more often. **M*A*S*H** was extraordinarily effective at mixing comedy and the tragedy of violence in a thought-provoking way.

Other than the above, shows that raised concerns less than three times over the course of the season and the number of times they did so were:

Cops (Fox) - 1
The Critic (Fox) - 1
Encounters (Fox) - 1
Melrose Place (Fox) - 2
Models Inc. (Fox) - 2
Sliders (Fox) - 1
Wayans Bros. (WB) - 2
Whole New Ball Game (ABC) - 1

4. Programs That Deal With Violence Well

Reading the above analysis might give the impression that prime time series are filled with violent themes. In fact, only a few shows this season consistently raised issues about violence. Many shows impressed us with how well they were able to convey conflict and grittiness without resorting to excessive or contextually inappropriate uses of violence. The 10:00 dramas were particularly outstanding in how they handled violent themes while never resorting to excessive, graphic images or gratuitous or glorified violence. The work of Steven Bochco, David Kelley, Dick Wolf and Michael Crichton was especially notable in its sensitive handling of violence. It is encouraging to see that violence can be portrayed so responsibly.

An entire season of monitoring **NYPD Blue** 18 times, **The Commish** 12 times, **Picket Fences** 12 times, **Under Suspicion** 12 times, **ER** 16 times, **Homicide** 12 times, and **Law and Order** 8 times produced no inappropriate portrayals of violence. Although these shows deal with themes containing violence, they do so in a fashion such that the violence is not overly graphic, is relevant to the story and is in a time period suitable for such themes. There is much to commend in these shows and they should serve as models for how to deal with violence in an intelligent and responsible manner. These shows appear across all four networks. In the following analyses we have tried to explain what we feel is impressive in these shows.

NYPD Blue (ABC)

Envisioned as broadcast television's first R-rated drama, **NYPD Blue** consistently deals with violent themes in a responsible manner. Famous for its use of some semi-nudity and explicit (for network television) language, the show was never found to be irresponsible in its use of violence. Many people unfamiliar with the show associate it with other police shows containing explicit violence. Those who watch **NYPD Blue** know that it contains little violence and when it does address violent themes, they are always completely relevant to the story.

Based on the New York City Police Department, the show necessarily deals with violence. It would not be possible to portray the lives of New York cops without frequently dealing with violence. Unlike older police shows such as **Adam-12**, the officers are not completely virtuous. Pushed to the wall by the pressures of their dangerous jobs, the officers struggle and occasionally we see police officers acting brutally when arresting suspects or getting a confession out of them. While the 12/20/94 episode raised the issue of excessive police force, it ultimately dealt responsibly with the issue.

The show also deals extensively with the psychological implications of violence. Violence is depicted as a realistic part of daily life in the city. However, the show is not overrun by guns. The violence is often born of frustration, such as slaps or threats. The police officers frequently consider acting violently and then demonstrate restraint.

Violence is portrayed as problematic. The police are depicted as human and multi-dimensional characters. The bad guys are not pure evil. This leads to a responsible and realistic handling of violence. The producers understand that it is not necessary to show graphic scenes of violence in order to deal with violence in the show.

Every scene of violence in **NYPD Blue** is contextually appropriate. Nothing is excessive, everything is realistic and the consequences are always shown. **NYPD** is close to a textbook example of how to deal with violent material and others can benefit by studying its methods.

Homicide (NBC)

Homicide contains few scenes of violence and some episodes contain none at all. Frequently scenes are nothing more than already dead bodies that are used to set up a homicide investigation. The show is often just a murder mystery without the murder. Very rarely do we actually see a murder. The act of killing is typically not contextually relevant to the unfolding of the story which emphasizes the investigation, not the crime. The show focuses on the psychological dimension of violent crime rather than the graphicness or exciting quality of the violence itself. Like **NYPD Blue**, **Homicide** presents a world in which violence and conflict are prevalent in urban life.

Almost all the violence and its outcomes are realistic and demonstrate consequences. Frequently action is taken to prevent violence. **Homicide** effectively avoids gratuitous violence while, at the same time, portraying the gritty reality of urban life.

Law and Order (NBC)

“In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate but equally important groups: the police, who investigate, and district attorneys, who prosecute the offenders. These are their stories.” With this statement, **Law and Order** begins. This is an unusual show which dedicates approximately half of its one-hour program to a police investigation and the other half to the follow-up prosecution of the earlier case. The goal of the show is to depict the justice system in the most realistic light possible. This is achieved through character and plot development which is gritty, intense and consequential.

A typical episode of **Law and Order** consists of one act of violence at the beginning of the show. This act is used as the story line’s driving force. The use of violence is always contextually appropriate. Furthermore, the consequences of the violence are dealt with in a very commendable manner. In one episode, an off-duty police officer shoots two adolescents, hurting one and killing the other, because they tried to rob her at gunpoint. Never is this shown as exciting or glamorous. The police officer is repeatedly shown expressing grief and remorse to the dead child’s mother and to a police psychologist.

In trying to remain consistent with its reality-based format, the show occasionally portrays the police as bullying some suspects through threatening language or some physical coercion. In one episode, a police officer pushes a suspect during an interrogation. However, these acts are never overdone or gratuitous in nature, and the violence is not shown as leading to a suspect’s admission of guilt. Thus, it is not rewarded.

Law and Order integrates violence into the plot in a very responsible fashion. The violent acts are not heroic, glamorized or prolonged. **Law and Order** substitutes graphic images and realistic consequences that work in tandem to give the show a more violent feel without having to see the violent act. The dramatic edge is provided by the detailed rigors of police investigations, which often create mysteries that the District Attorney’s office must solve. Then, the dramatic tension is continued by the atmosphere of the courtroom in which a verdict of guilt or innocence is never predictable. This is a cop show without a lot of violence and yet it has compelling elements that keep its viewers riveted to the show.

SUMMARY:

These dramatic series are commendable not because they avoid dealing with violence. Most comedies do this. What is so impressive about these shows is that they achieve a high level of grittiness and excitement without overemphasizing violence. A recommendation that a police show simply avoid violence would be unrealistic given the demands of the genre. These shows deal with violent themes but consistently do so in a contextually appropriate manner. Some conclusions we have drawn regarding responsible depictions of violence are as follows:

- 1) Violence is a part of city life.

These shows understand that violence does occur in 20th century urban America. They do not have to invent unusual ways or methods of portraying violence.

2) The violence must be realistic.

When violence is depicted on these shows it is never exaggerated, cartoonish or sanitized and the consequences are shown.

3) Characters who commit violent acts do not do so easily and frequently demonstrate remorse.

Violence does not exist in a vacuum. Rarely do police shoot or kill suspects, even guilty ones, and call it a day. Deciding to commit a violent act can be difficult. Often a character struggles with other options before resorting to violence. After committing a violent act, one often undergoes a painful process of self-examination and reflection.

4) It is not always necessary for the audience to see the violence.

It is not always necessary to show violence in order to adequately make a certain point, advance the plot or develop a particular character. Graphically depicting violence is seldom necessary and often serves merely to sensationalize rather than elucidate.

5) It is more difficult to write and produce these kinds of shows than typical action shows.

These shows require the creation of multi-dimensional characters whose actions are not always predictable. The characters cannot be superficially drawn because viewers have to understand their backgrounds and personalities in order to comprehend their actions. More traditional action shows can use simplistic characters who reflexively resort to violence as the solution to problems.

These guidelines point to ways in which programs can effectively deal with violent themes in an appropriate contextual manner that rarely, if ever, raises concerns.

B. Made-for-Television Movies and Mini-Series

Beginning in the 1970s, movies of the week (MOWs) and mini-series became a staple of broadcast network television. Some of the most memorable moments of the past 25 years of television came from this format. Similar in many ways to theatrical films, but specifically written and produced for television, movies of the week and mini-series began as an important forum for the discussion of society's concerns and problems. Earlier mini-series and movies, such as **Roots, Holocaust, Something About Amelia, The Day After** and **The Burning Bed**, not only captured extremely high ratings and many Emmy awards, they also sparked national discussions about slavery, the annihilation of the Jews, incest, nuclear war and spousal abuse.

Originally intended as "events" in a television world largely comprised of series, they quickly became a regular part of television programming and lost some of their luster. MOWs abandoned important and provocative themes and soon settled into a "disease of the week" format. At the same time, mini-series, intended to be television's blockbuster events, frequently seemed inflated in length and concept.

One important difference between MOWs and theatrical films is the speed with which MOWs can be brought to the television screen. While a feature film may require one to two years of production, a MOW can be conceptualized, produced and aired in a matter of months, less in some cases. Now, many MOWs specialize in bringing very recent events to the small screen. Within months of the resolution of the Amy Fisher case, three networks aired television movies on this sensationalized story. NBC authorized a television movie on the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas and it was half-way completed before anyone knew whether the followers of David Koresh would get out alive. Whatever the outcome, the television movie would air. Fox aired **The O.J. Simpson Story** during early days of the trial.

As discussed in the history section, MOWs and mini-series in the May 1993 sweeps period were a major source of the belief that television violence had reached new heights. Most of the concern, but not all, was focused on the fact-based television movies claiming to be “based on a true story.”

During the course of the 1994-95 television season, we monitored every television movie and mini-series on the four broadcast networks. We did not rely on a sample. Every movie and mini-series was viewed in its entirety. Having completely examined all 161 MOWs and mini-series in the past television season, we make the following comments on and evaluations of this important genre.

We went back and looked at earlier MOWs and mini-series programming, including some shows from the May 1993 sweeps, and saw that there has been progress since then. This is an area over which the networks have total control, and advertiser and political pressure may have influenced them to make some changes in this area.

Of the 161 MOWs and mini-series we examined, 23 were found to deal with violent themes or issues in a way that raised concerns. These concerns include the use of violence in the themes, the use of advisories, the titles themselves, and a variety of other issues. The first part of this section will discuss some particularly relevant examples of programs that raise concerns. The second part will delineate some issues and themes which run through most of the programs that raise concerns.

1. Leading Examples of MOWs and Mini-Series That Raised Concerns

Falling for You (CBS-2/21/95)

This television movie was one of CBS’s Tuesday Night Movies which immediately follow **Rescue 911**. Despite the romantic-sounding title, **Falling for You** is about a psychotic killer who throws women out of windows. Viewers watching **Rescue 911**, many of whom are children, who continue watching CBS would find themselves immediately confronted with a shockingly graphic scene of a woman being thrown out of a window to her death. The network issued no advisory and, as mentioned above, the title might send a completely wrong expectation regarding

the theme of **Falling for You**. Over the opening credits (before the theme is established), viewers hear a man and woman fighting and then suddenly see the woman pushed through the window of a high-rise, slowly falling. Then from above they see her land on a parked car. The camera moves into the car to clearly show her splattered on the windshield. There is blood everywhere. Finally the camera returns to its original perspective, looking down at the scene of death.

Based on the play "Last Tag," **Falling for You** is filled with highly stylized and glamorized scenes of violence. Starring Jenny Garth of **Beverly Hills 90210**, the movie is likely to attract young viewers. Throughout the movie there are several more scenes of women being thrown out of windows. Two of the scenes are excessively long; one lasts three minutes and the second close to four minutes. Some of the same scenes of violence are repeated through the use of flashbacks.

The opening scene was one of the most graphic and shocking that we viewed in the entire season. Following a program that considers public service part of its goal, and without an advisory, **Falling for You** catches viewers off guard and confronts them with shocking and disturbing scenes of violence. Concerns arise due to the number of scenes, their length and graphicness and the lack of warning as to the true nature of the program.

Avalanche (Fox-11/1/94)

Getting away to spend some much needed time together, a family is imperiled when snow from an avalanche falls on their cabin and traps them inside. Far from anyone who can offer help, they plan their own rescue. **Baywatch's** David Hasselhoff, in an uncharacteristic role, plays a psychotic criminal (Duncan) who has just pulled a diamond heist. After Duncan shoots his accomplice in the head, his plane crashes near the house, causing the avalanche. When he first appears, the family views him as someone who can help them get out of the snow. Gradually they learn of his violent personality and have to battle him as well as the snow. The movie is filled with many scenes of violence, some of which are very graphic. Viewers know from the beginning that the family is in danger. The music and tone serve to emphasize this. Similar to other psychological thrillers in which someone begins to realize that a familiar person is in fact a crazed criminal, **Avalanche** raises concerns because of excessively graphic violence. Once Duncan's true intent is revealed, he psychologically and physically brutalizes the family. Viewers see him stab the father (Michael Gross of **Family Ties**), tie up the daughter and hold the family hostage with a gun.

During a fight, another smaller avalanche causes Duncan to fall and be impaled on a large shard of glass. It is an extremely graphic scene. Standing over the seriously wounded Duncan, the daughter pleads with her father to kill him. Later, Duncan hits the father in the head with a pole and later Duncan himself is hit in the head with a pole.

Avalanche is a television movie about an innocent family encountering a vicious criminal. While the story requires some violence, what viewers see is overly graphic and prolonged. Instead of furthering the story, much of the violence continues to make points that have already been made or to move the story where it has already been.

As mentioned earlier, Fox has the unique problem among the networks of not having a 10:00 prime time hour. It must begin its two-hour programming at 8:00. Because of the earlier time slot, **Avalanche** does issue an advisory and repeats it two additional times. Despite the multiple advisories, its early time slot, its prolonged and graphic scenes of violence and the story's emphasis on violence combine to make this a television movie that raises serious concerns.

Scarlett (CBS-11/13 and 11/15/94)

The long-awaited (over 55 years) sequel to **Gone with the Wind**, **Scarlett** was the big mini-series of the November 1994 sweeps period. A lush melodrama, **Scarlett** was a highly stylized production picking up the pieces of Scarlett's marriage after Rhett Butler walked away not "giving a damn."

The first six hours contained only minor scenes of fighting between Scarlett and Rhett. Rarely do we see anything more than an occasional slap. The final two hours, however, contained some of the most graphic and explicit scenes of violence viewed this season. Forty minutes into the seventh hour, Scarlett and a man (Fenton) get into a fight after which he rapes her and knocks her unconscious. A few minutes later Scarlett finds Fenton dead with a knife in his chest and blood everywhere. Slowly, she pulls the knife out of his body and witnesses see her holding the knife. The scene of Scarlett pulling out the knife was an excessively graphic image. While viewers needed to see Fenton dead and Scarlett blamed, the explicitness was far beyond what the story required.

In another graphically violent scene approximately an hour later, viewers see a flashback of Fenton's murder and learn that Scarlett did not kill him. In the flashback they see another character, Mary, go into Fenton's room and repeatedly stab him in the chest. The first thrust of the knife is very clear and viewers see the knife enter the body. Subsequent stabs are shown in shadow.

Interestingly, **Gone with the Wind** was able to tell its story without much explicit violence. Viewers do see bloodied soldiers and even Scarlett shooting an intruder, but the violence is within the context of the story and necessary to character development. The sequel **Scarlett** uses extremely graphic violence that is far more explicit than the story requires.

Problem Child 3 (NBC-5/13/95)

Representative of an interesting trend in television movies, the first two installments of **Problem Child** were theatrical films. In some cases when a series no longer delivers large box office and can no longer justify the expensive budget of a film, a concept is resurrected as a television movie. This is true of **The Omen** and a few other movies.

A comic version of **The Bad Seed**, **Problem Child 3** continues Junior's antics as a kind of "devil child." None of the scenes compare to some of the intense violence described in other

television movies above. It is, however, violence on a very different level and with a very different effect. The program appeals to young children and the 8:00 hour is sure to attract those kids. Most of the violence is caused by the young problem child, Junior, and he is rarely punished. Instead, the context sends the message that Junior's use of violence and other anti-social tactics get him the attention he desperately needs. The moral of the story is that this kind of behavior works, making this a particularly inappropriate message for children in the audience.

There are over 20 fairly modest but mean-spirited scenes of violence in the movie. Five minutes into the program, a model of Saturn falls on a teacher's head causing her to fall into a snake cage and then out the window. The scene is played for laughs. Other violent acts include biting his dad on the arm; a tree falling on a scout-troop leader; a man being picked up, slammed against a truck and dropped on the ground; and multiple aggressive acts in a hockey rink.

Compared to **Avalanche** or **Falling for You**, the violence is comedic and certainly not intended to horrify. The sheer number of violent acts turns **Problem Child 3** into a movie about little more than aggressive acts of violence that are not treated as a genuine problem, but rather as amusing behavior. The movie raises interesting issues about aggressive behavior that goes unpunished and ultimately is rewarded.

Alien Nation (Fox-10/25/94)

This is another television movie based on an earlier theatrical film that was turned into a Fox television series. **Alien Nation** is about outer space aliens moving to Earth and integrating themselves into society. One of the aliens is a cop who is teamed with a human. The original film raised interesting issues about prejudice and integration. This film is a vehicle for intense action.

Monitors watching **Alien Nation** were left with the impression that this was a television movie just about action. There are many scenes of action and violence and several are extremely prolonged.

Most of the violence was typical of action films: fist fights, guns and explosions. Almost halfway through the movie, there is a long scene of violence in which fist fights, guns and a lethal spray are employed. The spray is deadly to the aliens and causes them much pain. One of the aliens grabs on to a rising helicopter and falls a considerable distance to the ground just as the helicopter explodes. All this occurs in one scene of a little more than two minutes. It is a very prolonged, excessive and violent scene. The sound of the scene is also excessive.

Like other Fox television movies, it began at 8:00 and contained several advisories.

Gramps (NBC-5/20/95)

Gramps aired at 8:00 on Saturday night on NBC, a time and day likely to attract family audiences. Andy Griffith stars as the title character. Because of the star, the time slot and lack of an advisory, it would be a reasonable assumption for an unwitting viewer to expect a warm-

hearted tale of an endearing grandfather. However, what unfolds over the next two hours is a story about an outwardly charming but psychotic grandfather bent on destroying his son's marriage so that he can steal his grandson from his parents.

In the course of the movie, Gramps shoots and kills his daughter-in-law's father, attempts to kill several children, smashes a police officer's head with a fire extinguisher and ultimately is sent plummeting over a waterfall. These are only a few of the disturbing, violent altercations with which the movie is filled.

Gramps is a movie based on an extremely violent and disturbing premise that is shown without an advisory in a time slot typically reserved for family-oriented viewing. The innocent sounding, misleading title and extremely atypical role for Andy Griffith combine to make the violence and subject matter of this movie surprisingly disturbing. The violent acts are very intense, dark and malevolent and would present problems at any time and on any day of the week.

The Danger of Love (CBS-4/23/95)

The Danger of Love, originally a 1992 MOW rebroadcast this season, is another example of a movie based on a true story. Although the movie itself contained only two scenes of violence, we found the portrayal of one of these scenes to be excessive, overly long and altogether unrealistic. **The Danger of Love** is the story of Carolyn Warmus, a teacher whose obsessive love affair is linked to a brutal murder.

All of our concerns surround the scene which depicts the murder. The death scene was one of the most unusual and disturbing seen in any television movie this season. Confronting the wife of the man with whom she had an affair, Warmus pulls out a gun with a silencer and shoots her victim five times. After the woman (Mary Ann) falls, Warmus stands over her, steps on her back and fires four more shots into the already dead body. The viewer sees the first few bullets entering the body and a close-up of the gun firing. This description may lead one to believe that this murder is similar to many other homicides with guns in fact-based television movies.

What makes this scene so unusual is its extreme length and the surreal reaction of the victim. Mary Ann reacts with disbelief to the first few bullets. She does not scream or fight back; instead she stands there, not really in pain, just not believing that she has been shot and wondering what those bullet holes are doing in her body. Although she is shot three times in the upper torso, the first few bullets seem not to do any real damage. It is only on the fifth shot that she falls and lays motionless. Carolyn stands over her for the final four shots. The prolonged and excessive nature of the murder and the victim's unrealistic reactions combine to emphasize the violence, making this a disturbing, problematic scene. Furthermore, the scene avoids the harsh reality of the crime and cloaks it with a mysterious, surreal quality.

Lady Killer (CBS-4/5/95)

Lady Killer is one of a host of television movies broadcast this season which deals with issues of sexual abuse. The movie tells the story of a middle-aged, married woman played by Judith Light who has an affair with a younger man, **Melrose Place**'s Jack Wagner. When she ends the affair for reasons of conscience, his affection turns into obsessive anger ultimately leading him to stalk and rape her in a haunting and disturbing scene. Realizing that he is unable to gain back her affection, his anger turns into vengeance as he first maliciously seduces her young daughter and shoots her husband. The movie concludes with a prolonged confrontation between Light, Wagner and the daughter, **Growing Pains**' Tracey Gold. In this scene Wagner tries to rape her again, beats up her daughter and is finally thrown off a lighthouse to his death on the snowy ground below.

Lady Killer is emblematic of the proclivity of television movies shown this season to feature sexual abuse as the main premise of the film. While we recognize that this is an important social issue, worthy of negative exposure and condemnation, the abundance of films dealing with it and the highly stylized manner in which it is portrayed, detracts from the seriousness of the topic. This tends to cheapen the issue and diminish its impact by turning it into a convenient plot device. By intertwining the themes of sex and violence and depicting them both as acts of passion, such television movies take a very superficial and romanticized look at a much more serious and emotionally unsettling issue.

2. Other Titles Raising Concerns About Violence

In addition to the above listed titles, the following television movies and mini-series were found to raise concerns about the use of violence:

Bionic Ever After (CBS-11/29/94)
Donato & Daughter (CBS-4/26/95)
Dangerous Intention (CBS-1/3/95)
Deadlocked: Escape from Zone 14 (Fox-5/9/95)
A Killer Among Us (CBS-4/4/95)
Langoliers, Part II (ABC-5/14/95)
The Omen IV: The Awakening (Fox-9/20/94)
Return of Hunter (NBC-4/30/95)
Shadows of Desire (CBS-9/20/94)
Texas (ABC-4/17/95)
Texas Justice Part I (ABC-2/12/95)
Walker, Texas Ranger: Flashback (CBS-5/6/95)
Walker, Texas Ranger: Standoff (CBS-5/13/95)
Walker, Texas Ranger: War Zone (CBS-2/11/95)

3. Issues Raised by Made-for-Television Movies and Mini-series

Network Television Has More Control Over Made-for-Television Movies Than It Does Over Theatrical Films

Television movies are a format the networks control from their inception. They can decide whether or not to make the movie, they have script approval and they can include or remove offensive or gratuitous scenes. Theatrical film is a different medium with different types of content and is less accessible to young children and thus has a greater opportunity to feature more violent fare. While many violent theatricals aired on television need to be cut to meet the standards of that medium, they can not always be cut nor can their scenes be changed without significantly altering the film or damaging viewers' understanding. Examples include **Terminator 2**, **Under Siege**, **Die Hard 2** and **Total Recall**. This being the case, it is debatable whether the most violent theatrical films are at all appropriate for the broad medium of network television in whatever form. At the same time, network television has complete control over television movies and thus is entirely responsible for their content.

Lack of Advisories

Among the three traditional networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) advisories were used only twice during the entire season for television movies and mini-series. The only two programs that issued advisories were **Donato & Daughter** on CBS and **The Langoliers** on ABC. Our monitoring indicated that there was a clear need for more advisories. Many of the titles listed or described above contained themes of violence or contained very graphic or intense scenes. Many needed advisories.

The Fox network seems to have a different policy with regard to the use of advisories. This is undoubtedly due to the lack of a 10:00 network hour and the fact that all movies must begin at the earlier hour of 8:00. Fox is much more willing to use advisories and frequently runs them several times during a program to alert those who might have started watching after the beginning of the programming. All four of the Fox television movies that we felt raised concerns did use an advisory. This is twice as many advisories as the three other networks combined.

In the appendix of this report is a list of all the television movies and mini-series that we believe should have had advisories.

TV Movies Contain more Graphic Violence than Television Series

Perhaps in an effort to appear more like theatrical films, television movies and mini-series contain more graphic scenes of violence than television series. The topics of many television movies, such as murder, abuse or rape, lend themselves to more graphic violence. But, in addition, the producers opt to more graphically depict these crimes than they do in most series.

Examples of this graphic violence can be found in **Lady Killer, Scarlett, Deadlocked: Escape from Zone 14, Falling for You, The Omen IV** and **Avalanche**.

Violence is Sometimes the Theme of the Movie

In some instances, the entire premise of the television movie is based on an act of violence. A large percentage of the films in this genre are predicated upon some sort of criminally violent activity. The world of some television movies is a world of murderers, psychotics, rapists and abusers. Although violence can be a legitimate and frequently constructive story device when treated responsibly, we occasionally found ourselves asking why this particular violent subject was chosen as the subject of a MOW. Some might argue that violent acts such as the Jim Jones' People's Temple massacre in Guyana or the Texas Cheerleader Mom are so inherently fascinating and say so much about our society that they easily justify being made into television movies. However, some of the subjects we saw featured in television movies during the 1994-95 season seemed to have no relevance or significance and just seemed to be sensationalized stories of criminal acts.

One sometimes gets the impression that the people who make these movies are searching for the most abysmal and sordid crimes that can be found in the depths of the human experience. Seldom do these stories inspire or uplift. They are depressingly detailed accounts of the worst people in society in the worst possible situations. Examples of this include **Falling for You, Donato & Daughter, A Killer Among Friends, Gramps, Avalanche** and **Texas Justice**.

Heavy Doses of Sexual and Spousal Abuse

As mentioned earlier, television movies have gone through cycles. In the past many were based on important historical occurrences (**Holocaust, Winds of War**) or the disease of the week (**Brian's Song, The Boy in the Plastic Bubble**). During the past season, there seemed to be a large number of television movies dealing with sexual and spousal abuse. These films were filled with predators, sadistic actions, stalking and psychological terror. While we clearly recognize sexual and spousal abuse as important social concerns worthy of negative exposure and condemnation, the abundance of films dealing with it and their melodramatic style detract from the seriousness of the issue. This cheapens and dilutes the issue, diminishing its impact by turning it into a convenient plot device too readily exploited for its shock value. Examples of this include: **Dangerous Intentions, Lady Killer** and **Shadows of Desire**.

Ominous and Threatening Titles Promising Violence

A large number of made-for-television movies have ominous or threatening titles that imply the show will be violent, whether or not it actually is violent. Anyone reading a list of this season's television movies (see appendix) will immediately see that many of the titles are filled with words such as "dangerous," "killer" or "killing," "death," "deadly" and "fatal." This raises an interesting issue about the general philosophy of those who title these movies. It seems they do

not believe that they can capture viewers' attention without making the movie sound dangerous. Even creators of a new television movie based on the old **Bonanza** series evidently felt the **Bonanza** title alone was not enough to attract viewers and added "Under Attack" to the title. Interestingly, the same "Under Attack" was also added to another remake of a television series: *Simon and Simon*. Examples include the following: **Death in Small Doses, Escape from Terror, Lady Killer, Come Die with Me, Dangerous Intentions, Deadline for Murder, Fatal Vows, A Killer Among Friends, The Shadows of Evil, Simon and Simon: Under Attack, With Hostile Intent, Bonanza: Under Attack, Danger Island, A Friend to Die For, A Menu for Murder** and many more.

Misleading Titles

Ironically, while some films with violent titles were relatively non-violent, two of the most violent television movies of the season had seriously misleading titles promising innocent family fare. **Falling for You** and **Gramps** promised content very different from what was delivered. This is a particular problem given the fact that these shows lacked advisories. Had there been advisories, viewers would have learned that the misleadingly titled movies **Falling for You** and **Gramps** contained intense acts of violence. Starring likable celebrities Jenny Garth and Andy Griffith and lacking advisories, these stories appear to be about falling in love and a kindly old grandfather.

Television Movies from Violent or Action Prime Time Series

A growing number of this season's television movies were based on current or past television series featuring action or violence creating, in effect, a two-hour episode of that program. While this practice is hardly problematic in and of itself, these movies are only based upon violent action series. In many instances, especially the **Walker, Texas Ranger** movies, this becomes an opportunity to "turbocharge" an action show, present it as a special episode and include more scenes of heightened violence. Frequently the hero faces an even more sinister opponent than in the regular television series. Examples are as follows: **The Return of Hunter, Walker: Flashback, Walker: Standoff, Walker: War Zone, Bionic Ever After** and **Alien Nation**.

Is It Really Based on a True Story?

Many television movies proudly fly the banner of "Based on a True Story." They do not mention, however, that many of these stories are, at best, loosely based on true stories. These "true" stories always seem to be about the most shockingly horrific and depraved tales of the atrocities that people commit. Very seldom are these stories of triumph over adversity or heroic deeds. For every inspiring teacher or parent, there are tens of crazed killers, sociopathic personalities or malevolent villains. (The very ugly picture of the world that emerges brings to mind George Gerbner's "mean world" scenario.) Examples include: **A Killer Among Friends, Texas Justice** and **The Danger of Love**.

Time Slot Considerations

As discussed previously, the percentage of children in the audience is greater at 8:00 than at later hours. Therefore, movies with contextually appropriate violence, that might however be inappropriate for children, should be reserved for later airing. Almost all television movies air during the 9:00 hour, which is appropriate. The two exceptions are Fox's television movies and ABC's **Family Movie**, Saturday at 8:00. As explained earlier, Fox has no choice but to air its movies at 8:00. Its only alternative is to run them in two parts at 9:00 on two successive nights and that is impractical. Fox compensates for this somewhat by a liberal application of advisories. ABC's **Family Movie** runs mostly theatrical films which will be discussed in the next section. NBC did air **Gramps** at 8:00.

Slow Motion

The use of slow motion is obviously not exclusive to television movies. Its use has already been examined in television series. However, slow motion definitely finds its way into the genre of television movies where it raises the same issues as in series. Although directors would argue that it is an artistic device used to make the scene more dramatic, what it often does is just prolong and emphasize the violent act. Examples: **Lady Killer** and **Texas Part II**.

C. Theatrical Motion Pictures on Broadcast Network Television

While made-for-television movies were only introduced in the 1960s, theatrical films (films first released in movie theaters) have been an important and essential part of programming content since the 1950s. Most channels could not afford enough original content to fill a 24-hour schedule. Many went off the air around midnight but others filled their schedule with old motion pictures that had been sitting in studio vaults. Until television, motion picture studios had nothing to do with their films once they finished their run at the box office. Only a few films like **Gone with the Wind** or the Disney animation classics could be re-released every generation or so. Today, a studio can sell its films to cable, home video, airlines or television. But back in the 1950s television represented a real opportunity for studios to further distribute their products.

Theatrical films became an important part of television. They were high quality productions, the costs and risks of which had already been assumed by the studios. While a blockbuster film would be expensive to license on television, a network knew it was money well spent because the film had already proven itself with the audience. This was in direct contrast to expensive, unproven original television shows, the production costs of which were lost if they did not attract an audience. Theatrical films had already been made, represented substantially less risk and had an established reputation, making them popular with television programmers.

The situation began to change after the emergence of cable television in the 1970s. Until cable, a film would normally find its way to broadcast television about three years after it was released in

theaters. The big films would go first to prime time network television, then to prime time local television and eventually late night or afternoon on the local stations.

Starting in the 1970s, cable inserted itself between the theaters and networks in the distribution process. HBO began as a pay-cable service in 1972, dedicated to running theatrical films shortly after they were seen in theaters. Rather than having to wait several years, the pay cable audience could see films only months after they opened in theaters. Furthermore, as a pay service supported in its entirety by subscribers, HBO ran its recent films uncut and uninterrupted. All the sex, violence and language of the original could be seen on the home screen, and there were no commercial breaks to distract the flow of the story.

Pay cable was moved down the distribution chain when home video became a significant force. Pay cable was forced to take theatrical films after they were available for rental or purchase, but still acquired and aired them before they appeared on broadcast television. Subsequently, pay-per-view pushed cable down another notch. Today, the broadcast networks only get a theatrical after it has been seen in the theaters and on airlines, pay-per-view, home video and pay cable. There are very few exceptions. Last May, NBC ran Steven Spielberg's **Jurassic Park** less than two years after it was seen in theaters. NBC, by paying a substantial premium (allegedly \$60 million), was able to bypass pay cable in the distribution sequence. Obviously, they cannot pay those prices for more than a handful of films.

The fact that broadcast television gets a theatrical film so late in the distribution process means that when a big film comes to television (e.g., **Terminator 2**, **Lethal Weapon**) a substantial portion of the potential audience already has seen the film one or more times in the theater, on home video or on cable. By the time George Lucas's blockbuster **Star Wars** was scheduled on broadcast television, it had been seen by so many people in so many different media, that its television ratings were unimpressive. This would have been unthinkable 10 years earlier.

Theatrical films represent a real challenge for the broadcast networks that run them. Almost all other programming in their entire schedule is created by them or others who must work with them and adhere to their standards. With all other programs except theatrical films, the networks decide whether they get made, who makes them, how they are made and edited and what they look like. The networks apply their own standards to language, sexual scenes and violence. Those who create programming for television know these standards which affect all their decisions.

Theatrical film is a completely different medium with vastly different standards and First Amendment freedoms. The Miracle decision of 1952 clearly established that motion pictures are a significant medium for the communication of ideas and are, therefore, protected by the First Amendment. Television, with its use of the scarce electromagnetic spectrum, is subject to governmental regulation. There is no Federal Communication Commission for the movie industry. The film rating system is completely independent of the government and is administered by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) under the direction of Jack Valenti. Film is not subject to the indecency regulations applied to broadcasting which currently are being challenged in the courts. With few exceptions, film is free to make whatever type of content it wants.

In contrast to theatrical film, broadcast television shapes its original programming to the unique world of commercial television. Theatrical films shown on television have to be retrofitted to adapt to the standards of the much stricter television world. The broadcast practices and standards of the television industry are irrelevant to the production of a motion picture. But when the motion picture is scheduled for television, those standards must be applied after the fact rather than during the production process.

Television networks buy popular films filled with sex, violence and language issues and then have to redesign them for television. As we have come to realize in our monitoring of theatrical films this season, changing them for broadcast without destroying their artistic integrity is a significant challenge.

While the earlier sections of this report have detailed the concerns raised by television series and made-for-television movies, we believe that significant improvement has occurred in these areas. Once again, this is the programming over which the networks have complete control. In response to political and public criticisms and pressures of the past few years, there have been important changes in this network-controlled programming. Whether these developments have occurred because of a change of philosophy or because of simple fear is not the concern of this report. We simply recognize that change has occurred.

A large majority of the violence on broadcast television that raises concerns can be found in theatrical films. Unlike the other areas, there has been no improvement here. Possibly owing to the large number of violent films coming out of Hollywood, television theatricals are as big a problem as they have ever been.

Over the course of the 1994-95 television season, we monitored 118 theatrical films on the broadcast networks. (We examined many more in syndication and on cable and home video, which will be compared and discussed in later sections.) Of the 118 films examined, 50 were found to raise concerns about their use of violence. Much of the violence in series and television movies was only of concern because of its time period or because it was somewhat excessive. Theatrical films on television is where the “real” violence occurs. The number of violent scenes and the highly graphic nature of the violence is unlike anything else on television. Some films, which contain several scenes of violence, can be judiciously edited to air easily on television without concern. Many films, however, have so many scenes of violence that they could not possibly be edited enough to run on broadcast television without raising concerns.

In the remainder of this section, we will examine several theatrical films aired on the broadcast networks this past season that raised considerable concerns about violence. Then we will list the rest of the theatrical films which raised concerns and, finally, we will examine issues arising from theatrical films.

1. Some Theatrical Films That Raise Considerable Concerns

Under Siege (ABC-2/5/95)

Under Siege is typical of the action films that appeared on broadcast television (and cable) during the 1994-95 season. It is a film with a violent theme and constant violent action. Starring laconic action hero Steven Seagal, **Under Siege** is about a group of terrorists led by Tommy Lee Jones and Gary Busey who take over an aircraft carrier and threaten to use its nuclear weapons unless their demands are met. Seagal plays an undercover agent disguised as a cook who foils the terrorists' plot and saves the carrier and its missiles.

It is an excessively violent film. There are gruesome, detailed shootings and stabbings accompanied by other acts of mayhem, all of which are central to the plot. By the time the two bad guys meet their end the audience is delighted to see them suffer as they are brutally finished off.

The film contains over 50 scenes of violence, far more per hour than found in any series or television movie. The motion picture studio which produced **Under Siege** did not have to be concerned about the large number of violent acts because it was made for a theatrical audience and would be rated "R."

ABC did a noble job of trying to edit **Under Siege** for broadcast television. Scenes were pared down considerably, some of the worst acts were edited out and we believe some scenes were completely cut. But there was no way they could remove enough to make it free of concerns. There were far too many scenes which were central to the story. This film would not be understandable to its viewers, not to mention the fact that many Seagal fans would be disappointed by the lack of action, if most scenes were cut.

We know of no way that this film could be edited sufficiently so that it could run without raising concerns about violence. It did run with an advisory and began at 9:00 p.m.

Black Rain (CBS-3/27/95)

Black Rain stars Michael Douglas and Andy Garcia as two tough New York cops who have to deliver a gangster back to his home in Japan. He escapes and Douglas pursues him through Japan as we learn about Japanese crime syndicates and see a New York cop out of his element. The film began at 8:30 and 12 minutes later we see an extremely brutal scene where two men are killed, one of them by having his throat graphically slit--one of the darkest and most disturbing images of the entire season. While some of the action films, including the above mentioned **Under Siege**, have an exaggerated or overblown comic-book style with lots of action and heroes, **Black Rain** is filled with extremely ugly scenes of dark, mean and real violence.

Throughout the film, viewers see another stabbing, gun fights, fist fights and a very graphic scene where a character cut off his own finger. **Black Rain** ends in a huge gun battle with explosions and stabbings.

This too is a film that simply could not be edited sufficiently for broadcast television. Violence is inherent in the entire film as viewers watch American police use their methods against the equally brutal styles of Japanese police and gangsters. CBS did issue an advisory.

Ghost (CBS-10/23/94 and rerun 5/7/95)

This film is described earlier in the report. Unlike the action films, this is, at its core, a love story. Violence, while integral to the plot, is not the driving force of the film. It must begin with a scene of violence, Patrick Swayze's murder which turns him into a ghost. It also requires a final confrontational scene in which Swayze's wife, Demi Moore, is in danger. Swayze (as a ghost) saves her and defeats the man who arranged his murder.

It contains far fewer scenes of violence than the action films. Concerns arise out of the final confrontation. As mentioned earlier, after a prolonged fight, the bad guy falls onto a broken window sill where he is impaled by a large piece of glass. The close-up of the glass entering the body is edited, but viewers see the body with the glass protruding from his stomach for a full eight seconds. It is excessive and far too graphic. This is one of the theatricals that could have been edited without interfering with the integrity of the story. Even though it contained this very intense and bloody scene, it did not contain an advisory.

Gladiator (Fox-12/16/94)

This is a story about a teenager in Chicago who becomes involved in underground boxing. It is filled with the violence of the underground boxing world and crooked fight promoters. This is not just a boxing movie. It is about excessively violent boxing that is graphically portrayed. There are over two dozen boxing scenes filled with blood and gore. The scenes are prolonged and central to the entire story. It would be impossible to remove the scenes from the film and still have a story.

As with made-for-television movies, Fox begins its theatrical films at 8:00. Because of that, here too, they are very liberal with the use of advisories, and in this film, warnings ran three times.

The Last Boy Scout (ABC-11/20/94)

Bruce Willis plays a disgraced former government agent working as a cheap detective. He teams with ex-football player Damon Wayans to investigate corruption in professional football. Basic to the story are a large number of very intense scenes of glorified violence. The very violent Willis is shown to be cool and suave. This is underscored by co-star Wayans' admiration of his actions.

The Last Boy Scout, with over 30 scenes of violence, is excessive and graphic. This film, which contains football violence, raises an interesting issue. A case could be made that football is an American pastime and institution and therefore socially sanctioned. There is no question that, at its core, football is a violent game. But “real” football is televised live with no control over what will happen. A case can be made that either football should be protected from criticism or that it glorifies violence and should be condemned.

However, in a film about football all the scenes are scripted. A writer has to decide what will happen and a director has to decide how graphic it will be. These scenes are not real. Therefore, we held them to the exact standard of violence to which all other scenes in a film are held. A film which is primarily about football such as this season’s **Necessary Roughness** raises fewer concerns than the football scenes in **The Last Boy Scout** where in one moment on the field a player pulls out a gun and shoots another player.

Almost every scene in the film contains violence. Many were prolonged and ugly. This is yet another film that could not possibly be edited enough to air on television without raising concerns. The amount of violence is excessive and the glorification only aggravates it. ABC ran an advisory.

The Rookie (ABC-1/22/95)

ABC extended prime time until 11:30 to run this film. This is an unusual action that incurs the anger of affiliates. This film was heavily edited in another noble effort to make it fit the standards of broadcast television. Unfortunately, the effort was unsuccessful as it would be impossible to eliminate gratuitous scenes of violence from the film.

“Bad boy” Charlie Sheen plays a rich kid who becomes a rookie cop and is teamed with Clint Eastwood as his hardened, cynical partner. The movie is wall-to-wall violence, containing over 40 scenes. The violence here too is glorified as the viewer cheers when Eastwood commits acts of violence.

There are obvious signs of editing as the network tried to salvage the film. However, it is simply not possible to take the violence out of this film. ABC aired several advisories.

Marked for Death (CBS-12/13/94)

In another Steven Seagal film, the actor this time plays an ex-drug agent taking on Jamaican drug lords who have marked him and his family for death. Many of the scenes were very long and drawn out. It is a very typical action film distinguished only by a heightened level of violence. It contained fewer scenes than many of the films described above, but two of the scenes were particularly graphic and shocking.

Five minutes into the film, Seagal is buying illegal drugs in a Mexican brothel when a fight breaks out. The gory scene is filled with knives, guns, punches and kicking and it lasted a full two minutes as we saw many people shot. Far more graphic than the story warranted, the scene could have been edited without damaging the plot.

The second problematic scene occurs at the end and lasts for six minutes. It is a very long and continuously graphic finale which begins with one of the characters holding the severed head of a Jamaican drug lord. (Strangely, we see the decapitated head of another Jamaican drug lord in another film shown in local syndication, **Predator II**.) A long fight and chase ensue with Seagal chasing the bad guy who ultimately (after much intervening violence) is impaled by a long piece of metal on which he lands after being thrown down an elevator shaft. The camera lingers on this image.

Nothing could be done to edit this film sufficiently for broadcast television. It is filled with visual images of disturbing violence and constant action. It ran with two advisories.

Another 48 Hours (CBS-11/1/94)
Die Hard 2 (CBS-5/18/95)
Hard to Kill (NBC-4/23/95)
Lethal Weapon II (CBS-9/18/94)
Lethal Weapon III (ABC-11/13/94)
Out for Justice (NBC-1/16/95)
Passenger 57 (ABC-5/2/95)
Ricochet (NBC-1/8/95)
Tango and Cash (ABC-1/23/95)
Terminator 2 (ABC-10/23/94)
Total Recall (ABC-5/4/95)

These movies are grouped together because they continue to raise the same issues. All are big-budget Hollywood action films with big stars (Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson, Bruce Willis, Denzel Washington, Steven Seagal, Wesley Snipes, Eddie Murphy and Sylvester Stallone) in the lead roles. The only significant difference is that **Total Recall** and **Terminator 2** are futuristic action films while the others are contemporary action films.

They are all filled with many scenes of continuous violence. **Lethal Weapon III** contained 21 scenes, **Terminator 2** 29, **Total Recall** 35, **Ricochet** 27, **Tango and Cash** 30 and **Another 48 hours**, 27 scenes. Once again, a valiant effort was made so that these films might be suitable for television. **Terminator 2** alone must have occupied the efforts of film editors for months. There simply was nothing that could be done. The violence is everywhere and is what these films are all about.

These films continue the Hollywood trend of making violence exciting because it is committed by the hero. All of these films attempt to interject humor into the violence. After killing his wife who has been trying to kill him, Schwarzenegger exclaims, "Consider this a divorce."

Much of the violence is exciting and glamorous. All the films contained advisories.

Trespass (Fox-4/4/95)

The plot of **Trespass** is completely dependent on the use of violence. Indeed, if the violence had been cut it would have been a very short film. There were 35 scenes of violence.

The story revolved around a prolonged struggle between two firefighters who witnessed a murder and the men who committed it. Violence is what moves the story. Much of the violence was mean, dark and graphic.

The most disturbing scene of violence shows a drug user graphically about to shoot up with a hypodermic needle. He then uses the syringe as a weapon and stabs one of the firefighters in the neck. The film is filled with violence. No matter how much Fox edited **Trespass**, the constant barrage of violence could not be eliminated, only toned down. Adding to our concern is the fact that the film features popular rap artists Ice Cube and Ice-T, making it more likely to garner a large audience of young viewers. Like other Fox films, this one began at 8:00 and contained three advisories.

Home Alone (NBC-11/24/94)

Home Alone is one of the top five box-office films of all time. How can a children's film possibly raise concerns about violence? While many will argue that this is a cartoon-like kid's film filled with Christmas spirit and worthy of becoming a holiday tradition, a contextual examination of the violence tells another story.

Macauley Culkin plays a young boy, Kevin, accidentally left behind at home by his parents in their rush to prepare for a trip to Paris. Kevin lives every child's fantasy and nightmare: he is home alone. The first part of the film is indeed a kid's film as the young Kevin adapts to life on his own. We watch him use aftershave, not knowing it will burn, and try to convince a store clerk that he really is an adult and able to use a credit card.

Toward the end the film becomes violent. Two burglars try to break into Kevin's house. In order to foil the break-in, Kevin sets up elaborate schemes to stop the burglars. While these scenes are played for laughs, they are filled with extremely sadistic and mean-spirited acts of violence never

demonstrating consequences. In fact, Kevin is rewarded. Watching Kevin torture these burglars is really the appeal of the film.

Kevin's actions begin modestly as he shoots the intruders with a BB-gun. The violence progressively becomes more mean-spirited and vindictive throughout the movie. At one point he pours water on the stairs causing the burglars to slip and fall. When one of the robbers falls, a crowbar lands on his head. In another scene, an iron falls on one of the burglar's heads who then steps on a nail. The violence continues to escalate as Kevin rigs a blowtorch to burn the bad guys' heads. They continue to slip and fall throughout the movie, and in one scene, are hit in the

head with great force by paint cans. Later on, one gets stung by a tarantula and finally the old neighbor comes to the rescue and bangs the intruders on the head with a shovel.

Many will argue that this is a funny cartoon-like film that appeals to every child's fantasy. While we understand this, we hope it is not every child's fantasy to use his or her wit and intelligence to sadistically torture fellow human beings, even if they are robbers.

This is violence for the sake of violence. It is never intended to be realistic, but it sends the message that people getting hit in the head with a crowbar or burned by a blowtorch is funny, especially if it is the result of an ingenious booby trap. NBC ran **Home Alone** at 8:00 without an advisory.

Any Which Way You Can (ABC-3/11/95)

Ernest Scared Stupid (ABC-11/5/95)

Every Which Way But Loose (ABC-1/21/95)

Problem Child II (ABC-10/22/94)

None of the violence in these films compares in intensity or graphicness to the films already discussed. Most are fairly innocent with tame themes, in most cases appealing to children. Our only objection is that all four are lumped together by ABC as part of its **Family Movie** on Saturday nights.

While any 8:00 program is likely to attract children, an 8:00 "Family Movie" encourages them to watch. We believe that a "Family Movie" promises that the entire family can sit together and watch a story of family interest without any intrusions of sex, violence or language. What little level of violence one would expect to see would be very innocent and closer to a cartoon format.

These are primarily objectionable because they are presented as "Family Movies." They would not necessarily have registered on our scale without this label and its implicit promise.

Problem Child II (the sequel to this film which was a television movie is discussed in the previous section) is filled with malicious pranks which typically involve children. In one of the first scenes of violence in the film, Junior turns on the propane on a neighbor's barbecue which then explodes, sending the neighbor flying into the air. In a later scene a man storms into a restaurant to find his wife on a date with John Ritter. The man hits a waiter with a lead pipe. As the scene continues, the angry man hits Ritter over the head with the pipe. Ritter stands up and the man tries to hit him again. This time Ritter grabs the pipe and hits the man in the stomach. Then Ritter is punched to the ground by his date. Later we see an electrocution as Junior declares, "The wench must die." Further into the movie a character threatens Junior with a knife and tells him to go to his room. The film continues to be filled with people fighting, falling and being electrocuted,

Every Which Way But Loose and its sequel **Any Which Way You Can** are Clint Eastwood vehicles, very different from the Dirty Harry series. Featuring Eastwood with an orangutan, they are intended to be funny. They raise concerns because they are labeled as "Family Movies."

In both films, Eastwood plays a traveling street fighter. The movies center around violence. His sidekick Clyde, the orangutan, drinks alcohol and fights. In the first scene of **Any Which Way You Can**, Eastwood is fighting as the police cheer him on. In a subsequent comic scene, Clyde punches a biker causing him to fall and knock over a row of motorcycles. In a later scene, after breaking into a house, mobsters threaten Eastwood's mother and beat up his best friend. The film is filled with fights, many of them cheered by bystanders.

Ernest Scared Stupid contains 38 acts of violence. Although most of these are minor, concern was expressed because of the frequent involvement of children. The violence is continuous and, in one scene featuring a knife and numchuks, Ernest fights a monster. It is a relevant scene but surprisingly intense for a "Family Movie."

None of these films contain outrageous or graphic violence. They do contain intense violence. Our major concern surrounds their inclusion in the "Family Movie" category.

Bugsy (NBC-11/4/94)

Dances With Wolves (CBS-2/27/95)

Far and Away (ABC-3/13/95)

Dances with Wolves is Kevin Costner's Academy Award-winning film about the Old West. **Far and Away** is Ron Howard's story of Irish immigrants in America. **Bugsy** is Warren Beatty's portrayal of mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Malone, the man responsible for founding Las Vegas. These films, while containing brutal and graphic violence, must do so to accurately capture and realistically illustrate the historical eras and events they portray. Our only issue with these three films, particularly **Dances With Wolves**, is that their use of violence warrants an advisory.

2. Additional Theatrical Films That Raise Concerns

Aces: Iron Eagle III (Fox-3/14/95)

Alien 3 (Fox-11/22/94)

Batman Returns (NBC-2/21/95)

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Fox-2/14/95)

Cape Fear (NBC-3/5/95)

The Dead Pool (CBS-3/14/95)

Death Becomes Her (NBC-4/2/95)

Deceived (ABC-4/24/95)

The Hand that Rocks the Cradle (ABC-1/16/95)

Internal Affairs (CBS-9/13/94)

The Lawnmower Man (NBC-3/27/95)

Pacific Heights (CBS-4/25/95)

Patriot Games (ABC-1/10/95)

Point of No Return (Fox-5/16/95)

Poison Ivy (ABC-4/3/95)

Raising Cain (Fox-3/28/95)

Robin Hood (CBS-4/9/95)

Single White Female (Fox-3/22/95)
Suburban Commando (NBC-5/27/95)
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Fox-12/27/94)
Unlawful Entry (Fox-2/7/95)
Unforgiven (ABC-4/30/95)
White Sands (NBC-9/30/94)

3. Issues Arising out of Theatrical Films on Television

Some films are not suitable for broadcast television

Violence is so central to the theme and core of many films that no matter how much they are altered, they could never be made appropriate for broadcast television. An effective edit of some of the films described earlier would require the skill and precision of a highly trained surgeon. It would also leave them very short and without adequate context or a comprehensible storyline. Many of the films that fall into this category have already been described. The Steven Seagal and Jean-Claude Van Damme films are predicated on violence. This is what their fans pay for. There are dozens of violent scenes in each film and taking them out, if not impossible, would serve no purpose. They would be unrecognizable to those who know them and incomprehensible to those who do not.

Walker, Texas Ranger is a television series about violence. The violence is central to the theme like in the films above. However, since **Walker** is made for television, the violence, while still a concern, is far less intense and graphic than that of motion pictures. Retrofitting a film that was created for an entirely different medium is sometimes an impossible task. There is no series currently on television that raises concerns about violence to the same degree that theatrical films do. This is where the problematic violence is.

Some films such as **Dances with Wolves** simply need advisories. Others like **Patriot Games** need a little more editing. But there is nothing that can be done on broadcast network television with **Marked for Death** or **Trespass**. There is nothing that can be done to make these films suitable for broadcast television.

Some question the effect of editing on the artistic integrity of films. Although it reflects a network's attempt to responsibly air a program, we believe that many of these films are in need of further editing. Some films, however, contain so much violence that they cannot be edited sufficiently to air without concerns. **Silence of the Lambs** is a film with a very violent theme that could be edited and made appropriate for broadcast television because it contains only a few scenes of inappropriate violence that could be excised without seriously detracting from the basic storyline. The list of all theatrical films monitored (in the appendix) demonstrates that many very violent films in the theater could be acceptably modified for broadcast television.

The broadcast television networks recognize that some films can never be shown on their airwaves. That is why films such as **A Clockwork Orange**, **The Wild Bunch** or **Reservoir**

Dogs have never appeared. They know that violence is so central to these stories and the scenes so graphic and disturbing that no matter how responsibly they edited these films, they still could not be run without raising serious concerns. The violence in **A Clockwork Orange** is integral to the film's theme and message and is an important part of character development. The rape scene demonstrates how brutal Alex is and why society needs to stop him. The actual rape follows more than eight minutes of attempted rape and violence. As contextually appropriate as these scenes are to the film's whole, the sheer amount and graphicness of the violence make it impossible for a network to run this film, and none has.

We would never see a pornographic film such as **Deep Throat** on television because of the explicit sexuality. If a network editor tried to edit **Deep Throat** to remove the sex we would be left with a plot so confusing and weak that no one would watch it. The same point applies to many violence laden films. Violence is what they are about and they either have too many scenes to edit or, if edited, they would be shells of their former selves.

We are also unlikely to see **Natural Born Killers** or **Pulp Fiction** on broadcast television. The networks do accept the fact that they should not air some theatrical films. They have drawn a line about what does and what does not belong. In our view, the "what does not belong" side of the line should also include the action films with 30-50 scenes of non-stop violence.

Advisories need to be more regularly and effectively applied before and during theatricals

Advisories are used much more frequently for theatrical films than for made-for-television movies. Perhaps because theatrical films have MPAA ratings and are made by others, the networks are more willing to use advisories when airing them. Still, of the 50 theatrical films we felt raised concerns, 22 did not use advisories. As discussed previously advisories alone would have made a difference with **Dances with Wolves**, **Far and Away** and **Bugsy**. We can find no explanation for how films such as **Batman Returns**, **Ghost** and **Die Hard 2** could run without an advisory. They are far more violent than many films that did contain advisories.

Fox, because of its earlier starting time for films, uses advisories much more liberally than the other networks. Advisories are used consistently on Fox and are likely to be spoken or printed three times during the course of the movie.

A list of all the theatrical films and made-for-television movies that should have had advisories and did not is in the appendix.

Time periods raise important issues for theatrical films

The three older networks have a prime time lasting three hours six nights a week and four hours on Sunday. They can start a theatrical at 8:00 or 9:00. Some theatricals are longer than two hours and unless they can be extended with commercials (or additional footage) to four hours and broken into two parts, they usually run at 8:00.

Occasionally, the three older networks will extend prime time 15 or 30 minutes beyond 11:00 so as not to have to start the film before 9:00. This raises strong objections from affiliates who want to see their own advertising at 11:00 rather than the network's advertising. It is commendable when the networks extend prime time to accommodate difficult films. They did this 12 times this past season. Prime time was extended for the following films:

Cape Fear (NBC)
Death Becomes Her (NBC)
Ghost (CBS)
The Hand that Rocks the Cradle (ABC)
Lethal Weapon 3 (ABC)
Patriot Games (ABC)
Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (CBS)
The Rookie (ABC)
The Silence of the Lambs (CBS)
Terminator 2 (ABC)
Total Recall (ABC)
The Unforgiven (ABC)

On the whole, the three networks act responsibly by starting theatricals as late as possible. In only a few instances were films run at 8:00 or 8:30 when they should have been run later. The previously discussed **Black Rain**, which contained an extremely graphic image in the first 15 minutes, raised an additional concern because it started at 8:30.

As mentioned earlier, ABC bills its 8:00 Saturday night slot as the "Family Movie." This is one of the heaviest family viewing periods of the week. Almost all of these ABC movies are family-oriented and fit well into this slot. For that, ABC deserves praise. In reviewing all of the "Family Movies," we did, however, find several that were questionable (four out of over 20).

The biggest time slot issue concerns the Fox network. On one hand, Fox does routinely issue advisories. Yet on the other, it is forced into airing all these films at 8:00. Like the other networks, Fox runs theatrical films filled with violent themes and scenes. Many are of the type that may not be able to be sufficiently edited or made appropriate for television. Some of the films they run may not be able to fit at all on broadcast television. Running them at 8:00 raises special concerns. If the other broadcast networks are able to occasionally extend prime time to accommodate a film of concern, Fox should also on occasion be able to do this for its most difficult films. If and when Fox becomes a network with a 10:00 prime time hour, this concern will diminish. Until it does, Fox is under a special obligation to use the 8:00 period appropriately.

D. On-Air Promotions, Previews, Recaps, Teasers and Advertisements

At their core, on-air promotions, previews, recaps and teasers are all the same thing: advertisements. Unlike conventional advertisements that sell a product not associated with the show, promos are ads for the shows themselves. These are the “ads” aired between and during shows that highlight upcoming shows appearing later that night or week. Although this section deals with all of the above, we will frequently use the term “promos” to deal with any material promoting the network’s own programming. Occasionally, it will be necessary to make distinctions between types of promos. Therefore we define them as follows:

On-air promotions are the network’s television ads for their own programming. These are to be distinguished from other promotions such as a tie-in between the network’s fall schedule and a department store.

Previews are like movie trailers. They are scenes at the end of a show previewing the highlights of next week’s episode. Their purpose is to get the viewer to tune in next time.

Recaps are scenes shown at the beginning of a program from the previous episode or episodes. They remind the viewer of what he or she has seen before or fill in the new viewer on what he or she may have missed. An example of this is “Previously on **Chicago Hope...**”

Teasers are short clips making promises about what is to be seen. They are usually at the beginning of a show or movie and are designed to entice the undecided viewer to watch. Some shows also use teasers just before a commercial in the middle of show to make sure the viewer returns to the show after the commercial.

Promos are a very high priority for the broadcast networks. The mission of the promotion department is to highlight and sell the product of the network. More than reading television guides or anything else, viewers use promotions to determine whether to watch a series and especially a television or theatrical movie. Viewers first learn of the story line, a guest star appearance on a series or the theme of a television movie from promotions. They are also used to expose viewers to programs they might not normally watch.

During the summer, the networks spend enormous amounts of money to introduce the public to their new shows for the upcoming season. In the new season, viewers will be bombarded with up to 50 new shows on all the networks, and it is the job of each promotion department to make sure viewers notice its network’s shows. Frequently using a slogan or theme song, each network develops a theme to introduce its fall shows. ABC’s “We’re still the one” song, slogan and campaign from several years ago is one of the best known of these themes. Similarly, NBC used “NB see us” to promote its schedule.

Blockbuster events which attract large audiences are especially desirable because promos can be used during their airing to sell the schedule. Traditionally, one of the major advantages of bidding successfully for the summer Olympics is that there are so many hours available at exactly the right place in the summer to promote the new fall schedule. Promotions also tell

viewers a great deal about the network's priorities including what the networks view as special or important.

From the beginning, evaluating promotions was an important part of the monitoring process. Many television writers and producers complain that they carefully craft their shows to deal with violence responsibly and then are shocked to see a promotion eliminate all the context and only feature the violence. We examined several thousand promotions. Later in the year, we made site visits to three of the four networks to meet with people involved in making promotions so that we might better understand the process.

Promotions raise serious concerns, particularly because they feature violence out of context. It is almost impossible for promotions to provide sufficient context for any violence that does occur. By definition, promotions feature only a small highlight of the upcoming program. Violence, as well as sex, is almost always featured as the highlight.

Violence is used in many ways in promos as a hook to draw viewers into the program. Viewers see violence in the promos encouraging them to watch. They then see violence in the preview at the beginning of the show. During the show, commercials often interrupt violent scenes or occur just as violence is about to erupt to ensure that viewers will continue watching. All of these promotional efforts demonstrate that networks think that rather than alienating viewers, violence attracts them to the program.

Violence is a prominent promotional device. In some instances, violence can live a long promotional life. In the 11/16/94 episode of **Models, Inc.**, viewers saw a rape in the preview for next week's show. During the week between the shows, they saw on-air promotions featuring the rape. On 11/23, viewers saw the episode with the actual rape. Then in the recaps of the 11/30, 12/14 and 12/21 episodes, we saw the rape again.

There are logical reasons why so many promotions feature scenes of violence. Promos have only a very short time to show something interesting enough to attract the viewer. Most promos contain several scenes thus complicating efforts to explain the plot in 10 or 20 seconds. With so little time, the easiest things to feature are those that require little explanation: violence and sex. Viewers may need context to know why the violence is occurring, but they need little or no context to know that a show will contain action, guns or fistfights. Even promotions for situation comedies feature what little "action" may actually be in the show. Many jokes need a longer set up or explanation than is possible in a promo, contributing to the tendency for promos to feature a scene of comedic violence (or a sexual reference).

Some promotions do not even make a pretense of context. **Walker, Texas Ranger** knows that its fans are not watching because of the particular story that week, but because of the certainty that Chuck Norris will get into a fight. This point was made clear in a promo for **Walker** aired during **Hearts Afire** on 9/24/94. The promo features Chuck Norris from the waist up doing nothing more than throwing punches. Nothing in the ad mentions anything about the show and the promo is not episode specific. We see no one but Norris and there is absolutely no context. In many ways it was an honest promotion because it highlights exactly what the show is about: fighting.

Promotions have an obligation to tell the viewer what the show is about. One would expect violent programs or movies to show some violence in their promotions. Many theatrical film promos do this and, on many occasions, the network includes an advisory in the promo.

Many shows that use violence minimally and in an appropriate context end up showcasing the violence decontextualized in the promos. This is a serious concern for several reasons. First, the viewers get a mistaken impression of the show. They may believe there is much action and then become disappointed when they find only two or three minimal scenes spread through the course of the story. Sometimes a promo for a show such as **Law and Order**, a program which would not appeal to fans looking for fights, guns and mayhem, features what little violence there is in an effort to attract these action fans. Furthermore, violent promos frequently are run during programs geared for children or on completely non-violent shows. Even shows that are virtually free of violence are promoted utilizing the merest suggestion of violence that can be gleaned from the program. Clearly, someone is scanning these virtually non-violent shows for anything that could possibly be construed as “action.”

Some of the most compressed and decontextualized violence on television appears in commercials promoting theatrical films opening in the theater. A trailer seen before a film in the theater may last up to three minutes and, while it too features many of the scenes of action and violence, it has sufficient opportunity to give viewers the gist of the story. A 30-second ad for a film, however, has substantially less opportunity to tell the story and has a tendency to only feature the violence. There are numerous examples of this which will be detailed below.

In our examination of the issue of television violence, we found promotions to raise very serious concerns. They contain some of the most compressed and intense scenes of violence on television. Because they are short, promotions usually can not provide much context for the violent acts. Promos may also be one of the easier issues in the world of television violence for the networks to correct.

Issues Arising from Promotions, Previews, Recaps, Teasers and Advertisements

1) Promos Feature Violence Out of Context

As has been discussed, it is very difficult to incorporate context into a promotion. The goal of a promo is to grab the potential viewer's attention. However, revealing the story line takes a great deal of time and is seldom the most attention-grabbing feature of the show. What grabs viewers' immediate interest are scenes of exciting action, many of which are violent: car crashes, chases, fist fights and explosions.

Whenever a promotion does tell the story of a show or movie it has to be careful not to tell too much or give away the ending. This is difficult to accomplish. To create a promo with just the right amount of context takes great time and precision. It is far easier and more reliable to just feature two or three scenes of action.

The constant barrage of action seen in promo after promo raises concern. A viewer watching for an entire evening is typically bombarded with many more problematic scenes of violence in the advertisements and promotions than in the programs themselves. This bombardment usually contains only the violence and none of the important contextual elements such as consequences or punishment of the violence.

Some of the best examples of this problem can be found in advertisements for theatrical films about to be released. Many of the most popular and expensive theatrical films feature action and adventure. Many of them contain a large number of very graphic violent scenes that are part of the basic story. When these films appear on television sometime in the future, many of these scenes of intense violence will be edited out. The network faces the challenge of airing promotions for films in movie theaters that contain scenes of violence that would not be allowed in regular network programming. Some of the most talked about films of the past year fall into this category: **The Specialist**, **Batman Forever**, **Die Hard 3**, **Judge Dredd**, **Waterworld**, **Braveheart**, **Rob Roy** and **First Knight**, to name just a few.

Some promotions illustrating lack of context:

The Specialist (aired during NBC's **Madman of the People** 10/6/94)

This promo is a very violent advertisement for the film. The only information the announcer reveals is that the film stars Sylvester Stallone, Sharon Stone and James Woods. The ad features a man falling out of a window with a gun in his hand, a building exploding, James Woods pointing a gun (as he says, "You lose, I win"), a picture of a detonator beeping and another large explosion. The only other information given is the date that the film opens. All of this fits into about 15 seconds. There is absolutely no context. The message of the promo is that the film contains big-name stars and much violence. This is a good example of a recurring type of short promo which features heavy violence with absolutely no sense of the story. Even fans of action films are unable to discern who is the good or bad guy or what the story is about.

Walker: War Zone (aired during CBS's **Due South** 2/9/95)

This report has already discussed one promotion for the series **Walker, Texas Ranger** which features nothing more than Chuck Norris throwing punches. This is a promotion for one of the several **Walker** two-hour movies that ran during the year. It begins with enormous letters on the screen and a voice-over telling viewers that **Walker: War Zone** is an "Action Thriller, not in theaters and not on home video." Behind the block letters we see explosions, fires, a car crash, **Walker** fighting (kicking) and a shot of Walker with a gun. The only message is that this two-hour **Walker** will contain an escalated level of violence, even more than what is shown in the weekly series. This is a 10-second promo. While it does not have time to explain the story of this special Walker, it does cram in six scenes of intense violence.

The Dead Pool (aired during CBS's Tuesday movie 3/7/95)

This is a promotion for the theatrical **The Dead Pool** which ran on CBS. Ironically, it airs during the movie **Boyz 'N the Hood**, a very violent but contextually appropriate film that illustrates the senselessness of urban crime and gangs. Although containing much violence, **Boyz 'N the Hood** is really an anti-violence film. **Boyz 'N the Hood** is a serious piece of social commentary which is inappropriately juxtaposed with **The Dead Pool** promo which features glorified acts of decontextualized violence. The promo begins with a car flying at full speed over a hill, a man reacting in terror, several blazing machine guns shattering a glass elevator, a fight scene with one man kicking the other in the face, Clint Eastwood chasing someone with a gun, a car bombing, Liam Neeson with a gun, two men engulfed in flames, another car chase and Eastwood pointing a harpoon. Then, rather superfluously, the promo mentions that "Due to some violent content, parental discretion is advised." This coupling of contradictory messages diminishes and detracts from the impact of the prosocial message in **Boyz 'N the Hood**.

Avalanche (aired during Fox's **Alien Nation** 10/25/94)

This promo contains just about every violent scene from the television movie **Avalanche**. Viewers see in succession the avalanche, furniture breaking apart and landing on terrified people, David Hasselhoff violently grabbing the daughter, Hasselhoff with a gun, someone falling down a mountain, the daughter opening a door and seeing the bloodied and frozen hand of a dead body, another avalanche with more injured and terrified people, Hasselhoff with a large shard of glass protruding from his abdomen, and the father threatening the wounded Hasselhoff with a metal stake while the daughter encourages her father to kill him, screaming, "Do it, do it, kill him." Although the promo does reveal that there is an avalanche, the real message is that this is a two-hour television movie filled with terror and violence. The promo uses almost every scene of violence to make the point.

Melrose Place (aired on Fox)

This promo ran on Fox's owned and operated station in Los Angeles on 1/15/95 during the hour preceding a special two-hour episode of **Melrose Place** which aired at 8:00. It was produced by the network and similar ads ran on Fox the week before. The promo contains the following clips in succession: Amanda being grabbed and stabbed with a hypodermic needle, Amanda on the operating table while Peter screams to Michael to "cut her open, doctor, that's an order," a close-up of a scalpel about to cut Amanda, Jo punching Kimberly in the hospital hallway, and Jo being shot by a man holding a rifle and falling in slow motion as Jake screams in horror. Fans of **Melrose Place**, recognizing the story lines, will be able to understand the context surrounding the violence in the promo. However, viewers who do not watch the show will only see a constant barrage of violent scenes strung together without context.

Mantis and The X-Files (aired during Fox's **Melrose Place** 1/23/95)

This is a 30-second ad promoting **Mantis** and **The X-Files**. The first segment features a high-voltage killer who can travel through electrical wires. A woman reacts in fear as a television set blows up and sparks fly everywhere, Mantis shoots a ray gun at an unseen foe and the killer electrocutes a man with shock waves from his eyes. **The X-Files** segment begins with Mulder examining a dead body under a sheet as a police officer tells him the eyes and heart have been cut out. It continues with a series of eerie and unsettling images: several people uttering blood-curdling screams, someone swinging what appears to be a weapon and a woman holding a knife at head level with both hands and thrusting down into what we believe is a person on the ground. It is almost impossible to discern from either segment, especially the one from **The X-Files**, what the story is about. Instead, we are only left with a promise of violence.

2) Violent Promos in Children's or Other Inappropriate Time Periods

It is not uncommon to see promotions or advertisements featuring violence during shows or time periods aimed at children. These promos are run on shows that rarely contain any scenes of violence. A family might sit together in front of the television watching such family-oriented programming as **The Mommies**, **The Nanny**, **Rescue 911** or the **ABC Family Movie** and, without warning, be confronted with violent promos. These families might have carefully screened the television guide or used their own viewing experience to select a program that does not contain violence. With few exceptions, the shows live up to the promise of family entertainment. But there is no way the viewer can protect him or herself from promotions or advertisements frequently containing intense scenes of violence.

One might expect to see more graphic or violent promos on shows that contain violence. A network could reasonably expect that these viewers are more tolerant or accepting of these kinds of depictions. But a promo portraying violent scenes that is aired in the middle of a completely non-violent show raises a particular issue of concern. Some examples:

Earth2 and **SeaQuest** (aired during NBC's **The Mommies** 1/21/95)

The **Earth2** promo begins with the image of a man holding a large weapon. The announcer tells viewers that the man is a ZED and that ZEDs are super-soldiers genetically engineered to kill. Next viewers see the ZED fiercely holding a man by the throat. It is followed by a clip of an explosion. The **SeaQuest** promo shows a man hanging out of a car firing a machine gun and a car exploding into flames. Both of these were aired during a family show, **The Mommies**.

America's Most Wanted (aired during **America's Most Wanted** 10/29/94)

On October 29, **America's Most Wanted** devoted a show to Halloween and provided tips to children about dealing with Halloween hazards. By gearing an episode to children two nights before Halloween, the show was serving an important function. The issue of concern arises at the end of the show when a preview of the following week's episode is aired. The preview begins with the announcer describing a "birthday party that turns into a battleground." In the video of a child's birthday party there is the sound of rapid gunfire. The terrified children, still in their party hats, jump under tables for cover. There is a close-up of a man with an assault weapon. The viewer learns that a gang war has erupted as men run through the party shooting semi-automatic weapons. Birthday presents are shot and a bullet hits a bowl of red punch causing it to explode upward like blood. Then a 7-year-old girl is shot in the back. Her mother grabs and hugs her, terrified that she is dead.

This preview, airing at the end of a show offering Halloween tips to children, raises serious concerns. Children watching the show might be upset and traumatized by the terror of the birthday party video. If the birthday party episode aired on a different week, this preview would not have had to air on the Halloween show specifically geared to children.

SeaQuest (aired during **Earth2** 12/4/94)

Another violent promo for **SeaQuest** ran during **Earth2** Sunday at 7:30. The promo features a "gentle giant" of a man who seems to be unable to stop himself from committing acts of violence. Viewers learn that he has a brain but not a heart and that he is about to snap. While screaming he pounds his fist through a wall. In a very intense scene he fights with a man and throws him violently against the wall. Then viewers see the giant in silhouette holding a large weapon with both hands and bringing it down on someone or something. It is a chilling scene. The Captain of the **SeaQuest** says to "use whatever force is necessary." Viewers then immediately see gunshots from a car which careens out of control and crashes.

All of this occurs during a show that NBC clearly designates for children. It is as violent as any theatrical film ad. It is a short, intense promo filled with violence and likely to scare many children watching.

Streetfighter (aired during NBC's **Blossom** 12/19/94)

Streetfighter is a Jean-Claude Van Damme film that is rated PG-13. Almost all the acts of violence must be in this advertisement. NBC ran it at 8:30 during **Blossom**, one of the least violent shows on television and one that appeals heavily to adolescents. The ad begins with Van Damme doing a flying kick through the air attacking an unseen foe. Then there is a massive explosion and many people are seen running. Van Damme swings on a rope like Tarzan and then two armies are seen facing each other. Van Damme is shown in a fight using his martial arts skills and then another large explosion which sends a man flying through the air. There is another fight scene ending with Van Damme about to kick someone and the promo concludes with a final explosion.

Promotions during the ABC Family Movie

As discussed earlier, ABC has set aside the Saturday at 8:00 time slot for its **Family Movie**. With the exception of the few movies that may be inappropriate for this slot (see the previous section), the **Family Movie** does provide a time period in which the entire family can watch together. However, on several occasions there have been violent promotions with guns and explosions run during the **Family Movie**. These promotions have not been placed by the network, however. They are placed by the local station for its 11:30 movie. In this case the local station, KABC, is owned by ABC.

On 11/5/94 there is an ad for the violent film **Highlander II** during the family movie, **Ernest Scared Stupid**. On 10/8/94, during the family movie **Summertime Switch**, a short promotion for the 11:30 movie **Maximum Force** features only guns, shooting and explosions. Instances such as this happened throughout the season.

The problem of affiliates or local-owned stations running the network's more action-filled promos during inappropriate time periods will be discussed later in this section.

3) Violent (or Action) Promotions Used for Typically Non-Violent Shows

An interesting phenomenon in the realm of promotions is when a non-violent show manages to produce a promotion containing violence, or at least action. Most television series contain little violence and many of those that do feature violent scenes do so in a contextually appropriate manner. These shows, influenced and approved by the networks' departments of practices and standards, generally make it on the air without any problems or concerns.

Someone in the promotions process reviews these shows, managing to find the one moment or instant that contains some action. In a drama, this may mean a gun that is drawn but never used. In a comedy, it usually means violence played for laughs such as someone getting punched or falling down. Inevitably, this one scene will make its way into the promo. Devoid of context, the scene raises issues of concern. Even the most innocent shows on network television occasionally result in promos that lack context and have a different feel than the shows themselves.

These promos are of less concern than those of theatrical films or action shows. But it is important to note that someone culls through the material of situation comedies and looks for the most violent scene. Some examples:

NBC's Thursday comedy lineup (aired 12/10/94 during **It's a Wonderful Life**)

It would be difficult to find a less violent lineup of shows than NBC's Thursday night programs. Our monitoring consistently showed that **Mad About You**, **Friends**, **Seinfeld** and **Madman of the People** never raise concerns about the use of violence. Most of the shows are completely free of violence.

Yet, somehow NBC managed to put together four promos of these shows and three of the four featured aggressive acts or accidents. These acts did not raise serious concerns, but it is not a coincidence that the one scene from each that could be construed as aggressive or injurious ended up in the promo. Compared to other promos on television, these clips are of minor concern. What is of concern, is the emphasis placed on finding the one violent scene.

The four-show promo opens with **Mad About You**. In succession, the viewer sees Paul Reiser aggressively poked in the chest by a man in a wheelchair, hit hard on the upper torso by an older woman with her purse and punched by the man in the wheelchair so hard he reels back. The **Friends** segment is the only one of the four that contains no violent action. In the **Seinfeld** segment Kramer, playing Santa, falls off his chair when a little boy jumps as hard as he can on Santa's lap. The **Madman of the People** segment shows someone decorating a Christmas tree which then topples, dragging him to the floor.

It is important not to exaggerate the significance of the violence in these clips. But the fact that these promos contain any violence at all is significant, reflecting a priority of programmers.

Picket Fences (aired during CBS's Miss Universe Pageant 5/12/95)

Picket Fences is a show that rarely features violence. When it does contain violence, the violence is never graphic, is appropriate within the story and never raises concerns. The promos however, feature scenes of decontextualized action and weapons. The promo features an assault weapon being shot followed by pictures of some of the citizens of Rome, Wisconsin, one of whom, it is revealed, will soon die. In the last clip the viewer sees a multiple gunshot wound victim on a gurney in the emergency ward of a hospital.

Home Improvement (aired during ABC's **Sunday Night Movie**)

Home Improvement is another of the least violent shows on television. Tim Allen plays Tim Taylor, the host of a cable television home repair show and the least likely person on Earth to be able to fix anything. Part of the comedy is watching Allen try to repair something in his shop and instead accidentally blow it up. Viewers usually see these scenes once or twice in a show.

The promo on 4/9/95 for the “Greatest Hits” episode, however, was full of only these images. The first clip shows Allen on a tractor run amok destroying a tool table. Then a steel girder falls on a car, Allen puts his hand in the bulb socket of a lamp and is electrocuted, he is hit in the face with the television camera from his show, a guest is hit in the face with a large piece of wood and another piece of wood falls on Allen’s foot.

Once again, these scenes are of little concern compared to others discussed earlier. They are all part of **Home Improvement’s** “Greatest Hits.” It is important to note that when an editor puts together the highlights of the show for a greatest hits episode, all the clips feature someone getting hit in the face or some accident. Not portrayed in the promo were the other important dimensions of the show which include Allen’s family relationships, one of the most equal marriages on television and Allen’s three sons who constantly raise important issues of family life.

4) The Problem Regarding Affiliates

The four broadcast television networks all have promotion departments that prepare an enormous amount of material to advertise their programming. Not all of the promotional material ends up airing during network-controlled time. The network also sends promotions for its programming to the local affiliates. A network is comprised of several local stations that the network owns (in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago, all the network stations are owned by the network) and approximately 195 independent stations that affiliate with the network.

During the time they control, the networks set their own practices and standards for what promos can appear at what times and on what shows. The affiliates, however, are given a small amount of prime time by the networks to advertise and promote their own shows and much more time in other parts of the day to do the same. Many times it is the affiliate that will schedule a violent promo in a non-violent time slot. When this is done it is impossible for the average viewer to discern whether it was the network or the local station that made the decision.

Networks frequently get blamed for the decisions of the affiliates. Few viewers can tell the difference and, in the larger scheme of things, to most of them it does not make a difference. It is the affiliates who schedule some of the promos just as it is the affiliates who schedule adult talk shows during after-school hours. It is much easier to control something when only four large corporations are responsible. However, when the responsibility is spread over hundreds of large and small stations, the ability to take corrective action is much more difficult.

Since it is the networks that are being held responsible for the promo scheduling of the affiliates, it is in their best interest to deal with this problem. Each Spring, the affiliates come to Los Angeles to discuss successes and problems of the networks and to preview the fall programming. This issue of scheduling network promotions is an important concern and should be addressed at the next affiliate meetings.

5) Prosocial Promotions

The television networks frequently run spots talking about alternatives to violence. NBC has run its “The more you know” for several years, and Fox has been running its “Under the helmet” spots.

There is no clear evidence that these spots are effective. But, more importantly, there is no clear evidence that they are not. They are expensive to produce and replace network time that could be sold to advertisers. They are not the solutions to the problem of violence on television, but they do perform an important public service. Their presence should not take the heat off the networks on the issue of violence. But the networks should be commended for these campaigns.

E. Children’s Television on the Broadcast Networks

One of the problems in television is that children may watch any program at any hour of the day including those programs aimed exclusively at adults. There is evidence that far more children than many people realize are watching television at 9:00 or even 10:00 at night. Even though this is probably true, because of the lateness of the hours, broadcast networks have some right to consider them primarily the province of adults.

This section deals with the television that is created especially for children: Saturday morning. In the earliest days of television, a tradition establishing Saturday morning for kids and Sunday morning for religion began. Just as many kids get up early on Sunday morning, but that television time was generally reserved for religious programs.

The earliest hours of Saturday morning television belong to the youngest children. The shows that begin around 7:00 a.m. appeal to 4-6 year olds. Around 9:00, the schedule changes to accommodate the youngest viewer’s older brothers and sisters. This is when the more action-oriented shows are broadcast. In the last year, NBC devoted its Saturday morning schedule (after news) to live-action programming for teenagers, as did Fox at 11:30.

Children’s television has long been controversial. To combat what she felt was over-commercialization and poor programming aimed at children, Peggy Charren formed Action for Children’s Television (ACT). Her goal was never to take anything off the television airwaves, but to offer more good shows. Heeding the challenge, public television filled what it saw as a vacuum in the area of children’s programming, particularly programming for very young children. **Sesame Street**, **The Electric Company** and **Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood** became staples of many children’s daily morning routine.

In 1990, Congress passed the Children’s Television Act, which promised to ensure that there would be quality programming for children. The act’s passage prompted Charren to pass her mantle to The Center for Media Education, which continues to advocate for children. Unfortunately, many stations interpreted educational programming differently than the sponsors of the legislation, and today, children’s television is as controversial as ever.

In 1995, Saturday morning children's television is dominated by the new player, The Fox Network. Entering children's programming in 1990, the ratings of The Fox Children's Network exceed that of all the other networks combined. NBC has gone out of the business of creating Saturday programming for young children. It runs **The Today Show** followed by the teen-oriented, live-action programs **Saved By the Bell** and **California Dreams**. ABC has arranged for the new studio, Dreamworks SKG (Founded by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen) to supply future Saturday programming.

There has also been much discussion in the 1990s about the effects of Saturday programming on children. While the attention focuses on everything from sex and gender roles to commercialization, the most vocal concern has been about the effect of violence in children's programming. One show in particular, **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers**, has been singled out by some as an example of violent children's programming that kids emulate. Although Fox argues that the Rangers are no different than other Saturday morning program, they have become a lightning rod for much attention and criticism.

We monitored children's television programs exactly the same way we examined prime time television. Every show was watched a minimum of four times. Children's television, far more quickly than prime time fare, fits into a formula. Many prime time shows are more variable in their content, sometimes interweaving comedy, drama and violence. These shows have to be monitored a large number of times to get a handle on them. Children's programs, on the other hand, tend to repeat the same themes and patterns each week. Children seem to be more comfortable with and desirous of repetition, familiarity and predictability. Many parents note their children can watch the same animated movie on video tape over and over again.

After examining the networks' Saturday morning schedule, we developed categories for the various types of violence in the shows. A reminder: NBC does not broadcast for kids on Saturday morning and its teenage programming raises no concerns in the area of violence. Our three classifications of violence in Saturday morning programming are:

1) Slapstick

This is the slapstick comedic violence that has been watched by children in television and movies for generations. Typified by the classic Warner Bros. cartoons such as Bugs Bunny or Wile E. Coyote and Roadrunner, this type of violence is lighthearted and hyperbolic with comedy as the main theme and purpose. It is never realistic with regard to the violent actions themselves or the consequences. This genre of violence, while occasionally mean-spirited, is not designed to be taken seriously by viewers, no matter what age. Examples of cartoons that feature this type of violence are:

Addams Family (ABC)

Animaniacs (Fox)

Beethoven (CBS)

The Bugs and Tweety Show (ABC)

Bump in the Night (ABC)
Cro (ABC)
The Cryptkeeper (ABC)
Fudge (ABC)
Garfield and Friends (CBS)
The Little Mermaid (CBS)

Most of this is programming for the youngest children. Although **The Cryptkeeper** is based on the violent **Tales From the Crypt**, it is animated, uses a very different tone from the original and raises very few issues of concern. Likewise, **Addams Family** is much tamer and less spooky than the television series and movies.

2) Tame Combat Violence

This type of violence is typical of adventure/comedy cartoons in which the violence usually stems from a battle between good and evil and serves as the climax or wrap-up of the show. Also included in this category are somewhat threatening chase scenes that seldom result in harm, even comedic harm. While the tame combat violence is sometimes central to the program's resolution, it is never the crux or focus of the story and typically entails a fairly quick and innocuous fight rather than a scene drawn out for the purposes of action. Everything about this tame violence is minimized. Examples of these shows are:

Aladdin (CBS)
Dog City (Fox)
Free Willy (ABC)
Reboot (ABC)
Sonic the Hedgehog (ABC)
Spiderman (Fox)
The Tick (Fox)

3) Sinister Combat Violence

These are the programs that raise the greatest concerns with regard to the treatment of violence. This form of cartoon violence is characteristic of action-oriented programs that are combat driven. Fighting is the main attraction or purpose of the program and the plot only provides justification for the combat. While this is not a new genre in Saturday morning programming, the dark overtones and unrelenting combat in these shows constitute a fairly recent trend which appears to be on the rise. This is where mean, vindictive violence occurs with little to counter the message that violence is an appropriate solution to a problem. The warriors are often portrayed heroically and their actions glorified.

Sinister combat violence shows are similar to tame combat violence shows in that they always contain a battle scene between the forces of good and evil. Nevertheless, sinister combat violence shows are far more mean-spirited and typically have a considerably more exciting feel to them

provided by, among other things, a driving, rock music background. The heroes or “good guys” in these programs are valued for their toughness rather than their virtues, such as sense of humor or kindness, and are made “cool” by their warrior status and ability to destroy enemies. Violent behavior is always the defining element of these characters. These shows also draw out the violent scenes much longer than necessary and feature much more hand-to-hand combat and more lethal forms of violence than the tame combat shows. In these programs, the focus is on the battle scenes which take up a large portion of the show.

While all of the above types of violence may raise some concerns depending on the particular program and the age of the child, it is our contention that sinister combat violence raises the most serious and immediate concerns. It is violence for the sake of violence. It rarely couches the violent acts in any suitable context. The message is: fight. For this first report on television violence we feel that it is appropriate to concentrate on this newer and darker form of violence. While we intensely examined all types of Saturday morning violence, this is where we focused our greatest effort because we believe it to be the most serious and disturbing type of violence. We do not mean to downplay the significance of the other types of violence, which we will continue to monitor and follow closely.

We found seven Saturday morning programs that fell into the category of sinister combat violence. They are as follows:

Batman and Robin (Fox)

A new and much darker version of the adventures of the Caped Crusader and Boy Wonder began three years ago. Originally for the weekday afternoon cartoon line-up, this program is reminiscent of the “Dark Knight” series of comic books which reestablished Batman as a major comic book hero. It also follows the Warner Bros. Batman movies which abandoned the satire of the 1960s television series for the moral ambiguity of Batman’s earlier days. Both the mood and lighting of **Batman and Robin** are dark. The stories always revolve around the dynamic duo’s thwarting of various super villains and other forces of evil, but with a substantially more mean-spirited and vicious perspective than the older live-action television series.

In this cartoon, Batman and Robin show their darker side as vigilantes rather than serving as custodians of the law. In one scene, a criminal is dangling on a girder hundreds of feet off the ground. Batman could save him, but because he refuses to cooperate, the Caped Crusader walks away, leaving the man to fall to a certain death. The criminal protests that the police would not leave him dangling and Batman replies, “We’re not the police.”

The fight scenes are prolonged and contain realistic weapons such as guns, pipes and Batman’s fists. The violence is vindictive. Batman and Robin almost always win. They are strong and silent heroes like Clint Eastwood in the Dirty Harry series of films. Both Batman and Robin are willing to do whatever needs to be done in order to get their man, always resorting to violent tactics, even if it means letting an already beaten foe die.

The violence is glorified and the fight scenes comprise the focus of the show. A very distinctive style of animation and a foreboding tone amplify the “cool” feel to the characters toughness and one gets the feeling that the heroes really enjoy thrashing their opponents.

X-Men (Fox)

Another series based on an enormously popular comic book is **X-Men**. The stories revolve around a renegade team of mutant superheroes, gifted with talents which make them brutal warriors. The X-Men battle super-villains and their robot minions throughout the show in extremely long battle scenes accompanied by fast-paced music. The scenes are filled with explosives, power beams, bladed weapons and fist fights.

The heroes themselves are malevolent and actually enjoy fighting. The show is little more than a series of battle scenes strung together by thin plot lines in which the heroes attempt to destroy their foes rather than bring them to justice.

While the violence is fantasy, the true consequences of the violence are never shown. The characters and their actions are extremely vicious and can be lethal.

WildC.A.T.S. (CBS)

This program is CBS’s answer to **X-Men**. Also based on a popular comic book, the **WildC.A.T.S.** are a team of super-warriors of alien descent who have banded together to battle a secret race of aliens who are trying to take over the Earth. The program is made up of a string of violent encounters between the warring factions and consists primarily of hand-to-hand combat (punching and kicking), shooting with power beams and fighting with bladed weapons.

The heroes are all violent and never hesitate to resolve their problems violently. In fact, they appear to possess a strong zeal for combat and often assert joy at fighting their enemies. They even express a desire to kill already subdued villains. Again, the violence is not realistic nor are the consequences shown, but the message is clear: violence is the most effective and fun way to deal with problems.

Skeleton Warriors (CBS)

This is another action-oriented program devoted to one battle scene after another. The heroes are angry and belligerent and are motivated by revenge against the leader of the Skeleton Warriors, who stole their kingdom. The heroes’ objective is to destroy their enemies. They never hesitate to initiate violence or to respond to confrontations with violence.

They usually try to slay their opponents with laser guns and sometimes resort to hand-to-hand combat. There are numerous explosions and constant destruction of the evil skeleton hordes.

Non-violent solutions are rarely considered nor is the idea of compromise ever examined. It is violence without hesitation.

In one episode on 2/11/95 the show ended with one of the heroes seemingly dying as he was thrown off a bridge into a valley hundreds of feet below after a very long battle scene. This is a very ominous, threatening and mean-spirited show that highlights the darkest of human emotions and actions.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (CBS)

One of the first combat-driven cartoons to achieve widespread success, the lighthearted **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** have faded away somewhat in favor of the more sinister violent programs. At one time, the Turtles were the most popular characters for kids, particularly boys. Their first movies were enormously successful. Subsequently, their antics seem tame and juvenile in the face of some of the newer programming described above. In response to the new sinister combat violence trend, the Turtles have taken a turn to more dark and mean, unrelenting violence.

Now, there is more focus on extended karate fights and less on the comic aspects of the show. The Turtles still do battle against evil hordes of bad ninjas and evil mutants, but now they do so with a more vicious approach.

This is probably the least sinister of the action-oriented cartoons due to a heavy comedic element in the form of glib one-liners. The most prominent problem with **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** is that most of the violence entails hand-to-hand combat, involving much punching and kicking and the use of martial arts weaponry such as staffs, numchuks, swords and tsais-martial arts knives. The Turtles' light-hearted attitude about violent conflict makes the violence seem that much more attractive. As in the other shows, the fighting and confrontations are the central aspect of the program.

The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (Fox)

For the moment the most famous children's series in the world, **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers** have been accused of inciting violent acts resulting in injury. Many feel that children all around the world are imitating the acrobatic violence of the Power Rangers. The show has become an emblem for those decrying the excessive amount of senseless violence in children's television programming. Everyone, whether they have seen the show or not, seems to have a strong opinion about the Power Rangers. The Rangers themselves have become an industry, including films, stage plays, video games and countless other forms of merchandising.

The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers has serious problems and certainly sits high on the list of shows featuring sinister combat violence. It does not, however, stand alone on the list. The problematic elements in the Power Rangers are no worse than the problematic elements in the

other shows. What distinguishes this show from other combat programs is that it is a live-action show rather than an animated cartoon.

The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers has given birth to a new genre of live action, children's programming. Revolving around an ongoing battle between the forces of good and evil, the six rangers (four men and two women) engage in multiple, prolonged martial arts battles in each show. These battles involve extensive punching and kicking against evil monsters and the Putty henchmen sent by the evil Lord Zed. In every episode, the Rangers' initial encounter with the enemies involves martial arts combat. In each final encounter with the enemy, however, the Power Rangers are almost always driven to use their "super gun" to defeat the otherwise insurmountable foe.

Each episode has a very similar look and feel, always conveying the same underlying message: violence is not really horrible and no one is really hurt by it. The Rangers themselves do not fear violent interactions and never give the impression that their battles are anything to be taken very seriously. Always victorious, the Rangers appear "cool" and successful. The show leaves the impression that the Rangers' actions are socially acceptable and even redeeming. The music and special effects only serve to accentuate this message.

Because of the live action, the show seems more realistic, even though the enemies are always monsters. The characters are real people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and, therefore, are much more likely to become role models for the young audience than are animated heroes. This is especially the case because kids build a strong bond with the characters and the entire look and feel of the show.

The problem is that this show, which appeals to so many young children, is completely driven by combat. Though defenders might argue that the Rangers emphasize teamwork and cooperation, it is always teamwork and cooperation for combat.

Super Samurai Syber Squad (ABC)

This is one of the numerous live action copies of **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers**. The violence all takes place in a quasi-virtual reality, as a team of teenage computer hackers does battle with nefarious computer viruses in the shape of evil, robotic monsters.

The heroes use martial arts techniques and assorted weapons to destroy the viruses that are sent by an evil force within the virtual reality realm. The prolonged battle scenes are the focus of the program. The same issues that are seen in the **Power Rangers** are present here, although to a lesser degree. Fast-paced rock music is played in the background to amplify the intensity of the fight.

SUMMARY:

Once again, this first report focuses on the more immediate problematic violence of sinister combat. These are the shows that are about combat, confrontation and violence. When asked to

describe the plots of these shows, children find it impossible to do so without emphasizing the violence. When children are asked about **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers** they do not mention teamwork or commitment to common goals, but they will excitedly talk about the fighting. These are shows about fighting. Rarely are options other than fighting considered in these shows and the heroes are always eager to engage in combat. Remorse and restraint are seldom seen or even considered. These are the shows that, by far, raise the largest number of concerns about violence.

It is only fair that several shows be singled out for their lack of violence and constructive messages. **Where in the World Is Carmen San Diego?** (Fox) is a particularly impressive show given its ability to hold children's attention and allow them to use their imaginations without relying on violence at all. **Beakman's World** (CBS) is also able to package educational concepts in an entertaining format. Both shows are not only violence free, they are also fun to watch. NBC's teenage shows raised no concerns about violence.

PART IV. FINDINGS IN OTHER TELEVISION MEDIA

Broadcast network television is the major focus of this study. Every television series, made-for-television movie, theatrical film and on-air promotion of the 1994-95 television season was monitored. There were no exceptions. Every series was examined at least four times and many were examined for the majority of the season or the entire season. Series were the only area in which we used any sampling and even here this was minimal. The number of hours examined and the minimal amount of sampling used places us in an excellent position to make a definitive analysis of the broadcast network season. None of that analysis is subject to whether we sampled a typical week or an exceptional week.

From the beginning, we intended our analysis of local, syndicated and public television, as well as cable, home video and video games, to be supplemental to our broadcast network focus. Our goal was to offer a comparison to the broadcast networks to see if the content differed and, if so, in what ways. The supplemental programming was sampled in order to provide a snapshot of the content necessary for this comparison. Local stations, syndication and the Prime Time Access Rule programming were all examined for two randomly selected weeks. Eight cable networks and public television were also monitored for randomly selected two-week periods. The analysis of home video was based on the top ten rental titles each quarter during the past year; the top five video games of the year were also examined.

This sampling does allow us to make informed, and, we believe, intelligent judgments about this programming. But it does not allow us to make the definitive analysis that we have conducted in the broadcast network area.

It is all too common in the media world for broadcasters to claim that all the real problems in regard to sex and violence are in cable, or for cable programmers, in defense, to cite their higher level of first amendment protection and pitch the bulk of the burden of reform back on broadcasters. Everyone easily faults the video game industry as one of the major sources of the problem.

Our goal is not to place blame or responsibility for any of the media content problems on any particular medium. Each of these industries has different levels of protection and freedom. Some are easier for the government to regulate than others. Some are easier for parents to control than others. Using broadcast television as the base, we looked at other programming such as pay cable, not to judge whether that programming raises concerns for cable, but rather to see whether that programming would raise concerns if judged on the standards applied to broadcast television. For example, we look at an HBO or Showtime program to decide whether ABC, CBS, Fox or NBC could air the same program applying their standards. The program might be of no concern to the world of pay cable applying their standards, but of great concern to the broadcast network world. We use this approach of whether supplemental programming would raise concerns if broadcast television standards were applied to it for all programming including cable, home video and video games.

Not surprisingly, local and cable television contains more programming raising concerns about violence than is found on the broadcast networks. This is primarily due to fact that theatrical

films make up the largest portion of those channels' programming. Previous sections of this report show this is where most of the violence is found and the local and cable channels have more of it. Even when comparing the same films, they tend to be edited more thoroughly and raise less concerns on broadcast network television than on local or basic cable television. Of course, pay cable does not edit its films.

The non-network television media can be summarized as follows:

Local television raises more concerns than broadcast network television both in its theatrical and original programming. As mentioned above, local television runs more theatrical films than the networks and they are edited somewhat less than by the networks. This may be because local stations do not have a large practices and standards department as is found at the networks. Syndicated series also raise more concerns on a percentage basis than network series do. Syndicated series are mostly one hour-dramas, a type much more likely to contain violence than half-hour network comedies. Furthermore, these syndicated dramas also run at many different time periods throughout the country, sometimes even in the daytime.

Public television is full of drama, films and documentaries, but practically no programming raises any issue of concern.

Cable television also runs more theatrical films than found on the broadcast networks. Since pay cable channels do not edit their films, they contain more violence than found on broadcast network television. Our job is not to evaluate whether running unedited scenes of violence on a pay service is a problem, but instead to compare the content of the two media. When pay cable airs original series with violence, that violence is likely to be more graphic and raise more concerns than the original programming of the networks. Compared to the networks, pay cable runs fewer original shows.

Basic cable also runs theatrical films raising concerns about violence. These films are less likely to be as edited as the same films shown on the broadcast network. More graphic and shocking scenes of action-film violence are found on basic cable. Basic's original series (though also far fewer than the networks') are more likely, on average, to raise concerns than network series.

Home video runs content mostly identical to that found in movie theaters. Over half of the videos examined would raise concerns if run unedited on broadcast television. This area was also studied to provide a comparison with the content of broadcast television, not to make judgments about the environment of home video.

Video games represent a world different from other television programming. The games featuring deadly combat, such as **Mortal Kombat II**, raise considerable concerns about violence. Most games, however, display scenes of tame combat, such as characters chasing or bumping into each other.

A. Local Independent Television Programming and Syndication

This category includes all the programming that appears on broadcast television that is not controlled by the networks. Los Angeles is the second-biggest television market in the country (New York is the biggest). No program can be successful unless it is sold in the Los Angeles market. Therefore, by monitoring local and syndicated programming in Los Angeles, it was ensured that we would examine all significant non-network programming that is produced. We examined two-week samples of prime time and Saturday morning of the following stations:

KTLA Channel 5. As mentioned earlier, KTLA is affiliated with the WB network on Wednesday nights. On those nights, we treated its schedule as network programming which is discussed in the previous section.

KCAL Channel 9. This station runs news during all Monday through Friday prime time hours so its programming was examined on weekends only.

KCOP Channel 13. As mentioned earlier, KCOP is affiliated with the UPN network on Monday and Tuesday nights. On those nights we treated its schedule as network programming, which is discussed in the previous section.

KCBS Channel 2, KNBC Channel 4, KABC Channel 7 and KTTV Channel 11. These are the network owned and operated stations. Their prime time and Saturday morning programming is the world of broadcast network television and is examined in detail in the previous section. Other than during prime time and Saturday morning, these stations act as local stations and buy their own programming in the syndication market. We looked at the syndicated programming that is scheduled before and during the Prime Time Access period.

This sample allowed us to pick up original syndicated programs, such as the various **Star Treks** and **Baywatch** and theatrical films, on the independent stations. The programming on the network stations in the non-network time slots was comprised of game shows, entertainment and news magazine shows, and of original syndication such as **Top Cops** and **True Stories of the Highway Patrol**. This section of the report centers on that programming that, if run on broadcast network television, would raise concerns about violence. We divided the content into original programs for syndication, theatrical motion pictures and children's television.

Original Programs for Syndication

Fifteen years ago, syndication largely consisted of reruns of old network television series. As independent stations grew stronger in the 1980s they began forming ad hoc networks with other independent stations to produce their own original programming. The syndication market which used to be every producer's second choice after the broadcast networks, soon developed new appeal. Game shows such as **Wheel of Fortune** and **Jeopardy** and entertainment news and tabloid programs such as **Entertainment Tonight** and **Hard Copy** became enormously successful in the world of syndication. Syndication now competes head-to-head with the networks in the area of original series, particularly dramas. Now the producers of a new **Star**

Trek or **Baywatch** can sometimes make more money selling their program to local stations. Occasionally, syndicators even produce made-for-television movies and mini-series for independent stations.

As opposed to the broadcast networks, those programming syndicated shows have no large departments of broadcast standards and practices deciding what gets made and ensuring that programs meet network standards. Every station must make decisions as to what is acceptable and whether anything should be cut, and they are forced to do this work with small staffs and even smaller budgets.

A much higher percentage of original syndicated programs raises concerns about the use of violence when compared to the programs on the broadcast networks. Many of these syndicated shows are aired much earlier in the day than networks shows. This raises the issue of a large audience of children. Although many of these shows should run an advisory, none do. The following programs would be classified as raising concerns if aired on the broadcast networks:

Highlander

Like **Mantis** or similar shows on the networks, **Highlander** contained few scenes of graphic violence. While the intensity of the violence is not of concern, there are as many as 14 different scenes of violence in an episode, making it apparent that violence is the thread that holds the show together. There are many fights scenes, typically involving weapons such as swords, knives and fists. In one particularly disturbing scene, a character is brutally kicked in the face.

The Journeys of Hercules

Though typically containing fewer scenes of violence than **Highlander**, **The Journeys of Hercules**' scenes are longer and much more gory. One of the shows monitored was about young boys who join a violent and evil warrior cult. The entire episode was based on violent conflict. The carnage-filled opening scene occurs after a battle and shows an axe clearly protruding from a soldier's body. The violence features weapons such as hands, clubs, branding irons, swords, rocks and whips. Some of the scenes are very long and gory. In this episode, violence was also used as a teaser before a commercial.

Vanishing Son

The underlying message on this show is that violence is only used as a last resort. In the episodes we monitored, there seemed to be many last resorts. **Vanishing Son** is about martial arts fighters and most of the scenes of violence use this intense form of hand-to-hand combat. Much of the violence is like **Walker, Texas Ranger**, only more concentrated and intense. The story would not have been hampered by fewer or shorter scenes of violence. This show is driven by fighting, especially kicking.

Renegade

A show about a loner who rides a motorcycle, **Renegade** compresses more scenes of violence into its one hour than any other original program monitored. Most of the acts of violence are more mean-spirited than are the violent acts in the other shows in syndication. Most of the time the violence is not very graphic. The program is about little other than violence. The quantity of scenes is excessive even though most individual scenes are not. One episode featured more than 20 acts of violence.

Kung Fu: The Legend Continues

Another program showcasing martial arts, **Kung Fu: The Legend Continues** is an updated version of the old television series of the same name. This version focuses less on the spiritual message and much more on the fighting. Like other shows described above, **Kung Fu** also contains many scenes of violence, a good number of which are prolonged. In the opening credits, the viewer sees pistols, shotguns and a man being kicked in the face. At the end of that scene the man is kicked through a plate glass window. Although the program's theme is based on the world of martial arts, a surprising number of the many acts of violence involve guns and explosives.

Real Stories of the Highway Patrol

Unlike the one-hour dramas already described, **Real Stories of the Highway Patrol** is a 30-minute reality show that uses re-creations to feature crimes from the cases of various state highway patrols. It is a cross between **America's Most Wanted** and **Cops**. The entire show is about criminals and the violent acts they commit.

As a show that uses re-creations, it raises the recurring issue of how graphically to illustrate the crime. Frequently the re-creation is excessive and seems more likely to sensationalize the crime than to offer any real understanding to the viewer or any assistance to law enforcement.

Several of the re-creations are horribly excessive, graphic and prolonged. In one episode the scene of violence lasted over eight minutes. It starts with the criminals shooting at a bus and ends with four police officers being killed in a shootout. The point of the scene is to demonstrate the horror and senselessness of the crime. However noble the purpose, the scene is overly long and excessively graphic, going far beyond whatever is necessary to demonstrate that point.

Another episode depicted a crime in which two intruders terrorized a couple. In a slow, torturous and graphic scene, the man is shot in the back with an arrow. The viewer sees the arrow in the man's back and is appalled not only at the crime, but at the length and excessiveness of the scene. This scene goes far beyond what is necessary. The show definitely could use an advisory.

Hard Copy

Hard Copy is a tabloid news program that focuses on topical stories of the day. It usually features more stories dealing with sex than violence. In the episodes we monitored, it raised one concern with regard to violence. The same scene is repeated again and again throughout the show. On 11/10/94 there was film footage of a man, surrounded by a group of people, shooting at the White House. This was an important news story and was covered by all the mainstream news media. What **Hard Copy** did differently than anyone else was air the same shooting scene 13 times in a 30-minute program. It was used as a preview at the front of the show and as a teaser before each commercial. No matter how important the story, the use of the clip 13 times far exceeded what was necessary to establish the context. No matter what time viewers tuned into **Hard Copy**, they would be likely to see the clip. On the next day's episode, the scene was shown five more times. This excessive use qualifies as gratuitous by any definition.

Robocop

Based on the successful series of theatrical films, this is an original syndicated series. The entire premise of **Robocop** is an ultra-efficient fighting machine that takes on the most unsavory and violent elements in society. The contextual problem with many of these gratuitous scenes is that they do little to move the story. The violence is not very graphic (unlike in the films) but is often unnecessary.

Top Cops

Another reality show featuring police in reenactments, **Top Cops** often focuses on the extremely brutal aspects of crime. One scene graphically illustrates a criminal chasing someone whom he catches and hits with great force over the head with a gun. Then he kicks him repeatedly. While the scene illustrates the brutal nature of this criminal, the intensity of the violence is far more than what is warranted. This program could also use an advisory. In the Los Angeles area the show aired at 7:00.

Hawkeye

Another strong and silent type, Hawkeye is the title character of this Indian adventure story. The episodes monitored contained fewer scenes of violence than did the other original syndicated shows. But several of the scenes of violence added elements that enhanced their intensity but did not add anything to the story. In one scene, Hawkeye walks into a booby trap and is hit in the head with a log. The impact is vividly displayed. In a second scene Hawkeye gets into a fight which involves hitting and choking. Slow motion emphasizes the nature and length of the violence.

Baywatch

The most popular show in syndication, **Baywatch** is seen all around the world. The show contains only a few scenes of violence, but these scenes could be shorter, or in some cases eliminated, without affecting the story. One of the episodes monitored contained only three acts of violence, but two of them were prolonged. All three violent scenes were promoted in a compressed form as a preview at the beginning of the show.

Shows made for syndication that raised no concerns about violence in the two-week sample were:

American Journal

The Crusaders

A Current Affair

Babylon 5

Entertainment Tonight

Extra

Inside Edition

Pointman

Sightings

Sirens

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

University Hospital

Trauma Center

Theatrical Films on Local Stations and in Syndication

Of the 17 theatrical films that were monitored on independent stations, nine would have raised concerns if aired on the broadcast networks. This is a higher concentration of problematic films than the networks run. More action and high intensity films appear in syndication than on the networks. The films that did not raise concerns were **Lonesome Dove** (a made-for-television movie), **Troop Beverly Hills**, **Once Bitten**, **Paradise**, **The Cutting Edge**, **Legend of Billie Jean**, **Hear No Evil**, **See No Evil** and **The Burbs**.

All but two of the nine films that did raise concerns were action dramas. Although many action films raised concerns when aired on the broadcast networks, these films ran with far less editing on local television. It is unclear whether this was due to the absence of a large practices and standards staff or to the more conservative standards required to market a film nationally as opposed to selling it in particular local markets. What is clear is that violent films that ran locally contained higher levels of intensity and were more graphic than those that raised concerns on the networks. The films that did raise serious issues were as follows:

Predator II

The second theatrical movie this season to feature a decapitated Jamaican drug lord (the other being **Marked for Death**), **Predator II** is about violence. The original starred Arnold Schwarzenegger; this sequel casts Danny Glover in the lead. There are 17 scenes containing violence, many of which are excessive in length. Most of the violence is unrelenting and appears to have been included for the sake of intensity. For example, the viewer is forced to see the decapitated head of the drug lord. This film contains more graphic violence than can be found in almost any network version of a theatrical. It did contain an advisory.

Death Wish 3

Another sequel, this one retains the original star, Charles Bronson. **Death Wish** is also a theatrical series in which violence is the main theme of the films. This film contained over 40 scenes of violence when it appeared in the local television market.

Although in this film the violent criminals are all punished, it is interesting to note that the man who exceeds the limits of the law to punish them, Charles Bronson, is glorified. The violence early in the film is used to demonstrate the evil of the gang members. It is part of their character development, but, like everything else in this film, it is far too excessive and repeatedly covers the same ground. The film is little more than a barrage of violence saturating the screen. Whatever point it tries to make about the ambiguity of violence and the thin line between right and wrong, is lost in a flurry of bullets and bloodshed. It is doubtful that any of this movie's fans are interested in the discussion about who is the true criminal. Instead, viewers' attention is completely dominated by the fighting and killing.

The violence in this film exceeds that of most action films shown on the broadcast networks. It did contain an advisory.

Death Wish 4

A sequel to the above sequel, this installment also stars Charles Bronson. Although the criminal players are different, the film raises the same issues and concerns as the one that came before it. It is filled with grisly scenes of murder and terror and, in the end, the viewer gets the dramatic payoff through more killing and mayhem. It does contain substantially fewer violent scenes than **Death Wish 3**. It also contained an advisory.

Stakeout

Stakeout is the first of the two action comedies raising concerns. It is a police action comedy involving many scenes of shooting and chases. Several of the scenes are very long and add up to yet another film full of violence. One scene lasts three minutes and another lasts four. Once the

lifestyles of the characters are established, the violence added little to the plot. The film concludes in one long fight and chase scene. Although few of the scenes are very graphic, the film contains a lot of continuous and intense violence. There was no advisory.

Bloodsport

A Jean-Claude Van Damme film, **Bloodsport** contains over 20 scenes of violence. The title promises excessive violence and the film delivers. One scene in which an evil kickboxer “fights dirty” and seriously injures his opponent is cheered on by the enthusiastic crowd. Shortly after this, Van Damme demonstrates his considerable fighting skills and is also cheered by the crowd. Both scenes are exceedingly violent. At one point, there is an extremely graphic shattering of a leg. Many of the fighting scenes are prolonged through the use of slow motion.

Violence is at the core of the story and is the promise that attracts Van Damme’s fans. When films of this genre have aired on the broadcast networks, they usually have been edited far more than this. An advisory was issued.

Sudden Impact

Another film with a large number of very violent scenes, this is part of Clint Eastwood’s Dirty Harry series. With a vigilante theme similar to the one in **Death Wish**, violence is the main course of the film. Like **Death Wish**, the line between right and wrong is blurred and it is not always possible to know who the good guys are. The issues are similar to those in the other **Dirty Harry** and action films.

When **The Dead Pool** was shown earlier this season on CBS, the violence was edited considerably more than this was. The station (KCOP) did issue an advisory but it only warned about language and “subject matter.” No specific reference to violence was made.

Sleepwalkers

The main goal of this film is, as in most other movies based on Stephen King books, to scare the viewer. The film manages to go far beyond scaring the viewer and instead fills the screen with terrible and horrific images. Early in the movie, a mother avenges her son’s death by going after the girl who killed him. Arriving at the girl’s house, the boy’s mother throws a vase and slashes the face and neck of the girl’s father and throws her mother through a window. She bites off the fingers of a policeman protecting the family and, after snapping his arm in two, kills him.

The film is filled with these horrendous images and, even for the horror genre, goes too far. The advisory only mentions language and “subject matter” and makes no reference to violence.

8 Million Ways to Die

The title promises more violence than the film delivers. Most of the scenes of violence are relevant to the story; there are just a lot of them. Several could have been cut with no significant loss to the integrity of the story. What this film most needed was an advisory. It began at 8:00 and an advisory would have removed most concerns.

Dragnet

This is the second film on the list which raised concerns but was not an action drama. A comedy, it was still filled with action. Many scenes are surprisingly violent considering that the theme was comedic and that Tom Hanks and Dan Ackroyd are the stars. The last scene, in particular, lasts for several minutes; and it is not comedic fighting, but a very real and excessive scene of violence involving machine guns, rifles and fighting. The promos for **Dragnet** emphasized the satiric nature of the comedy. There was nothing to warn the viewer that this comedy contained some very prolonged violence. It aired at 6:00 on a Sunday and could have used an advisory.

Children's Television

Facing competition from the broadcast and cable networks for children's attention on Saturday morning, local stations in Los Angeles do little to compete. Two of the three local stations run infomercials. The third, KCAL, is currently owned by Disney. KCAL runs a Saturday morning children's lineup. Four of their shows, **Wonderland**, **Chip'n'Dale Rescue Rangers**, **Bill Nye the Science Guy** and **Ducktails**, raise no serious concerns about violence. Bill Nye's show is impressive in its ability to make science fun for young viewers.

The only children's programming to raise any concerns is the cartoon **G.I. Joe**. Much less ominous than other animated combat programs such as **X-Men** or **Skeleton Warriors**, **G.I. Joe** is about fighting. Much of the fighting falls into the sinister combat category, but just barely. The program is filled with many acts of violence that, not surprisingly, make **G.I. Joe** a vehicle for combat. **Mega Man**, which ran on Fox's KTTV Saturday morning as a syndicated program, features the characteristics of sinister combat violence described earlier in the report. The fast-paced, catchy music and the characters' tendency to engage in combat demonstrate how "cool" and fun fighting can really be.

B. Public Television

In the 1920s, the young industry of broadcasting was regulated by the Department of Commerce and its secretary, Herbert Hoover. It was not at all clear how the new field of radio would be supported and who would pay for its programming. One option was to let the government own

and control radio and underwrite the costs of programming. While this is the system used today in many countries around the world, it was unacceptable to most Americans because government control of radio would permit it to censor information it did not want citizens to hear.

A second alternative was to let those who were interested subscribe to radio programming and their fees would provide the economic foundation for radio. This was ultimately how pay cable became an important force in American life. A third alternative was to allow companies to buy radio time for a fee so they could sell their products and these monies would support broadcasting.

Advertising flourished and provided the economic structure for radio and then television. The goal of broadcasters was to attract the largest possible audience in order to be able to charge advertisers as much as possible for their messages. From the beginning, almost all broadcasting was designed to appeal to large audiences. Networks were created so that programming could reach the entire country. (Without a network, a signal could not reach further than the local metropolitan area in which the station was based.)

To meet the goal of capturing large audiences, broadcasters endeavored to create programming that would be accessible and understandable to the largest possible audience. In practical terms, this meant no Shakespeare, ballet or opera, few documentaries, and much popular entertainment. Radio and then television were enormously successful in creating programming that millions of people have wanted to hear and see.

The problem with the system was the lack of incentive to create educational programming that was less likely to appeal to large audiences. Economics created a network need to attract huge audiences and tended to give short shrift to programs that appealed to more specialized interests. While the needs of the many people were met, the needs of some were not.

Public television was created to fill the needs not met by commercial broadcasting. It was not dependent on advertiser support or the need for enormous audiences. Public television was free to create high-quality programming regardless of whether it garnered high ratings. It was in the area of children's television that public television made its largest strides. Programs such as **Mister Rogers' Neighborhood** and **Sesame Street** became a regular part of children's lives.

Public television was always envisioned as an alternative to commercial television. While its ratings are small compared to the commercial networks, it fills an important void. Since this monitoring project is looked at the entire world of television, we examined public television. The world of public television provides an interesting opportunity to examine whether the absence of advertiser pressure or demand for high ratings produces programming less dependent on violent themes.

Practically nothing that was monitored on public television during the two-week sample even comes close to raising concerns about violence. Some shows do contain elements or scenes of violence but it is usually so minimized or contextually appropriate that it is of very little concern.

Programming on public television can be divided into four areas, three in prime time and one on Saturday mornings: documentaries and news, arts and entertainment, nature and science and children's programs. All four types of programming were remarkably violence free.

Documentaries and News

Programs in the news category include **Washington Week in Review** and **Wall Street Week**. Absolutely no issues of violence were raised. A considerable number of documentaries ran during the two-week sample. Because these shows usually involve actual film footage, they may occasionally use images of violence. An episode of **Nova** followed a Navy submarine on a cruise. The show used film footage to show explosions of large ships, sailors hitting the ground and other shots of submarines during war. It was all part of the context and of no concern whatsoever. Another documentary on the Holocaust, **Diamonds in the Snow**, avoided graphic footage and focused on survivors' stories. The entire production avoided unnecessarily violent pictures and exercised much restraint. There was discussion of Nazi horrors but none of them were shown. **American Experience** examined the Holocaust from a U.S. point of view and exercised similar restraint. A third Holocaust program, **Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie**, was entirely free of violent images. None of the news or documentary programs raised any problems in regard to violence.

Arts and Entertainment

This category includes original productions, concerts and performer showcases. Acts of violence are rarely featured in these productions and when violence is part of a show it is usually contextually appropriate. Restraint is evident everywhere.

Only one program in the entire two weeks of PBS raised any issues whatsoever. On 4/10/95 the film **Shimmer** aired on **American Playhouse** and raised some important questions. The film focuses on the lives of two boys living in a juvenile boys' home in Iowa during the 1950s. During one scene, a bully punches a boy until he falls to the ground. The boy's friend steps in and slams the bully's head against a metal pole. The schoolmaster intervenes and knocks the boy's friend down. There is a graphic picture in slow motion of his face hitting the ground, his face covered in blood. Treatment like this becomes the impetus for the two boys to escape from the home. The film does contain an advisory warning that "The following program contains material from which some viewers might take offense." After every break, the advisory is repeated. This program came closer than any other on PBS to raising concern about violence. Although graphic, the violence appeared in an adult program and was central to the overall plot. It could have been edited somewhat, however.

None of the concerts or performer showcases raised any issues at all.

Nature and Science

While there were acts of violence in some of these shows, the violence was never a central part of the story and never raised any important issues. In one episode of **Nature**, a shark is shown tearing apart and eating a turtle. It is disturbing to watch, but entirely consistent with the theme of a program about nature. None of the other nature or science shows raised any concerns about violence.

Saturday Morning Children's Programming

Children's programming on public television includes **Sesame Street**, **Reading Rainbow**, **Barney and Friends**, **Puzzle Place**, **Story Time** and **First Edition**. Several scenes in **Sesame Street** showed characters arguing, usually the Muppets. They get angry, but not violent. There were no issues of violence in any of the programs.

C. Cable Television

Cable television began in the 1940s with a very simple purpose: to bring television signals to those who could not receive them with rooftop antennas because of terrestrial interference. As broadcast television became an important part of American culture, people living in areas blocked by mountains or other geographic barriers were denied the opportunity to watch television. Cable television, wiring the signal into homes, offered people a chance to become television households. It is highly ironic that cable, the medium that would become so important in shrinking the broadcast audience, began as a medium that increased the strength and penetration of broadcast television.

Cable offered another hope: greater channel capacity. The number of over-the-air broadcasting channels had always been limited by the scarcity of the electromagnetic spectrum. Cable did not use the electromagnetic spectrum and, therefore, had no scarcity of channels. As the physical cable improved and eventually became a fiber optic, there were few limits to the number of potential cable channels.

Although cable possessed the promise of great channel capacity, it was a promise that was unrealized until the 1970s. This all changed with the advent of Home Box Office (HBO) in the 1970s. HBO was introduced to cable systems in 1972 as a channel offering uncut, uninterrupted movies available long before they would appear on broadcast television. HBO demonstrated that there was a large potential audience for this programming. In 1975, HBO gambled on a new and revolutionary technology and put its signal up on a satellite 22,300 miles above the Earth. This radically new distribution system allowed HBO to distribute its signal to a national audience.

Satellite distribution was the spark that introduced a whole new host of players with original programming to cable. HBO soon faced competition from another movie channel, Showtime, in presenting recent theatrical films. With so many available channels, cable networks were able to

offer very specialized programming to a narrowly focused audience. By the late 1980s, there were channels programmed exclusively for news, music, religion, shopping, governmental affairs, weather and different ethnic groups.

Individual cable channels knew they could never compete head-to-head with broadcast television. Cable as a whole competes with broadcast, but the most successful cable channel could not gather more than a fraction of the network audience. Broadcast television was, and still is, the medium that can appeal to everyone at the same time. It is still the only delivery system that can offer the whole nation at once to advertisers. The largest cable channels are still not available in millions of homes whereas broadcasting is available in more than 99% of American households.

Cable challenges broadcast by offering content not available over the air. The first way it does this, as discussed, is through more specialized programming. But it can also offer programming that the networks, trying to appeal to everyone, can not offer. Many critics today are shocked at the “semi-nudity” on **NYPD Blue**, but cable has been offering full nudity for years. Words routinely used in movies and stand-up comedy on cable can not even be considered on broadcast networks. Films like **Friday the 13th** and **Nightmare on Elm Street**, which have never appeared on network television, are regularly shown on cable. If cable did nothing more than replicate broadcast television, it would not exist. Cable must offer different programming and it does.

This project examined programming on eight cable networks in comparison to programming on the broadcast networks. The goal was not to determine that the programming does or does not raise concerns in its native cable environment, but whether the programming would raise concerns if it aired on broadcast television. A determination about the appropriateness of programming on cable itself would have to consider the greater freedom from regulation, the smaller audiences, the pay cable universe and other contextual factors.

There are currently approximately 70 cable networks. Many of them have no relevance to a study about media violence, especially channels such as C-SPAN, QVC, the Home Shopping Network, the Weather Channel and the Nashville Network. Our study concentrated on eight cable networks that resemble broadcast networks, appeal to children or teenagers, or create significant amounts of original programming. This project examined media violence, and, therefore, issues surrounding sexuality, nudity and language did not affect the report’s conclusions. The eight cable networks examined over a two-week period are as follows:

HBO and Showtime

Like the broadcast networks, both run many theatrical films and also original made-for-television movies and series. Both are leaders in pay cable.

The Disney Channel, Nickelodeon and MTV (Music Television)

All three appeal to young audiences, especially Disney and Nickelodeon. Disney is a pay cable channel while the other two are advertiser supported. All run some original programming.

USA and TBS

These are the two which are closest in format to a broadcast network. They run a mix of theatrical films, television movies, sports and more.

TNT (Turner Network Television)

TNT runs theatrical films and some original television movies and mini-series.

All of the monitored cable networks except TNT run children's programming on Saturday morning. TNT runs programs with an Old West theme.

Anyone who looks at the majority of these channels can see that they run much more explicit programming than is seen on the networks. They have more freedom and work within a completely different business and regulatory structure. The intent of this section of the report was to examine ways in which the content in cable and broadcast differed and to see whether that content would raise concerns if broadcast on the television networks. This is, we believe, the best way to compare the content of cable with that on broadcast television.

1. Home Box Office (HBO)

Founded as a movie channel by Time Inc. (now Time Warner) in the 1970s, HBO is the largest pay cable channel in the country. In the beginning, HBO ran almost nothing but recent theatrical films. As other pay movie channels emerged, such as Showtime, The Movie Channel and Cinemax (created by Time as a companion channel to HBO), HBO began diversifying into other types of programming. Original television series such as **Dream On**, **Tales from the Crypt** and **The Larry Sanders Show** became an important part of HBO programming. Sports, especially boxing, also became a regular part of the menu. HBO offered a forum to stand-up comedians in which they could showcase their talents without having to curtail their language or subject matter. However, it has been in television movies where HBO has especially excelled, last year gaining more Emmy nominations than all of the broadcast networks combined. HBO has been able to successfully tackle serious and historical subjects in such television movies as **Stalin**, **And the Band Played On** and **Truman**.

Theatrical Films Shown on HBO

Theatrical films are still the main staple of HBO's programming. Seventeen films were monitored in the two-week sample and, of these, eight would raise concerns about violence if run on broadcast television. These eight are as follows:

Under Siege

This film provides a fascinating opportunity to study differences between pay cable and the broadcast networks because it ran on both HBO and ABC this past season and each showing was monitored separately. Earlier in the report, is a discussion explaining why the film, even with all its edits, raised concerns when it was aired by ABC. HBO ran **Under Siege** without any

alterations and it raised even more concerns in its unedited state. This demonstrates how much editing ABC did in its ultimately unsuccessful attempt to make the film suitable for network television. One of the most significant differences between the two versions is found in a scene in which Tommy Lee Jones is stabbed in the eye by Steven Seagal. This deeply disturbing scene was cut on ABC.

Judgment Night

Very graphic and intense, this film contains approximately 30 scenes of violence. The final scene lasts three minutes and only adds more gore to the film. This film would probably be edited substantially before it could run on broadcast television without raising concerns.

No Contest

This film also contains a very large number of violent scenes (25), many of which are prolonged. This movie is about little more than violence. There are many shootings and acts of torture and brutality. This film probably would also be significantly changed to run on broadcast television.

Rampage

This film focuses on the horrible acts of a serial killer. While containing fewer scenes of violence than the films above, one particular scene--in which the psychopathic villain escapes from a prison transport van after brutally murdering the guards--is extremely chilling and far more graphic than the story calls for.

The Stranger

This film contains many scenes of violence. An early scene graphically shows a neck being broken. The hero is the most violent character in the film.

Blue Tiger

A very violent film, **Blue Tiger** implies that violence for revenge is somewhat acceptable. There are many prolonged scenes of violence.

The Ambulance

The Ambulance is used by an evil doctor who kidnaps people so that he can perform scientific experiments. This film is filled with many violent scenes and would raise concerns if it was shown on broadcast television without changes.

Rising Sun

This film did contain many violent scenes, including the consistent repetition of a rape on a conference table, the key scene in the film.

With regard to violence, the following films would be able to air on broadcast television as they appeared on HBO:

Blue Chips

Fearless

Made in America

Major League II

My Girl 2

My Life

Rookie of the Year

The Thing Called Love

Wayne's World 2

Television Movies

Three original HBO television movies appeared in the two-week sample period. Of the three, only one, **Deadlock**, would raise concerns if aired on broadcast television. **Deadlock** was made several years ago and contains a great deal of violence including one scene set in a futuristic work camp where the prisoners are equipped with explosive restraining collars. During a fight, one of the men's collars is damaged causing it to explode and blow his head off. This scene is very gory, graphic and gratuitous. The other two television movies both have violent themes, but the violence is integral to the stories and handled very responsibly. **Citizen X** tells the tale of the worst serial killer in Russian history. There are only a few scenes of violence, but several of these are disturbing. The consequences of the crimes and the effect of these crimes on the victims' families are important elements of the story. These scenes are somewhat graphic, but not of concern. **Fatherland** shows what the world would be like if Germany had won World War II. It contains only three scenes of violence and they were all handled responsibly.

Original Series

HBO's original series contain elements that cannot be included in the broadcast networks' programming. **The Larry Sanders Show**, **The Dennis Miller Show** and **Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam** all contain language that is not heard on commercial television. **Dream On** also contains scenes with nudity. None of them raise any issues of concern with regard to violence. The only original HBO series that could not run on a network without editing violent scenes is **Tales From the Crypt**. This program does air on Fox and, even after editing, it occasionally raises concerns. The show was very violent both times it ran on HBO during the sample period. Both episodes were very graphic. In one of them, a threatened woman stabs her attacker in the eye with her high heel.

A promotional program, **HBO First Look: Drop Zone**, is a 30-minute behind-the-scenes look at the theatrical film. While the show did provide insight into the story, many of the scenes that were chosen to accompany the narration were violent and disturbingly graphic, which is particularly troubling in light of the advisory which cautioned of only "mild violence." Like most promotions, it features what appear to be all the violent scenes from the film.

Children's Programming

On Saturday morning HBO runs several series and theatricals. The films **Six Pack** and **The Coneheads** raise no concerns. The other shows, **Stop the Smoggies**, **Encyclopedia**, **Survival** and **Legend of White Fang**, also raise no issues. A graphic promo for **Home Alone 2** ran during **White Fang**.

2. Showtime

Showtime, like HBO, runs uncut theatrical films. While Showtime does create some original programming, it contains much less of this kind of programming than HBO and relies more on films.

Theatrical Films

Showtime ran 21 theatrical films during the prime time hours of the two-week sample. Of these 21, 14 would raise concerns on broadcast television if they were not edited. These films are as follows:

Excessive Force

The title tells the story of the film. There are over 30 acts of violence in a film that is only 83 minutes in length. Everything about the film is violent. It is graphic, gory and features much "excessive force." In one scene, someone is stabbed in the ear with a pen. This film probably

could not be edited sufficiently to appear on broadcast because violence is too central to the theme and makes up too much of the entire movie.

American Cyborg

A science-fiction action film, **American Cyborg** ran at 8:00 p.m. and contained very graphic and vivid scenes of violence, most involving some form of technology. In the most graphic scene a cyborg has just been thrown down an elevator shaft. Stunned, he recovers and climbs back up the shaft, grabbing the hero by the ankle. The hero uses a knife to cut off the cyborg's arm, but as he falls he catches hold of the hero's arm. During a long scene, the cyborg pulls on the arm as it begins to separate from the socket. Blood spurts everywhere. The cyborg pulls the arm completely off and again falls down the shaft. It is extremely graphic and emphasizes the suffering of the hero. At this point the hero then discovers that he too is a cyborg. Until this point, and through the entire scene of violence, the audience believes he is human and watches him scream and bleed.

Another Stakeout

A sequel to the film monitored on the broadcast networks, **Another Stakeout** contains fewer scenes of violence than similar action films. Still, the violence is unnecessary and would raise concerns. The film would probably be mildly edited on broadcast television.

Mirror 2: Raven Dance

There are several unpleasant scenes in this film including one in which a man's eyes are burned with acid, he accidentally chops off his own arm and is killed by falling on a chain saw. This film would probably be substantially edited before it appeared on broadcast television.

Remote Control

There are 15 scenes of violence in this film including one in which a wife, possessed by the VCR, stabs her husband with scissors. Another scene shows a man murdering his father and mother. This film would probably also be substantially edited by the broadcast networks.

The Program

This film contains many glorified scenes of football tackles in slow motion and one very violent rape. This film, however, could probably be easily edited to run on broadcast television without concern.

Loaded Weapon 1

All of the scenes in this film are comical or farcical but there are approximately 25 of them in a 75-minute movie. Full of slapstick, this film would probably only experience require mild editing by broadcast television.

Meteor Man

Also full of comedic violence, this film contains a large number of violent scenes. None of the scenes are overly graphic but the large number of violent scenes would probably be edited by commercial television.

Universal Soldier

This film uses much graphic violence. The final fight scene (this is a Jean-Claude Van Damme film) lasts for 10 minutes. There is fighting, a gunshot to the head, the villain impaled on spikes and countless other acts of violence. This would be virtually impossible to edit for broadcast television.

Man's Best Friend

Despite the inviting title, the film features well over 20 scenes of violence in less than 90 minutes. Many of the scenes feature guns and killing. However, most of the violent scenes, are not very intense. The "tonnage" of the violence is what raises concerns.

Cadillac Man

This film contains only a few scenes of violence and, with the exception of two much longer scenes, none are too intense or a problem. Those scenes would probably be edited on broadcast television.

Arcade

This film contains eight scenes of violence, four of which are very intense. In one extremely excessive scene, a mother, in front of her daughter, shoots herself in the head, spraying blood all over the daughter and the room. This film would probably be difficult to edit for broadcast television.

Blood of the Innocent

This film uses violence for the sake of violence. There are over 30 scenes of violence in 90 minutes, many of which are very long and unnecessarily graphic. A barroom fight scene is particularly excessive. It is doubtful that the film could ever be shown on network television.

Wild Cactus

This film has some extremely graphic scenes of violence. After a shooting, the viewer sees pieces of flesh flying from the wound followed by another shot of the very bloody wound. In a later scene thick and gooey blood gushes like a fountain out of a character's stomach. While the film contains a lot of sex, the violence alone probably would prevent this film from ever appearing on network television.

These films could air on network television without raising concerns about violence:

Beach Babes From Beyond
For Love or Money
Four Weddings and a Funeral
Malice
Money for Nothing
The Ref
Three of Hearts

Television Movies

Only one made-for-television movie, **Zoo Man**, ran during the sample period. **Zoo Man** could not appear on commercial television without changes, particularly because of a shooting scene early in the film.

Original Series

Three original productions were monitored: **Love Street**, **The Outer Limits** and **Red Shoe Diaries**. None raised any issues of concern with regard to violence. **The Outer Limits** contained several violent scenes, but all were handled well within the context of the story.

Children's Television

Showtime's children's series were **The Busy World of Richard Scarry**, **A Bunch of Munsch**, **A Christmas Eve**, **Ready or Not**, **Owl TV**, **Shelley Duvall's Bedtime Stories**, **Degrassi Jr. High** and **Chris Cross**. None of these shows raised any issues of concern in regard to violence. On both Saturdays that were monitored, there was an unusual problem. On both days theatrical

films were run in the morning. **The Double 0 Kid** began very early (at 5:25 a.m.). In one scene, the viewer sees a man killing two security guards who twitch when they are shot. The film has 23 scenes of violence. The title is very likely to attract children who are awake early in the morning. **FX2** ran at 9:00 a.m. on the other Saturday we monitored. **FX2** contained several very graphic scenes including one in which a man's throat is slit. This film is particularly inappropriate for Saturday morning.

3. The Disney Channel

The Disney name is famous around the world for family entertainment and The Disney Channel offers the opportunity to view this kind of programming around the clock. The programming of The Disney Channel is far more diverse than non-subscribers might realize. Ever present is Disney's animation which comes in half-hour and hour episodes as well as in theatrical films (both classic and new films). Television movies and theatrical films appealing to an older audience are shown in the prime time hours. Concerts, such as the one by Tricia Yearwood which aired during the two-week sample period, also play an important role in attracting adults to the channel. Also broadcast later at night, are information shows ranging from documentaries to science programs.

All of the programming we viewed was consistent with Disney's commitment to wholesome family programming and raised almost no concerns. Most of the programming is free of any violent content. The little violence that did occur in the programming is relevant to the context of the show and raises concerns in only one instance.

Of the 13 prime time theatricals aired during the time period monitored, only one raised concerns and most of these concerns arose because it aired on The Disney Channel. The Disney Channel offers a promise to its subscribers that a family can watch any of its content without having to be concerned about violence. This promise means that it is held to a much higher standard--just like the ABC **Family Movie**. With only one exception, it met this standard.

The exception was the theatrical film **Baby...The Secret of the Lost Legend**. The innocent-sounding title, the knowledge that it was about a baby dinosaur and the 7:00 p.m. starting time were all likely to entice children to view. Disney did advise that "The following program contains certain scenes which may be too intense for young children. Parental discretion is advised." The advisory never specifically mentioned violence.

Baby contains more than 20 scenes of violence and one scene in particular raised concerns, especially for The Disney Channel. The final battle scene lasts for seven minutes. People are shown being killed with guns and knives. Many of the bad guys are dispatched by the heroes with great glee. It is a very surprising scene considering the title of the film, the hour in which it is shown and the channel itself. **Baby** would also raise concerns if it aired during the Saturday **Family Movie**. It raises special concerns because of its presence on this otherwise non-violent family channel.

All of the other Disney Channel programming on Saturday morning and prime time raised absolutely no concerns about violence. Unlike almost any other source of programming examined for this report, The Disney Channel is remarkably free of violence. It is unnecessary in most instances to examine if the violence raises concerns within its context because little programming even contains violence.

4. Nickelodeon

Nickelodeon also makes a promise that its channel is violence-free and suitable for the entire family. It too delivers on that promise. Some of Nickelodeon's animation and children's programming have a slightly harder edge than Disney's. This is probably due to its appeal to somewhat older audiences and to an attempt to be more cutting-edge. Almost nothing we monitored on Nickelodeon raised any concerns.

Weekday prime time is filled with old network situation comedies. Most of these shows featured in Nick at Nite are from the 1960s and 1970s and never raise any violence issues. Shows such as **I Dream of Jeannie**, **Bewitched**, **I Love Lucy**, **The Mary Tyler Moore Show** and **Taxi** rarely feature any violent scenes. Although there is occasionally a scene of physical comedy or slapstick (particularly on **Lucy**), it is always appropriate within the context of the show and of no concern.

The prime time Nickelodeon show that does occasionally raise concerns is **Ren and Stimpy**. Containing some of the irreverent spirit of **The Simpsons** (it has even been featured on **The Simpsons**), **Ren and Stimpy** is full of crude and sometimes graphically violent scenes. The issue here, as with The Disney Channel, is the context of the channel as a whole, which promises a consistent level of family entertainment.

In one episode of **Ren and Stimpy**, there is a scene in which Stimpy brushes his teeth with a hammer, saws off his nose, cuts off his tongue and pulls out his eyes. In a later cartoon in the same show, Ren is stung in the eye by a hornet. His eye swells and a lobster cuts off the top of Ren's head. This is animated, comedic violence. It is very graphic and goes far beyond the level of Nickelodeon's other programming. It is exaggerated and designed to disgust the young viewer, but it is extremely violent and atypical of the channel.

Are You Afraid of the Dark? contains some intense images but most are appropriate within the context of this 9:30 p.m. show. A ghost, appearing like a man, is consumed in flames in a scene that is more graphic than is necessary. Overall, the series, while containing more scenes of violence than Nickelodeon's other shows, did not raise concerns about violence.

Nickelodeon's Saturday morning programming also is largely free of violence and those shows that have some violent scenes are all minor and completely acceptable within the context of the show and time period. Even an animated series, **Beetlejuice**, based on the popular film which contained many comic but extremely graphic scenes, raised no issues at all.

5. Music Television (MTV)

MTV is one of the most controversial channels on television. Decried by critics, adored by fans, MTV almost single-handedly created the demand for music videos. Music was the mainstay of MTV for most of the 1980s. The channel also was a pioneer of the use of computer graphics which are featured in its on-air logos and promotions. In the 1990s MTV has moved away from just featuring music and has created original real-life dramas, animation, news, documentaries and even sports programming.

Although MTV appeals to youth, its intended audience is much older than that of Nickelodeon or Disney. MTV was created to be controversial and, not surprisingly, it is. The issues in videos that earned the wrath of early critics, such as sexual themes and images of women as objects, are less in evidence in the 1990s. An analysis of MTV's programming must take into account the context of the entire channel and what MTV's brand name (like Disney's) means to the viewers.

Videos make up an ever-shrinking part of MTV's programming. Each weekday evening at 8:00 MTV runs a two-hour block of music videos in a program appropriately titled **Primetime**. The show features music videos mostly from well-known performers such as Boyz II Men, Aerosmith, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers and Madonna. More obscure or less mainstream music appears in some of the other video shows. Most of the videos do not raise any issues of violence or graphicness. There are some exceptions. A video called "California" by the group Wax shows a man on fire running down the street. This image runs through the entire video, lasts several minutes and is accompanied by the pounding beat of the music. There is no story in the video. The only context is provided by the lyrics, which are extremely difficult to decipher. The viewer never learns anything about the situation. Another video with graphic images is Snoop Doggy Dogg's "Murder Was the Case." A mini-drama, it is the story of a murder. It contains a few intense images but they are contextually appropriate. The words of the song, however, complicate the issue somewhat by making the murder case seem exciting. Yet another video with violence is Jon Bon Jovi's "Always," which contains a scene of a young man trashing and blowing up an apartment. The other video collection shows, **Alternative Nation** and **The Top 20 Countdown**, as well as the concert show **Unplugged**, also do not raise any violence concerns. **Yo' MTV Raps**, a program that features rap videos that many critics feel do raise concerns about violence, was aired outside the times monitored by this project.

Four original programs on MTV were monitored during the sample period: **The Real World**, **Dead at 21**, **The State** and **Beavis and Butt-Head**. The first three are live action programs, while **Beavis and Butt-Head** is animated. The live action shows have a gritty feel and do contain minor scenes of violence. All of the scenes are central to the story, are not graphic and, therefore, raise very few concerns.

Beavis and Butt-Head is probably the most famous and controversial program on MTV. It is a satire of MTV's own viewers, though it is not clear they always get the joke. Similar to **The Simpsons** with its primitive animation and "in your face" humor, **Beavis and Butt-Head** is

often crude and tasteless. This is by design and is part of the appeal of the show. The show begins with the funny quasi-advisory:

Beavis and Butt-Head are not role models. They're not even human. They're cartoons. Some of the things they do would cause a person to get hurt, expelled, arrested, possibly deported. To put it another way: Don't try this at home.

On several occasions, episodes of **Beavis and Butt-Head** came close to raising concerns about the use of violence. The two characters are usually seen beaten up, degraded or rejected in some crude and humiliating way. Crossing the line is a distinguishing characteristic of the show. Importantly, Beavis and Butt-Head are never shown as heroes and are instead portrayed as pathetic and weak. What ultimately mitigates most of the concerns, is that MTV has placed **Beavis and Butt-Head** in the latest time period available in prime time. Like **The Simpsons**, this is satire. The difference between the two shows is that MTV places **Beavis and Butt-Head** in an adult time period. If **Beavis and Butt-Head** ran at 7:00 or 8:00, it too would raise concerns. Several years ago, an episode of the show in which Beavis and Butt-Head start a fire was allegedly linked to a real fire in which a little girl was killed. At that time, the show ran early in the evening, attracting children who did not understand the satiric nature of the program. It is more appropriately placed at 10:30.

MTV on Saturday morning consists of an unusual mix of programs. The very early programs **The Brothers Grunt** and **Speed Racer** contain a fair number of gratuitously violent scenes and raise some concerns. **The Brothers Grunt** is a show that tries very hard to be gross. One episode contains several scenes of fighting and a character being bashed over the head with a TV. **Speed Racer** is an old animated series that uses car crashes but also contains fighting and scenes with guns. Most of the rest of the morning is taken up by the **Top 20 Video Countdown**, which does not raise any additional issues of concern.

6. TBS (The Atlanta Superstation)

TBS was the first of the Turner cable channels. Now there are five others. TBS is very different from other cable channels in a significant way: it is licensed as a local UHF station, WTBS, in Atlanta. This means that it is regulated like a broadcast station rather than a cable system and must serve the public interest, convenience and necessity. In the 1970s, Turner transformed both broadcasting and cable by taking his over-the-air Atlanta station and beaming it up to a satellite to create a "Superstation." He took WTBS, with its weak signal, and transformed it into a national television station.

Turner was able to broadcast games of Atlanta's baseball and basketball teams on TBS because he owned the teams. Over the years, TBS has developed like a network, with a mix of different programming types. It runs far fewer original programs than a network and more theatrical films. In 1985, Turner purchased one of the biggest and best movie libraries from MGM and that library has become a source of much programming on all the Turner cable channels. Turner runs

more television and theatrical films than any other source in television. As of August, 1995, Turner airs over 700 films a month. TBS also runs more documentaries than the broadcast networks. Ted Turner's interest in both scientific exploration and the environment is well represented by the National Geographic and Jacques Cousteau documentaries.

TBS is also different from other cable channels because it does not have separate East and West Coast feeds. Almost all cable networks use two separate transponders on the satellite so their programming can appear "at the same time" on both coasts. The East Coast feed is used to send a program out to the East at 8:00 and the other feed sends out the same program three hours later to the West. The result is a schedule that resembles that of a broadcast network. TBS, since it also exists as an over-the-air station must send all its programs out at the same time. Therefore, the definition of prime time differs with TBS. A program that begins at 6:00 p.m. in Los Angeles is simultaneously playing at 9:00 in the East. Some programs may raise concerns because they appear too early in one time zone, but may raise less concerns for another time period.

Theatrical Films

During the two-week period TBS was monitored, it ran 15 theatrical films. Of these, six would raise concerns about violence if shown on a broadcast network. None of the films is free of violence and, in addition to the six that would raise concerns, several come very close to doing so. Most of the films have intense themes and contain a great deal of action. The six that would raise concerns on a broadcast network are the following:

Play Dirty

The film contains 12 prolonged scenes of violence. The first scene shows an Englishman shooting at some Arabs, reloading his rifle and continuing to fire even after they are dead. Very upbeat music accentuates the violence. Other scenes are also very long and could be edited. This film ran at 8:00 in Los Angeles and 11:00 in the East.

Invasion U.S.A.

The film stars Chuck Norris who uses some of the same martial arts skills seen in **Walker, Texas Ranger**. Because this film was made for the theater rather than television, the fighting scenes are more graphic and deadly than what is found on broadcast. There are approximately 15 scenes of violence. In one scene near the end, the violence, as in some other action films, does little to move the story, but instead demonstrates a "super" weapon that can kill far more excessively than necessary. Toward the end of the film, Norris shoots his adversary by launching a grenade into his chest. This film began at 7:00 in the West.

Cujo

The film also contains scenes of prolonged violence, many of which do little to further the story. One scene, in which the rabid dog Cujo attacks a mother and child in their car, is overly long. The horror of this image is adequately conveyed very early in the scene. Many of the later attack scenes are long and graphic. **Cujo** ran at 7:30 on the West Coast.

Death Warrant

A Jean-Claude Van Damme film, **Death Warrant** has close to 20 scenes of violence. The entire film is about violence. One scene shows a prisoner being strangled with dental floss and the nearly five-minute finale is a long, violent fight scene. In this final scene, a man is cut with a light bulb and fights back, kicking his opponent into an incinerator. The man emerges charred, but ready to continue fighting. Finally the bad guy's head is impaled on a spike. The scene is very long and very graphic. The movie ran at 7:05 in Los Angeles.

Poltergeist III

Although there are fewer violent scenes than in the above movies, at the end of this movie a shovel is used to knock a preacher's head off. The scene could be less graphic than it is and would raise concerns if shown on a broadcast network. It began at 7:30 in the West.

High Plains Drifter

A Clint Eastwood Western, this film contains endless amounts of violence. Some of the considerable number of shootings are glorified and the shooters seem to be the heroes. This is one of the films described earlier that probably could not be edited sufficiently for broadcast network television. It began at 7:30 p.m. in Los Angeles.

Three films, **Tarantulas: the Deadly Cargo**, **Ants** and **Deadly Tower**, are very intense and would come close to raising concerns about violence on the networks. The tarantula and ant movies are not documentaries but rather are about those creatures attacking humans and wreaking havoc. More of the theatricals aired on TBS depend on action or violence than those monitored on the four broadcast networks.

Other prime time programming

Much of the rest of the prime time schedule is free of violence. Shows such as **The Munsters** and **Live from the House of Blues** contain no violence at all. Other prime time programs, **Perry Mason** and **Matlock**, contain some violence but raise no issues of concern. Nor did the scientific documentaries.

Saturday Morning Programming

Because its programming airs irrespective of time zones, it is not possible to precisely define Saturday morning on TBS. Most of the morning is filled with Jacques Cousteau or National Geographic programs which, as mentioned above, do not raise any issues of concern. Of concern, however, was the running of Jean Claude Van-Damme's **Kickboxer 2** at 9:00 in the morning in the West and 12:00 noon in the East. It raised particular concerns because of the West Coast time. **Kickboxer 2** contained an advisory that "This movie contains violent material which may be unsuitable for children." The advisory ran at the beginning of the program and again an hour later. Even with the advisories and the later East Coast time, **Kickboxer 2** is one of the most violent films to appear anywhere on television. It contains over 20 very prolonged and intense scenes of violence. There are three scenes of five, six and seven minutes in length. The film frequently uses slow motion to emphasize the violence. Without the fighting scenes there would be very little movie. There are even fighting scenes over the closing credits. It would raise concerns if shown on the broadcast networks at any time, but especially 9:00 in the morning on Saturday.

7. The USA Network

The USA Network is the closest thing on cable to a broadcast television network. Its mix of programs, theatrical and television movies and original series very nearly parallels that of the networks. USA is among the most successful of the cable networks. It reaches approximately 60 million homes. Much of the programming on USA, both the films and the series, contains more intense action than is found overall on the broadcast networks.

Theatrical Films

Five theatrical films were monitored during the two-week sample period. Of these five, three would raise serious issues of concern if shown on broadcast television. Coincidentally, all three of these films star Sylvester Stallone. The first film is **Nighthawks**, which contains many scenes of intense violence. One scene, over six minutes long, features an innocent bystander being shot and killed, a woman being taken hostage at knife point and a man being bloodily slashed in the face with a knife. The other two films are **Rambo First Blood** and **Rambo III**, both of which are violence free-for-alls. They are filled with long, intense scenes of violence. It would be impossible to cut the violence from the films, especially **Rambo III**, which contains scene after scene of combat, shootings and explosions. Both of these films would raise concerns on the broadcast networks.

Television Movies

USA ran two made-for-television movies during the sample period and both raised issues of concern about violence. Neither is very graphic but, like many of the television movies which appear on the broadcast networks, both contain themes of violence and one has a violent title.

The two television movies are **Tall, Dark and Deadly** and **Hush Little Baby**. Each of the films features killers and three violent deaths. They bear a striking resemblance to network television movies that raise concerns.

Series Programming

USA shows mostly original programming in prime time. The majority of its programming raises few if any issues of concern. The one show that resembles network shows that raise concerns is **Tek Wars**. Of the four times this show was examined, it raised issues of concern about violence three times. **Tek Wars** is an action adventure show about hunting down villains which is characterized by continuous scenes of violence, some of which are very long. There are multiple casualties on each show and sometimes random and unknown people are caught in the crossfire. Many of the longer scenes could easily be cut. This show is like **Mantis** and **Fortune Hunter** in that its story is tied together by violent scenes.

Saturday Morning Programming

USA's Saturday morning schedule contained no issues of violence at all. Some of the time was sold to infomercials and the few programs that aired were free of violence.

8. TNT (Turner Network Television)

Turner Broadcasting introduced TNT after it achieved success with TBS and CNN. Created as a venue for Turner's vast library of films, TNT consists almost exclusively of theatrical and television movies. Since its beginning, TNT has financed or produced many large scale original productions. Some examples are discussed below. Since the creation of TNT, Turner has also developed two additional networks--one for its film library, Turner Classic Movies, and the other for all of the Hanna-Barbera product it owns, The Cartoon Network. Each channel has its own philosophy of programming and the philosophy of TNT is action movies.

Of the 20 films monitored on TNT in the two-week sample period, seven would raise concerns if shown on the broadcast networks. Several of the other 13 films come close to raising concerns. All of the films contain scenes of violence but treat them in a variety of different ways. The films that would raise concerns on the broadcast networks are as follows:

Escape from New York

This film contains many scenes of prolonged violence, most of which would probably be trimmed before the film was shown on the networks. In one scene, the hero is forced to fight with one of the villain's henchmen in a battle to the death reminiscent of a gladiator competition. They first fight with baseball bats and later with a spiked version of the bats. Ultimately, the

henchman is dispatched with blows to the gut and back of the head with the spiked weapon. Many of the scenes are not nearly as graphic as they could be, but the film, overall, contains a large amount of violence.

Geronimo

One of TNT's original productions, this film is filled with battle scenes between the Apaches and the soldiers. The use of violence is to be expected in this kind of historical docudrama and there is ample evidence of it. The problem is not the violence itself, which is relevant to the story, but the length of the violent battle scenes, some of which last as long as five minutes and show graphic images of stabbings and throats being slashed. The historical point could be made with less gratuitous violence. This film would raise concerns if shown on the broadcast networks.

Kingfish: A Story of Huey Long

This is another of TNT's original productions. Since Huey Long was assassinated, it follows that this film would include a scene of his murder and, therefore, contain violence. After Long is shot, his body guards riddle the assassin's body with bullets. The scene is absolutely integral to the story and must be shown. It is, however, excessively gory and goes on for a very long time. Slow motion is used to effectively extend the violence beyond real time. This scene would probably be edited somewhat before it ran on broadcast television.

Into the Sun

Although this film runs for two hours, almost all of the 20 scenes of violence occur during the second hour. The film is full of all kinds of explosions. Very little of the violence is excessive or graphic, but there is just too much of it. It would be difficult to remove the violence and leave the story intact.

Framed

Another film with a large number of scenes of violence, **Framed** contains several brutal scenes of fighting. The film contains every conceivable method of committing a violent act. There are fists, guns and knives, scenes of torture, sexual violence and even a dog attack.

Red Dawn

Red Dawn, which contains over 30 scenes of violence, is a combat film with political overtones. Since the fighting is rooted in patriotism, all of it is glorified. Although the political nature of this

film is interesting, the endless scenes of violence are frequently redundant and detract from the story. Many of the violent scenes are gratuitous.

The Avenging Angel

Although there are many scenes of violence, most of them further the plot and fit the context of the story. Several of the scenes demonstrate a clear use of restraint, illustrate remorse and show the consequences of the violence. The film contains much violence. But the use of an advisory would eliminate almost all concerns.

TNT's Saturday morning programming is not geared to children. If children did watch, they would see mild acts of violence in Westerns that would not raise concerns.

D. Home Video (Rentals)

Home video, an industry that barely existed 15 years ago, now generates revenues that exceed box office ticket sales. Home video is heavily dependent on the publicity and promotion attendant to a motion picture's release in theaters. While there has also been very successful non-theatrical home video content, such as exercise tapes and old television shows, most of the home video rental business comes from theatrical films.

Home video is divided into the purchase and rental markets. Increasingly people are purchasing home videos rather than renting them. Prices for purchasing videos tend to be either in the \$13-\$20 range or over \$80. Increasingly, large motion pictures such as **Jurassic Park** or **The Lion King** are offered for sale at \$15. Coupons for special promotions lower the price even more. Nevertheless, there seem to be a limited number of films that people want to own. The Disney animation classics and very popular films do well in the purchase market. Most viewers rent their home videos at their local video store.

In the areas of sex, language and violence, home video offers at least one level of protection for children not available in the other television distribution systems. Home videos are not available by merely clicking on channels on the television set. The viewer has to make an affirmative decision to go to a video store, select a film and rent it. The situation varies from store to store, but young children often cannot easily rent films because a cash deposit or, more frequently, a credit card is needed. Ideally, the video is watched in whatever room and at whatever time the parent decides. Films with sex or graphic violence can be viewed when the children are asleep. The video is small enough to be hidden or locked away from children who should not watch it. These controls have significantly contributed to the growth of pornography in the home video market and the spread of that material into CD-ROM.

With few exceptions, the content of theatrical films on home video exactly duplicates what is seen in the theater. When this is true, the MPAA rating is still applicable and can guide viewers

as to the content of the video. Occasionally, the home video is different than what is seen in the theater. Sometimes additional footage is added to the film. Motion picture studios, belong to the MPAA which requires directors and producers deliver to them a film that will be rated no stronger than "R." In some cases, scenes have to be edited or completely eliminated to receive the "R" rating. Home video provides an opportunity to restore these scenes. But in most cases, home video replicates theater content.

Although home video is a system directly linked to the film business, the videos are shown on a home monitor and become part of the television system. Therefore, home video becomes a part of this monitoring project. We examined the top ten home video rental titles each quarter as determined by Billboard. The monitoring began with an early August, 1994 list and continued every three months in November, February and May. While we arbitrarily chose the initial week in which to begin, we were bound by the lists that followed at three-month intervals.

Once again, the goal of monitoring video rentals is not to determine whether these films raise concerns about their use of violence in their native environment of home video, but rather if they would raise concerns if shown in this form on the broadcast television networks. Film is a medium that appeals to an adolescent and young adult audience which is more tolerant of graphic or intense violence. As a result, one would expect many of the most popular video rentals to be action films that use violence as part of the story. It is not surprising that of the 40 home video rental titles examined over the past year, 22 would raise concerns if shown on broadcast television. Another five came very close to raising concerns as well.

More than a few of the home video rentals have titles which promise action or intense themes. Of the 22 films that would raise concerns on the networks, six, or more than 25%, have action titles. The six that do are **Blown Away**, **Natural Born Killers**, **Speed**, **Time Cop**, **The Getaway** and **Clear and Present Danger**. Of the 18 that would not raise violence concerns, none has an action or violent title.

Some of the films could probably be easily modified or edited to eliminate concerns on broadcast television. These films do not use violence throughout and contain scenes the length or intensity of which could be changed for broadcast without affecting the integrity of the story. **Clear and Present Danger**, though containing action scenes, is really a political thriller about American corruption and the South American drug trade. Its action scenes are typical of its genre and are only infrequently excessive. It would probably be easily adapted to broadcast television. The same is true with **In the Name of the Father**, a political film about the British treatment of Irish political prisoners. It could also be easily adapted. This also applies to **I Love Trouble**, **The Nightmare Before Christmas** and **The River Wild**. The only one of the three with intense scenes, many of them psychological, is **The River Wild**. An updated version of **Deliverance**, this film is about two criminals who terrorize a family on a river rafting trip. It does contain intense scenes of violence, but they are few in number.

Several of the films fall into the action category described in the broadcast television section on theatrical film. These films contain 20-40 scenes of violence that combine to form a context heavily dependent on violent action. It is impossible to edit out the problematic violence without removing huge portions of the film or destroying its ability to tell the story. These films raised

more concerns about violence than any that appeared on broadcast television. The home video titles that fall into this category feature the same stars and themes. It is questionable if they could ever be shown on the broadcast networks without raising concerns about violence. **Time Cop** is another Jean-Claude Van Damme film. Like his other films shown on broadcast, local television and cable, it is full of violence. This is central to its appeal and it would be fruitless to try to remove all the violent scenes.

The Crow, Brandon Lee's last film, is also full of violence that is central to its story and appeal. This film contains some of the most graphic violence seen during the entire season. **True Lies**, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, contains dozens of scenes of violence that sustain the theme of the film. Though it has a comedic tone, it relies heavily on guns, explosions and much combat. **Beverly Hills Cop III** would also raise considerable concern, as is, on broadcast television. Its scenes, also frequently played for comedy, fill the film with violence and would raise concerns on the networks. One film, in which the comedic treatment diminishes concerns about minor scenes of violence and, therefore, would not be a problem on the networks is **Naked Gun 33-1/3**. **The Specialist** also falls into the category of films that contain violence at their core and would not easily adapt to the broadcast world.

Five of the films that could not appear on broadcast television without raising concerns about violence bring forth some interesting issues about different types and styles of violence. These films warrant more detailed discussions. They are the following:

Natural Born Killers

Natural Born Killers, Oliver Stone's caustic satire of the way in which the media transforms violent criminals into celebrities, is an intentionally brutal film. One can not fully appreciate Stone's ironic point until he or she learns how completely violent and psychopathic Mickey and Mallory are. The film is filled with extraordinarily graphic and disturbing images. People are shot indiscriminately at close range and even Mallory's mother and father are brutally murdered. Later in the film, just as the viewer begins to "like" these psychotic killers, they kill in an increasingly brutal fashion. Stone uses a variety of styles to capture the chaotic feel of the story. He alternates between color and grainy black and white, and between slow motion, awkward camera angles and negative reverse images. Many of the same cinematic techniques are used in Stone's earlier film, **JFK**. Ever present is a hard-driving soundtrack that provides the pulse for the film. The film, as it intends to be, is overwhelming for the eyes and ears.

As with most satire, there is a debate about whether the audience understands the director's point. Those who do not are left with a long series of highly glorified, extremely graphic scenes. This is one of the most controversial films in years. In the hands of a less skilled film maker, **Natural Born Killers** would be viewed like other gruesome films such as **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre**.

This is one of the few films that is unlikely to ever appear on broadcast network television. There are simply too many scenes of terrible violence and the story as a whole is about horrendously violent people. It would be impossible to take the violence out of the film without destroying the

entire story. It would be equally difficult to edit the scenes. The director makes his point through the use of extraordinary violence and toning those acts down would change the meaning of the story. The director made this film for theatrical release and eventually home video. It is not a film for broadcast television.

Schindler's List

One of the most honored films in years, Steven Spielberg's **Schindler's List** epitomizes the point that a film may contain very violent scenes and not raise concerns because of the appropriateness of the context. Because of its quality and the importance of the story, this film should be broadcast on network television, although it would most likely be edited somewhat. Several of the scenes are excessively violent and this is their purpose. This is the story of an excessively violent and senseless event and the graphic violence communicates that point.

Photographed in black and white, scenes such as the one showing a factory worker being shot in the head and falling on the ground as dark blood oozes out of his head onto the snow are more graphic than what is typically seen on broadcast television. Here the story warrants the graphicness. The same is true of the scene depicting the random shooting of prisoners in the courtyard from the commandant's tower. In our view, it is probably better if **Schindler's List** does appear as is on broadcast television than if it is edited or altered. In that case, it should be accompanied by strong advisories about its subject matter and some very violent images. As an extremely important film, this deserves some degree of latitude.

The Getaway

This is one of the most violent films monitored this season. Its graphicness is as intense and disturbing as can be seen in any form of video. It is exceptionally violent and without the important context of the above films. One scene in particular is excessive and only serves to disturb the viewer. In this scene, a spike is slowly driven into a hotel clerk's knee. It is a shocking image, far more violent than necessary, and it only serves to demonstrate how violent a theatrical film can be.

Speed

One of the biggest action films in several years, **Speed** is filled with many highly violent scenes. Theatrical audiences pay to see action films like this. Several shootings and the eventual decapitation of Dennis Hopper are extremely intense. Like other action films, some of the scenes will probably be toned down before this film ends up on broadcast television.

Ace Ventura: Pet Detective

Also one of the most successful films of the year, this surprise hit launched Jim Carrey's film career. This is a comedy and the violent scenes are not as intense as in the films described above. Nevertheless, the film also strongly appeals to young children and contains images that might raise concerns in regard to that audience. Some of the many scenes are prolonged and excessive for a film with youthful appeal. As would be expected in a comedy, none of the scenes are graphic. Paring down the prolonged scenes of comedic violence would make this suitable for broadcast television.

The other home video rentals that would raise concerns on network television are the following:

Bad Girls
Blown Away
Maverick
Serial Mom
Stargate
Tombstone
Wyatt Earp

E. Video Games

The video game business, like home video, is a new industry. In the last 20 years video games have become an important force in the media world. In the early days of video games, most were played at commercial machines in restaurants and other places of business. Then video arcades opened and attracted many young customers.

Video games spread from the arcades to units that attached to consumers' televisions and did not require coins to play. The industry has gone through much turmoil. Atari, a very successful company in the early 1980s, has today become a minor force (though it is still competing in 1995 with a new system). Today the standard is 16-bit machines and that market is divided between Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo. The equipment for this format attaches to a television set and becomes part of the world of television. Most titles are licensed to both platforms, but some are developed by one of the companies and not available to their competitors. **Donkey Kong Country**, the number one seller of the past year, is not available to Sega.

The video game business is currently going through another transformation. The current 16-bit standard offers only adequate quality graphics and is slow compared to what is becoming available. There is a move to 32- and 64-bit machines, and the addition of CDs, as in the 3DO or CD-I systems. The whole business is changing and the only thing that is clear is that the economic stakes are high, as customers are certain to purchase much hardware and software.

Although video games appeal primarily to young people, many of the users can not afford the equipment without financial assistance from others, usually their parents. The current price of the

hardware for the less expensive systems begins around \$100. This is more than most kids can afford. More complex systems cost as much as \$400. The software can also be expensive. While there are less costly titles available, the most popular games cost about \$50.

Because of the high costs compared to television or home video, parents are almost always a part of the purchase process in video games. Kids simply cannot acquire the hardware or most of the software without help. Parents may acquiesce by giving their children the money for the equipment or buying the titles they want.

Since the parents are usually part of the purchase process, they have an obligation to become involved in the purchase decision. It is their responsibility to find out about the game and how it is played. Almost any video store will demonstrate the game. Parents should not passively hand over the money for the games or acquire the packages without investigating the game. More so than with any other media system described in this report, parents have a responsibility and an opportunity to learn about the video games that interest their children.

To help with this parental role, the video game industry has developed a rating system. Devised by the Entertainment Software Rating Board for the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), the ratings are administered by Dr. Arthur Pober. As of November, 1994, video games are rated for one of five audiences:

EC: Early Childhood titles are suitable for children ages 3 and older and do not contain material parents would find inappropriate.

KA: Kids to Adult is suitable for ages 6 and older; they may contain minimal violence or some crude language.

T: Teen is for those 13 and older; they may contain violent content, strong language or suggestive themes.

MA: Mature material for ages 17 and older; these products may include more intense violence and language with more mature sexual themes.

A: Adults only; these may include graphic depictions of sex and/or violence and are not to be sold to those under 18 years of age.

It is a system that deals with different levels of violence. The ISDA is addressing parents' concerns in a responsible way. Unfortunately, whether by accident or design, a number of retailers have placed a price tag over the game's rating.

All of the other forms of media discussed in this report have some relation to each other. Theatrical films, for example, become the content of home video, cable, network television and local television. Television series become the content of the syndicated marketplace. While video games do attach to the television set and become a part of the home television environment, they are really a very different part of that world. We looked at video games in a very tangential way

and do not imply that our findings apply to all games in the industry. We did, however, look at the most successful games.

We examined the five top-selling video games of the year as compiled by the NPD Group which, according to the IDSA, is accepted as the best source of retail sales data. The NPD Group's listings separate games by platform so that NBA Jam, for example, is both second (on Sega) and fourth (on Super Nintendo). Ignoring the different platforms, we established the list of games to be monitored as follows:

Donkey Kong Country
NBA Jam
Mortal Kombat II
Sonic the Hedgehog 3
The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

We moved the **Power Rangers** up the list slightly because it is a title in both the television and feature film world and we felt those other media might spur sales of the video game. Although not best sellers, we also looked at **Beavis and Butt-Head** and **The Tick** because they also have a presence in the television world.

Some critics have argued that video games, by their very nature, encourage violent behavior. They make the case that the act of pulling some kind of trigger or pushing a button is like shooting a gun. They also argue that chasing anything, even a friendly little blob as in **Pac-Man**, is tantamount to hunting and then killing. These are some of the same critics that consider almost any sport to be potentially violent. While we understand the philosophy behind this argument, we are not persuaded that all video games are, by their nature, violent.

Two of the categories created for children's programming, tame combat violence and sinister combat violence, apply well to these games. Slapstick really does not apply and a new category, sports, needs to be added. The only sports game we examined, **NBA Jam**, falls into this new category and allows the user to play basketball. It is a non-violent game except that players occasionally bump into each other. Martial arts games would not be considered as part of the sports grouping.

Most of the rest of the games (like many of the Saturday morning shows) fall into the tame combat classification. In these, some kind of minor confrontation is part of the game. These confrontations, however, neither involve weapons nor killing; instead they may simply disappear or fall off the screen and out of the field of play. If there is fighting it is, as the category name suggests, tame. The game environment usually has bright colors and graphics, carnival-like background music and simple looking, clearly animated characters, small in relation to the screen size. **Donkey Kong Country**, **Sonic the Hedgehog 3**, **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers**, **The Tick** and **Beavis and Butt-Head** all fall into this tame combat category. These games would not raise concerns about violence except for the youngest audiences.

The third category, sinister combat violence, contained one title, **Mortal Kombat II**. These are the games in which the goal is to injure or kill the opponent (another player or the computer).

The characters tend to be larger than in the tame games, allowing for greater detail to be shown in combat. Methods of fighting tend to be more elaborate and far more lethal in nature. A much wider variety of fighting techniques and options are available. For example, rather than just punching an opponent as might be found in the tame combat games, in sinister combat games a character has a selection of different, distinctive punches, some of which are more lethal than others. Players learn the ins and outs of fighting. These games also tend to be much more graphic; blood and disfigurement are often evident. Interestingly, the characters in these games have backgrounds and identities described in the instruction manual. Each character or fighter has his or her own distinctive personality, thereby making them seem more human and the game more realistic.

Some studies show that parents believe video games contain horrible violence and bring out aggressive and disturbing characteristics in their children. **Mortal Kombat II** (and **I**) is the game that sustains that belief. It contains the violence that many parents fear. It is sinister combat violence and even pushes that category to the edge.

Mortal Kombat comes in a variety of formats: video arcade, home video games, computer software and, in August, 1995, a motion picture. We examined the Sega version of the video game. **Mortal Kombat II** comes with the MA (Mature Audiences) rating, but as mentioned above, some retailers cover the label.

Mortal Kombat is a very realistic combat game. Players choose which character they wish to portray. There are 14 characters each of whom has a biography in the instruction manual. Two of the 14 are women. One male fighter, "Reptile," is described as follows:

Shang Tsung's personal protector, Reptile lurks in the shadows stopping all those who would do his master harm. His human form is believed to disguise a horrific reptilian creature whose race was thought extinct millions of years ago. He enters the contest hoping to defeat all and protect his master.

Each character has special moves and skills that are described in the manual. A player enters combat against another player or the computer. The combat is brutal and realistic, involving vivid sounds and special moves. As the opponent is beaten, there is no doubt that the confrontation will end in death as the computer encourages the victor to "FINISH HIM." The game is about brutal combat and players spend hours mastering combat moves and techniques.

What parents and many others do not know, however, is that there are special "blood codes" available that take the game to a higher and extraordinarily graphic and violent level. These codes are not in the instruction manual and parents would not know about them. A player in Sega's **Mortal Kombat I** achieves this higher level by pressing buttons in a special sequence. Both Sega's and Nintendo's **Mortal Kombat II** have special moves that are published in video game magazines and on the Internet. The articles reveal special moves not described in the manual that allow players to rip off arms and watch them spurt blood. They also teach how to impale on hooks, slash an opponent's throat, cause an opponent's body to explode or decapitate him or her. It is the most shocking and grisly violence imaginable.

Most video games now seem to be under the umbrella of the rating system. There have been some extremely violent games, including some on CD-ROM, that involve terrorizing women. The worst of the games are as bad as critics and parents fear. Our hope is that this will begin to improve as parents assume their responsibility in the purchase process of the video game.

PART IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

It is impossible to monitor close to 3,000 hours of television programming without developing an overall impression of the medium. Everyone uses television for vastly different reasons. Some look to it as their prime source of entertainment or as a way to pass time. Others want to know what is happening in their world and in their neighborhood. Many people pay close attention to television while others use it as background noise or to help them fall asleep. It has been simultaneously praised for creating the most sophisticated and aware generation in America's history and condemned for producing the least literate and most violent.

Television can be wonderful. With little direct costs to the viewer, it supplies a steady diet of entertainment and information. It can teach important lessons long before a child enters a classroom and inspire that child to become a good citizen and a productive member of society. If it does not do this, television will become, in the words of the man who used it better than any other, Edward R. Murrow, "merely wires and lights in a box."

All the good that television does is in danger of being eclipsed by an angry public and government demanding that something be done about violence on the screen. The world of television, from broadcast networks, to syndication, to cable, to home video, is not as violent as we had feared and not as wholesome as we might have hoped. There is room for substantial improvement. This report is intended to open the pathway for that improvement.

In the broadcast world, the four television networks have begun to get the message about television violence. The programming they completely control, series and television movies, has, for the most part, shown some promising signs and now reflects, on the whole, relatively few issues of concern as compared to other network television formats. The violence contained in the most disturbing television series is minor in comparison to that contained in theatrical films shown on network broadcast television. And that violence, edited as it is, is tame compared to films shown in theaters, in home videos and on pay cable. Today, we see few programs with violence as their central theme. More programming uses violence well or does not use it at all. The public seems to be responding. Of the top 30 shows of the season, only two are listed in this report as raising concerns about violence. It is possible to create popular programs that do not resort to inappropriate uses of violence.

Television movies also show some hopeful signs. While 23 out of 161 still raise concerns about violence, there are fewer television movies that focused on the minute and graphic details of gruesome crimes than in May of 1993. The practices and standards departments and programming executives at the four networks are having an important influence in dealing with violence in television series and television movies.

Even with the positive indicators we see in these two areas, there is still room for much more to be done. The scheduling of shows with violence early in the evening, particularly on Sunday, needs to be reconsidered. Television movies should avoid focusing on violent themes or using

violent titles. They also need a better and more consistent use of advisories. Almost all of the television movies that raised concerns lacked advisories. Only Fox makes liberal use of advisories and this is because it has to run its films earlier than the other networks.

The networks seem to have a policy prohibiting the depiction of bullets or knives entering the body. Instead, the viewer typically sees the victim after the shooting or stabbing. When violence is necessary to the story, this successfully alleviates some concerns by avoiding the need for graphic images. We raise the question: where are the alternatives to violence? Our concern is not only whether it is contextually appropriate for someone to reach for a gun and shoot, but rather, must someone always reach for a gun? There needs to be an exploration of other alternatives. In many instances, excessive violence seems to come from a poverty of creative ideas. The best writers are able to create multi-dimensional characters whose motivations are more important than acts of violence. Many theatrical action films must have scripts that describe the last 15 minutes as: "A big car chase, crash, several explosions and a fight to the death." It takes good writers to do better than that.

There are still serious problems in theatricals films on television, on-air promotions and children's television. These areas require considerable attention. The question of what theatricals can run on network television should be rethought. The networks agree that some films simply cannot be shown on television. They ought to examine whether theatrical action films with 30-50 scenes of violence belong in this category. These are the films that must be edited beyond recognition, and even then their consistent theme of violence cannot be minimized. All that can be edited are the absolute worst moments of violence such as the glass entering the body in **Ghost**. Advisories need to be more consistently applied here also.

On-air promotions continue to raise important concerns. Some of the writers and producers we spoke with expressed frustration at trying to deal with violence intelligently only to see their shows promoted by the scenes of violence--stripped of any context. Promotions have to sell the viewer on the show. They need to grab attention and violence is one of the ways to do it. Even if this premise is accepted, there is no compelling need to put every scene of violence in the promo, thereby overwhelming the viewer's attention. If a promo must feature a scene of violence, it can do so with one scene while trying to establish some surrounding context for the show. In some ways, the most honest promo we saw all season was the one for **Walker, Texas Ranger** which showed Chuck Norris throwing several punches. The promo promises a fight and this is what **Walker** delivers. But promos provide important opportunities to do much more. Scheduling is also an important area of promos and the networks need to pay much more attention to the shows in which they place promos. A review of standards for promos and theatrical film ads should be made over the next season.

Many of those who work in children's television will be surprised at our concerns about violence in some of these programs. They will point out that the amount of violence has decreased and no one is ever killed in children's programs. Producers of **The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers** might argue that the Rangers only fight monsters and the show is all fantasy. The point defenders miss is that the shows we classify as sinister combat violence are only about violence. Alternatives to violence are rarely discussed. The shows send the message that fighting, if not fun, is at least the norm. It is true that people rarely die on Saturday morning, but it is not true

that they rarely fight. While the programs featuring sinister combat violence raise the most concerns, the other shows continue to raise issues that will be examined in subsequent reports. It is ironic that programming geared largely to adults, prime time, is showing promising signs in regard to violence, while that created especially for children continues to have serious problems.

This is the first of three annual reports that the Center will issue on the state of television violence. Future reports will be able to analyze both how the issue of violence in the next television season has improved or worsened and also how the industry itself has responded to our recommendations. This is an unprecedented situation. We know that we have the industry's attention and plan to focus that attention on ways to improve the television picture of violence. After the release of this report, the Center is prepared to work with the industry on how to implement its recommendations. One of our recommendations suggests that the follow up to this report begin with a series of discussions with the networks to identify what is and what is not working in the effort to improve the situation in the area of television violence.

In any serious cooperative endeavor, success is predicated upon the involved parties having at least a modicum of respect for each other. In the present project, this is especially true in regard to the target of the criticisms, the television industry. Members of the television industry are not children in need of training, nor are they insensitive ogres whose concerns for the bottom line outweigh those for the quality of society. There is a tendency among academics to believe that if only television people knew the results of the scientific studies, they would change their evil ways. There is a tendency among moral critics to forget that members of the television industry have parents, children, brothers and sisters too, and that they care about making society a healthy and peaceful place. The industry could profit from a closer look at some of the evidence and conclusions of the scientific studies, but that is not to say that a huge knowledge gap exists between the scientific community and the television industry. Survey after survey, including one the Center conducted last year with U.S. News & World Report, clearly indicate that the industry knows it has a problem with television violence and wants to do something about it. Having said that, it is also important to recognize that the television business is competitive, and growing more so each day. In order to enable broadcast networks to make significant improvements in this area, their competition, including cable television networks, will have to address this issue as well. Increasingly, viewers simply do not distinguish among broadcast and cable channels as they "surf" through their television dial.

Though the members of the industry should not be regarded as ignorant and uncaring, there is certainly something to be said for holding their feet to the fire with an eye toward making the necessary improvements in programming. There is a tendency for the industry to make the proper noises and then wait for the danger to blow over. There needs to be some mechanism put in place whereby the industry will feel pressured to make real changes. The government needs to recognize when change occurs. If the industry is not held accountable in some concrete way, nothing will be accomplished.

In producing this report we have spoken to leading network executives, producers, writers, researchers, advocacy and public interest groups and parents. All have impressed us with their concern for the issue and their commitment to make things better. Frequently, in dealing with each other, these groups misunderstand or mistrust the others' motives. All too often they have

tried to demonize the other side. An issue, like a war, is easier to fight if you are convinced the other side lacks your own standards of decency. Despite what some in the industry say, much of the study of television violence has been well-conceived and meets the highest standards of scholarship. It is not created by “bean counters” with elitist notions that television is only pablum for the masses. And despite what the critics say, television executives are not money-grabbers willing to put on anything to make a buck. Both sides are full of intelligent people who care about the quality of their society. If some of the leading executives had gone to work at a university they might be conducting the very research they have come to distrust. And if many of the prominent researchers had gone into the television business they might be producing or scheduling the programs they criticize so often.

Most of our criteria for whether a program raises concerns about violence in its context are similar to those at the networks. These were the standards the networks adopted in 1992 and we evaluate them according to those standards. They too talk about consequences, punishment, graphicness and relevance to the story and believe that the programming they air reflects these standards. Many of their discussions are very similar to discussions we held at our weekly meetings. With two systems so similar, how do they frequently come to such different conclusions? Some differences can be credited to honest differences of interpretation. But others reflect programmers’ tendency to justify their decisions through the prism of their own programming. The network that runs reality programming claims that no matter how graphic the images are, they are realistic and better than the cartoon violence of an action science fiction program. The programmers of the science fiction show believe the audience knows their show is not serious and really just becomes a fantasy for the viewer. The networks are able to look at each other’s programming and easily see the problems. They have a harder time making the same judgments about their own programming.

Violence on television is a contentious social and political problem. Many of our friends and colleagues advised us to stay out of the fray. There is no way, they argued, you can please everyone and you may end up pleasing no one. It is not our goal to “please” anyone, but, it is our goal to act as an independent, objective and honest intermediary, able to make and defend sound judgments about issues of violent content on television and then to be available to recommend means and areas for improvement. The problem has been that programmers and their practices and standards departments have no one to talk to about these issues other than themselves, except for advocates whom they see as lacking objectivity or simply furthering their own cause. Hence, the need for an independent, outside monitor, not beholden to the networks, to the advocates or to the government.

As difficult as this issue is, we believe it can be addressed. Our report shows that some progress has already begun in several areas. Attention needs to be focused on how and why some programming has begun to move in the right direction and why the rest has not. What this issue needs, more than anything else, is cool heads on all sides of the problem: the network executives, the creative community, the government, researchers and advocacy groups. All sides need to worry less about how each development affects only them and instead look at the needs of everyone.

Our full focus is now on all that follows this report. Believing that all sides are serious about fully addressing the problem of television violence, we conclude this report with our recommendations about what can be done. The next annual report, due in the Fall of 1996, will begin with an assessment of the response to this report and the action that followed its release.

B. Recommendations

To the Broadcast Networks:

The Center for Communication Policy is prepared to discuss any aspect of this report and to fully work with the networks in implementing these recommendations.

1. **Scheduling:** Programs containing violent themes or images should be programmed in the later hours of the prime time schedule, specifically 9:00 p.m. or later. Special attention should be paid to what has been a trouble spot: Sunday evening. Action theatricals and television movies should be run as late as possible. Until Fox schedules a 10:00 p.m. hour of prime time, it should be especially vigilant in this area, continuing its liberal use of advisories.

2. **Promos:** The networks should re-examine their policies regarding promos. Attention should be focused on the lack of context in promos, the time periods and shows on which the promos run and how non-violent shows can produce action promos. All promos and theatrical advertisements should be reviewed by the practices and standards department.

3. **Theatrical Films:** Rethink which films cannot be made suitable for broadcast television, especially action films with 30-50 scenes of violence. These are the films that are nearly impossible to edit. Even if they are edited, little of the story would be left. Continue and expand the practice of extending prime time hours for difficult films.

4. **Children's Television:** Examine those shows that feature combat as the highlight of the program. Study those shows that attract children and maintain their interest without using extensive fighting.

5. **Television Movies:** Some crimes and other dramatic stories are so compelling they must be told. But many television movies are about crimes and only serve as a vehicle for violence without a larger context or purpose. These stories do not always need to be told. Be careful about unnecessarily violent titles. Advisories should be much more liberally applied.

6. **Advisories:** Advisories serve an important function for parents. They need to be applied much more consistently, especially to television movies and theatricals. This is much less a problem for series. Fox has shown that liberal use of advisories does not alienate viewers or advertisers.

7. **Tonnage:** A few shows contain so many scenes of violence that the overall context of the show is violent. These programs are in greatest need of better writing to find plot devices other than just violence to move the story. This is a particular challenge to development executives.

8. **Cinematic Techniques:** Emphasis should be paid to techniques that can overly accentuate scenes of violence. These include music, close ups, slow motion and sound effects. All these techniques can improve a scene, but often are used just to enhance the violence. These are not merely incidental areas of television. Reality programs using re-creations are under a special obligation to be careful in the area of technique.

9. **Practices and Standards:** Recognize that these departments are an inexpensive investment for the networks' own peace of mind. The executives who run these departments at all four networks are extremely knowledgeable and should have unimpeded access to the highest levels of senior management. Except in very rare instances, these departments should have the final say on the treatment of issues of violence. To program standards executives: apply to yourselves the standards you would apply to your competitors.

10. **Shows That Deal With Violence Well:** Examine how these programs can feature conflict, crime and tension without resorting to contextually inappropriate scenes of violence. Identify the qualities that make these shows successful.

And as next steps:

11. **Monitoring:** The monitoring has been so valuable and represents such an important source of information at such a small cost, that it should become institutionalized in the television system and continue to be conducted each year.

12. **Follow Up:** The four networks should work with the Center in a series of discussions and meetings over the next year to continue to discuss the nature of the problem and the best ways to address it.

To the Television Creative Community:

Recognize the risk that violence in television and film can be used to substitute for good writing. The best writers and producers in television can create characters and compelling stories without unnecessarily filling the program with scenes of violence. Through your own organizations such as The Caucus for Producers, Writers and Directors, the guilds and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences hold meetings and discussions on issues related to the use of violence: showing consequences, graphicness, the need for context and techniques to avoid over reliance on scenes of violence. Include the network's development executives in these discussions.

To the Government:

Understand the important role you play in the issue of violence in the media. Do not underestimate your power to shape public opinion. As much as possible, speak to the television industry with one voice. Use your powerful voice to encourage, persuade, cajole and, when necessary, threaten. Recognize when progress is made. The television violence issue needs sustained leadership from the government. Broadcasters should not have to fear that all understandings and arrangements disappear after every election or change in government.

To Affiliates:

Put pressure on the networks. Let them know what programming you do not like or which is unsuitable for your area. Do so with examples and with detail of the format, themes or scenes of violence you do not consider suitable. In conjunction with the network's practices and standards department, create your own standards for network promotions and your own local and syndicated programming. Network promotions designed for 10:00 should not be run on your station in the afternoon or very early evening.

To Schools:

Media literacy should never replace social studies or science in the curriculum. But television is an important part of students' lives. Teachers should ask their students about what they watch and how accurately it reflects their lives. Discussions of how television deals with gender and racial stereotyping, depictions of historical events and social trends can all be incorporated into existing lesson plans. Teachers can be more media literate and include these concepts in their teaching.

To Parents:

You cannot watch all television with your children, but you can occasionally watch your child watch television. You can ask them about what they watch. What lessons are they assimilating? Can they distinguish between animation and live action? Do they realize that they can settle disputes without resorting to violence? Why do they like some television characters and not others?

Explore some of the technological devices now or soon to be on the market to help you control what your children watch. If your television already has a channel block feature, learn how to use it. Whether or not there ultimately is a V-Chip, look at devices such as The Telecommander or TV Guardian that not only control which programs your children watch, but how much television and at what times.

Make your views known to television stations and broadcast networks.

To Kids:

Question what you watch on television. Discuss what you watch with your parents. When you do not understand something or it seems confusing, ask about it. Compare the world of television with the world you live in. If there are differences, why do you think this is so? How do your favorite shows deal with conflict and with people fighting? Ask yourself: how would you change television? You, too, make your views known to television stations and broadcast networks.

Appendix A--Scene Sheet

SCENE EVALUATION FORM

Name of Program:

Date Shown:

Counter Time:

I. CONTEXT AND MANNER OF THE VIOLENCE

- A. Give a brief description of the violent act.
- B. Was it in the past, present or future?
- C. Where did the violence occur? State specific place and general location.
- D. Who were the participants?
- E. Were law enforcement officials involved? If so, identify.
- F. Was the violence provoked? If so, how?
- G. What weapons, if any, were used?
- H. Was the violence used as self defense; to help, save or protect others; as a last resort? Were alternatives considered, discussed or explored?

II. MOTIVATION FOR THE VIOLENCE: Why was the violence committed?

- A. Was the violence intentional, unintentional, reactionary or a mixture? Explain. If it was intentional, what was the specific motivation for the violence?

- III. RELEVANCE OF THE VIOLENCE TO PLOT OR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: How did the violence fit into the story line and/or contribute to the development and understanding of the characters?
- A. In regard to plot and character development, was the violence (a) incidental, irrelevant or unnecessary, (b) significant, necessary or integral, or (c) a combination of both in some way? Explain.
 - B. Was the violence justified (from the point of view of an objective outside observer)? Was it shown as a means to a worthwhile end? How?
- IV. CONSEQUENCES OF THE VIOLENCE: What were the consequences of the violence?
- A. Was the violence rewarded or punished? If so, how?
 - B. What were the physical consequences of the violence? What was the extent of these consequences? Were they minimal, moderate or extreme? Were they short-term or long-term?
 - C. What were the psychological consequences of the violence? What was the extent of these consequences? Were they minimal, moderate or extreme? Were they short-term or long-term?
 - D. Were the outcomes of the violence realistic?
- V. NATURE OF THE VIOLENCE
- A. Did the violence itself seem real or a part of fantasy (dream or cartoon)?
 - B. Was the violence in some sense comic or humorous?
 - C. How graphic, vivid or gory was the violence? Give a brief description. Was the graphicness of the violence excessive? If excessive, could it have been less graphic without lessening the impact?
 - D. Did the show glorify the violence or make it seem exciting, or did it portray the act as heroic or "cool"?
 - E. Was there any restraint, hesitation or refusal to engage in violence?

Appendix B--Television Series Monitored on the Broadcast Networks

Series Name	# Times Monitored	Network
All-American Girl	7	ABC
Amazing Grace	2	NBC
America's Funniest Home Videos	41	ABC
America's Most Wanted	36	FOX
Beverly Hills 90210	7	FOX
Blossom	8	NBC
Blue Skies	7	ABC
Boy Meets World	6	ABC
Boys Are Back, The	7	CBS
Burke's Law	3	CBS
Chicago Hope	17	CBS
Christy	3	CBS
Coach	5	ABC
Commish, The	12	ABC
Cops	26	FOX
Cosby Mysteries	12	NBC
Critic, The	9	FOX
Cybill	11	CBS
Daddy's Girls	3	CBS
Dave's World	7	CBS
Diagnosis Murder	9	CBS
Double Rush	9	CBS
Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman	14	CBS
Dream On	7	FOX
Due South	16	CBS
Earth 2	22	NBC
Ellen	7	ABC
Empty Nest	4	NBC

Encounters	6	FOX
ER	16	NBC
Extreme	7	ABC
Family Matters	4	ABC
Five Mrs. Buchanans, The	7	CBS
Fortune Hunter	5	FOX
Frasier	7	NBC
Fresh Prince	16	NBC
Friends	5	NBC
Full House	4	ABC
George Wendt Show, The	4	CBS
George Carlin Show, The	10	FOX
Get Smart	7	FOX
Grace Under Fire	4	ABC
Great Defender, The	1	FOX
Hangin' with Mr. Cooper	4	ABC
Hardball	6	FOX
Hearts Afire	6	CBS
Home Improvement	19	ABC
Homicide: Life on the Streets	12	NBC
Hope and Gloria	7	NBC
House of Buggin'	7	FOX
In the House	6	NBC
John Larroquette Show, The	9	NBC
Law and Order	8	NBC
Legend	5	UPN
Life with Louie	1	FOX
Living Single	6	FOX
Lois and Clark	21	ABC
Love and War	4	CBS
Mad About You	8	NBC
Madman of the People	5	NBC
M.A.N.T.I.S.	17	FOX
Marker	12	UPN

Married with Children	12	FOX
Marshall, The	13	ABC
Martin	5	FOX
Martin Short	3	NBC
Matlock	6	ABC
McKenna	3	ABC
Me and the Boys	5	ABC
Medicine Ball	8	FOX
Melrose Place	29	FOX
Models Inc.	15	FOX
Mommies	7	NBC
Murder, She Wrote	6	CBS
Murphy Brown	5	CBS
Muscle	9	WB
My So-Called Life	6	ABC
Nanny, The	4	CBS
New York Undercover	21	FOX
Newsradio	6	NBC
Northern Exposure	5	CBS
NYPD Blue	18	ABC
Office, The	5	CBS
On Our Own	5	ABC
Parenthood	8	WB
Party of Five	10	FOX
Picket Fences	12	CBS
Pigsty	5	UPN
Platypus Man	6	UPN
Pride and Joy	5	NBC
Rescue 911	18	CBS
Roseanne	8	ABC
SeaQuest DSV	21	NBC
Seinfeld	6	NBC
Simpsons, The	28	FOX
Sister, Sister	10	ABC

Sisters	12	NBC
Sliders	9	FOX
Something Wilder	3	NBC
Star Trek: Voyager	5	UPN
Step by Step	8	ABC
Sweet Justice	7	NBC
Tales from the Crypt	7	FOX
Thunder Alley	5	ABC
Touched by an Angel	6	CBS
TV Nation	1	NBC
Under One Roof	4	CBS
Under Suspicion	12	CBS
Unhappily Ever After	12	WB
Unsolved Mysteries	13	NBC
VR-5	10	FOX
Walker, Texas Ranger	15	CBS
Watcher, The	10	UPN
Wayans Brothers	14	WB
Whole New Ball Game, A	5	ABC
Wild Oats	2	FOX
Wings	6	NBC
Women of the House	7	CBS
Wright Verdicts, The	4	CBS
X-Files, The	34	FOX

Appendix C--Television Movies Monitored on the Broadcast Networks

Title	Date Aired	Network
Abandoned and Deceived	3/20/95	ABC
Against Their Will: Women in Prison	10/30/94	ABC
Alien Nation	10/25/94	FOX
Avalanche	11/1/94	FOX
Awake to Danger	3/13/95	NBC
Backfield in Motion	2/5/95	ABC
Because Mommy Works	11/21/94	NBC
Betrayed: A Story of Three Women	3/19/95	ABC
Between Love and Honor	2/14/95	CBS
Beyond Betrayal	10/11/94	CBS
Big Dreams and Broken Hearts	1/22/95	CBS
Bionic Ever After	11/29/94	CBS
Bonanza: Under Attack	1/15/95	NBC
Buffalo Girls (miniseries)	4/30-5/1/95	CBS
Burning Passion: The Margaret Mitchell Story, A	11/7/94	NBC
Cagney and Lacey	5/2/95	CBS
Child's Cry for Help, A	11/14/94	NBC
Children of the Dust (miniseries)	2/26-28/95	CBS
Christmas Romance, A	12/18/94	CBS
Christy	11/24/94	CBS
Columbo: A Bird in the Hand	12/25/94	ABC
Columbo: No Time to Die	5/18/95	ABC
Come Die with Me	12/6/94	CBS
Computer Wore Tennis Shoes, The	2/18/95	ABC
Cries from the Heart	10/16/94	CBS
Danger Island	5/28/95	NBC
Danger of Love, The	4/23/95	CBS
Dangerous Affair, A	1/1/95	ABC
Dangerous Intentions	1/3/95	CBS
Danielle Steele's "Family Album" (Parts 1 and 2)	10/23-24/94	NBC

Danielle Steele's "Once in a Lifetime"	12/26/94	NBC
Danielle Steele's "Vanished"	4/3/95	NBC
Deadline for Murder: From the Files of Edna Buchanan	5/9/95	CBS
Deadlocked Escape from Zone 14	5/9/95	FOX
Deadly Invasion: The Killer Bee Nightmare	3/7/95	FOX
Deadly Vows	9/13/94	FOX
Death in Small Doses	1/16/95	ABC
Diana: Her True Story	1/29/95	NBC
Disappearance of Vonnie, The	9/27/94	CBS
Don't Drink the Water	12/18/94	ABC
Donato and Daughter	4/26/95	CBS
Double, Double, Toil and Trouble	10/29/94	ABC
Ed McBain's 87th Precinct	3/19/95	NBC
Escape From Terror: The Teresa Stamper Story	1/23/95	NBC
Falling for You	2/21/95	CBS
Falling from the Sky: Flight 174	2/20/95	ABC
Family Divided, A	1/22/95	NBC
Family Reunion: A Relative Nightmare	4/1/95	ABC
Fatal Vows	10/25/94	CBS
Father and Scout	10/15/94	ABC
Father for Charlie, A	1/1/95	CBS
Fighting for My Daughter	1/9/95	ABC
Following Her Heart	11/28/94	NBC
For the Love of Nancy	10/2/94	ABC
Friend to Die For, A	9/26/94	NBC
Friends at Last	4/2/95	CBS
Fudge-a-Mania	1/7/95	ABC
Gambler V, The (Part 1 and 2)	10/2,4/94	CBS
Gift of Love, The	9/25/94	CBS
Gramps	5/20/95	NBC
Great Elephant Escape, The	3/25/95	ABC
Hart to Hart	3/6/95	NBC
Horse for Danny, A	4/8/95	ABC
How the West Was Fun	11/19/94	ABC

I Yabba Dabba Do	12/31/94	ABC
If Someone Had Known	5/1/95	NBC
In the Heat of the Night: A Matter of Justice	10/21/94	CBS
In the Heat of the Night: By Duty Bound	2/17/95	CBS
In the Heat of the Night: The Final Chapter	5/16/95	CBS
In the Heat of the Night: Who Was Geli Bendl?	12/9/94	CBS
In the Line of Duty: Kidnapped	3/12/95	NBC
In the Shadow of Evil	2/7/95	CBS
Is There Life Out There?	10/9/94	CBS
Jack Reed: A Search for Justice	10/2/94	NBC
Jake Lassiter: Justice on the Bayou	1/9/95	NBC
Janek: The Silent Betrayal	12/20/94	CBS
Judgement Day: The John List Story	4/18/95	CBS
Justice in a Small Town	9/23/94	NBC
Killer among Friends, A	4/4/95	CBS
Lady Killer	4/5/95	CBS
Langoliers, The (Parts 1 and 2)	5/14-15/95	ABC
Liz: The Elizabeth Taylor Story (Parts 1 and 2)	5/21-22/95	NBC
Love and Betrayal: The Mia Farrow Story (miniseries)	2/28-3/2/95	FOX
Love Kills: Sweet Justice Movie	11/12/94	NBC
MacGyver: Doomsday	11/24/94	ABC
Madonna: Innocence Lost	11/29/94	FOX
Man Upstairs, The	1/29/95	CBS
Matlock: The Accused	10/13/94	ABC
Mercy Mission: The Rescue Flight	12/24/94	NBC
Million Dollar Babies (Parts 1 and 2)	11/20,22/94	CBS
Million Dollar Babies: Part 2	11/22/94	CBS
Moment of Truth, The: A Mother's Deception	10/17/94	NBC
Moment of Truth, The: Caught in the Crossfire	9/14/94	NBC
Moment of Truth, The: Murder or Memory?	12/12/94	NBC
Mother's Gift, A	4/16/95	CBS
Not Our Son	1/31/95	CBS
Nothing but the Truth	5/23/95	CBS
Nowhere to Hide	10/9/94	ABC

O.J. Simpson Story, The	1/31/95	FOX
Omen IV: The Awakening, The	9/20/94	FOX
One Christmas	12/19/94	NBC
Original Sins	4/12/95	CBS
Other Mother, The	4/17/95	NBC
Other Woman, The	3/26/95	CBS
Perfect Stranger, The	9/12/94	NBC
Perry Mason: The Case of the Grimacing Governor	11/9/94	NBC
Perry Mason: The Case of the Jealous Joker	4/10/95	NBC
Piano Lesson, The	2/5/95	CBS
Possession of Michael D, The	5/2/95	FOX
Problem Child 3	5/13/95	NBC
Ray Alexander: A Menu for Murder	3/20/95	NBC
Return of Cagney and Lacey, The	11/6/94	CBS
Return of Hunter, The	4/30/95	NBC
Return of the Native, The	12/4/94	CBS
Reunion	12/11/94	CBS
Rise and Walk: The Dennis Byrd Story	1/10/95	FOX
Robin Cook's Mortal Fear	11/20/94	NBC
Rockford Files: I Still Love L.A., The	11/27/94	CBS
Roseanne and Tom	10/31/94	NBC
Roseanne: An Unauthorized Biography	10/11/94	FOX
Saved by the Bell-Wedding in Las Vegas	10/7/94	NBC
Scarlett (miniseries)	11/13,15-17/94,	CBS
Season of Hope, A	1/8/95	CBS
Seduced and Betrayed	4/24/95	NBC
See Jane Run	1/8/95	ABC
Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story	2/6/95	NBC
Shadows of Desire	9/20/94	CBS
Shaggy Dog, The	11/12/94	ABC
She Led Two Lives	11/27/94	NBC
She Stood Alone: Tailhook	5/22/95	ABC
Simon and Simon: Under Attack	2/23/95	CBS

Sleep, Baby, Sleep	3/26/95	ABC
Someone Else's Child	12/4/94	ABC
Someone She Knows	10/3/94	NBC
Spring Fling	4/15/95	ABC
Stranger in Town, A	3/29/95	CBS
Summertime Switch	10/8/94	ABC
Take Me Home Again	12/18/94	NBC
Texas Justice (Parts 1 and 2)	2/12-13/95	ABC
Texas (Parts 1 and 2)	4/16-17/95	ABC
Innocent, The	9/25/94	NBC
Tom Clancy's "Op Center" (Parts 1 and 2)	2/26-27/95	NBC
Tower, The	4/25/95	FOX
Virus	5/8/95	NBC
Voices From Within	10/10/94	NBC
Walker: Flashback	5/6/95	CBS
Walker: Standoff	5/13/95	CBS
Walker: War Zone	2/11/95	CBS
Walton Wedding, A	2/12/95	CBS
Where Are My Children	9/18/94	ABC
While Justice Sleeps	12/5/94	NBC
White Dwarf	5/23/95	FOX
With Hostile Intent	4/11/95	CBS
Without Consent	10/16/94	ABC
Without Warning	10/30/94	CBS
Woman of Independent Means, A (Parts 1, 2 and 3)	2/19,20,22/95	NBC
Women of Spring Break	1/10/95	CBS
Women of the House	1/11/95	CBS
Young at Heart	3/12/95	CBS

Appendix D--Theatrical Films Monitored on the Broadcast Networks

Title	Date Aired	Network
Aces: Iron Eagle III	3/14/95	FOX
Addams Family, The	10/30/94	NBC
Airplane II: The Sequel	3/18/95	ABC
Alien 3	11/22/94	FOX
All I Want for Christmas	12/23/95	NBC
Another 48 Hours	11/1/94	CBS
Any Which Way You Can	3/11/95	ABC
Arachnophobia	4/16/95	ABC
Backdraft	3/26/95	NBC
Batman Returns	2/12/95	NBC
Beethoven	11/25/94	FOX
Black Rain	3/27/95	CBS
Bodyguard, The	5/1/95	ABC
Boomerang	4/2/95	ABC
Boyz in the Hood	3/7/95	CBS
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	2/14/95	FOX
Bugsy	11/4/94	NBC
Cape Fear	3/5/95	NBC
Crocodile Dundee II	9/24/94	ABC
Curly Sue	10/16/94	NBC
Dances with Wolves	2/26,27/95	ABC
Dead Pool, The	3/14/95	CBS
Death Becomes Her	4/2/95	NBC
Deceived	4/24/95	ABC
Die Hard 2	5/18/95	CBS
Doc Hollywood	4/16/95	NBC
Driving Miss Daisy	1/15/95	ABC
Encino Man	2/4/95	ABC
Ernest Scared Stupid	11/5/94	ABC
Escape to Witch Mountain	4/29/95	ABC

Every Which Way but Loose	1/21/95	ABC
Far and Away	3/13/95	ABC
Fast Times at Ridgemont High	1/3/95	FOX
Father of the Bride	11/27/94	ABC
Fisher King, The	12/4/95	NBC
Forever Young	5/6/95	NBC
Freaky Friday	5/6/95	ABC
Ghost	10/23/94	CBS
Gladiators	12/6/94	FOX
Hand that Rocks the Cradle, The	1/16/95	ABC
Hard to Kill	4/23/95	NBC
Hero	4/11/95	FOX
Home Alone	11/24/94	NBC
Homeward Bound	10/1/94	ABC
Honey, I Blew Up the Kid	5/20/95	ABC
Hook	12/4/94	ABC
Hot Shots	3/21/95	FOX
Housesitter	2/21/95	FOX
Huck Finn, The Adventurers of	2/25/95	ABC
Internal Affairs	9/13/95	CBS
It's a Wonderful Life	12/10/94	NBC
JFK	11/13,16/95	NBC
Jurassic Park	5/7/95	NBC
Ladybugs	2/11/95	NBC
Last Boy Scout, The	11/20/94	ABC
Lawnmower Man	3/27/95	NBC
League of Their Own, A	5/3/95	CBS
Lethal Weapon 2	9/18/94	CBS
Lethal Weapon 3	11/13/94	ABC
Marked for Death	12/13/94	CBS
Memoirs of An Invisible Man	11/5/94	NBC
My Girl	11/26/94	NBC
My Cousin Vinnie	11/18/94	FOX
National Lampoon's Vacation	4/18/95	FOX

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation	12/11/94	NBC
Necessary Roughness	10/16/94	NBC
On Golden Pond	11/26/94	ABC
Out for Justice	1/16/95	NBC
Pacific Heights	4/25/95	CBS
Passenger 57	5/21/95	ABC
Patriot Games	1/10/95	ABC
Pee Wee's Big Adventure	3/4/95	ABC
Pete's Dragon	12/24/94	ABC
Point of No Return	5/6/95	FOX
Poison Ivy	4/3/95	ABC
Prelude to a Kiss	12/20/94	FOX
Presumed Innocent	1/15/95	CBS
Pretty Woman	1/30/95	NBC
Prince of Tides	2/5/95	NBC
Problem Child 2	10/22/94	ABC
Quick Change	12/27/94	CBS
Raising Cain	3/28/95	FOX
Ricochet	1/8/95	NBC
River Runs through It, A	5/17/95	CBS
Robin Hood	4/9/95	CBS
Rookie, The	1/22/95	ABC
Shattered	10/9/94	NBC
Shock to the System, A	1/29/95	ABC
Sibling Rivalry	2/8/95	CBS
Silence of the Lambs	2/19/95	CBS
Single White Female	3/22/95	CBS
Sister Act	2/13/95	NBC
Sleeping with the Enemy	10/18/94	CBS
Sneakers	2/6/95	ABC
Sound of Music, The	4/9/95	NBC
Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country	11/6/94	NBC
Stop or my Mom Will Shoot	10/18/94	FOX
Suburban Commando	5/27/95	NBC

Super, The	10/4/94	FOX
Swiss Family Robinson	1/14/95	ABC
Tango and Cash	1/23/95	ABC
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II	12/27/94	FOX
Ten Commandments, The	4/9/95	ABC
Terminator 2: Judgement Day	10/23/94	ABC
Three Men and a Little Lady	5/13/95	ABC
Total Recall	5/4/95	ABC
Trespass	4/4/95	FOX
Under Siege	2/5/95	ABC
Unforgiven, The	4/30/95	ABC
Unlawful Entry	2/7/95	FOX
Wayne's World	9/13/94	NBC
What About Bob?	3/5/95	ABC
White Men Can't Jump	11/15/94	FOX
White Sands	9/29/94	NBC
Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory	12/3/94	ABC
Wizard of Oz, The	11/23/94	CBS

Appendix E--Home Video Rentals Monitored

First Quarter (August 1994)

Top Ten Rentals (according to Billboard Magazine)

Ranking	Title
1	Philadelphia
2	The Pelican Brief
3	Ace Ventura: Pet Detective
4	Tombstone
5	Grumpy Old Men
6	In the Name of the Father
7	The Getaway
8	Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit
9	The Piano
10	Reality Bites

Second Quarter (November 1994)

Top Ten Rentals (according to Billboard Magazine)

Ranking	Title
1	Jurassic Park
2	The Crow
3	Four Weddings and a Funeral
4	Naked Gun 33-1/3: The Final Insult
5	The Nightmare Before Christmas
6	Schindler's List
7	Bad Girls
8	The Ref
9	Threesome
10	Serial Mom

Third Quarter (February 1995)
Top Ten Rentals (according to Billboard Magazine)

Ranking	Title
1	Stargate
2	The Specialist
3	The River Wild
4	Angels in the Outfield
5	Only You
6	Timecop
7	Clear and Present Danger
8	True Lies
9	Natural Born Killers
10	It Could Happen to You

Fourth Quarter (May 1995)
Top Ten Rentals (according to Billboard Magazine)

Ranking	Title
1	The Client
2	Maverick
3	Speed
4	Blown Away
5	When a Man Loves a Woman
6	I Love Trouble
7	Renaissance Man
8	Guarding Tess
9	Beverly Hills Cop III
10	Wyatt Earp

Appendix F--Television Movies and Theatrical Films Needing Advisories

Title	Date Monitored	Net	Type	Time
Any Which Way You Can	3/11	ABC	theatrical	8pm
Batman Returns	2/12	NBC	theatrical	9pm
Bionic Ever After	1/29	CBS	made-for	9pm
Bugsy	11/4	NBC	theatrical	8pm
Dances With Wolves	2/26,27	ABC	theatrical	9pm
Danger of Love, The	4/23	CBS	made-for	9pm
Dangerous Intentions	1/3	CBS	made-for	9pm
Death Becomes Her	4/2	NBC	theatrical	9pm
Deceived	4/24	ABC	theatrical	9pm
Ernest Scared Stupid	11/5	ABC	theatrical	8pm
Every Which Way But Loose	1/21	ABC	theatrical	8pm
Falling for You	2/21	CBS	made-for	9pm
Far and Away	3/13	ABC	theatrical	9pm
Fighting for my Daughter	1/9	ABC	made-for	9pm
Friend to Die For, A	9/26	NBC	made-for	9pm
Fudge-a-Mania	1/7	ABC	made-for	8pm
Ghost	10/23	CBS	theatrical	9pm
Gramps	5/20	NBC	made-for	8pm
Hand that Rocks the Cradle, The	1/16	ABC	theatrical	9pm
Highlander	4/3	CBS	theatrical	10pm
Home Alone	11/24	NBC	theatrical	8pm
Jurassic Park	5/7	NBC	theatrical	8pm
Killer Among Friends, A	4/4	CBS	made-for	9pm
Lady Killer	4/5	CBS	made-for	9pm
Langoliers, The (part 1)	5/14	ABC	made-for	9pm
Langoliers, The (part 2)	5/15	ABC	made-for	9pm
Lawnmower Man, The	3/28	NBC	theatrical	9pm
Pacific Heights	4/25	CBS	theatrical	9pm
Patriot Games	1/10	ABC	theatrical	9pm
Poison Ivy	4/3	ABC	theatrical	9pm
Problem Child 2	10/22	ABC	theatrical	8pm

Problem Child 3	5/13	NBC	theatrical	8pm
Return of Hunter	4/30	NBC	made-for	9pm
Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves	4/9	CBS	theatrical	8pm
Scarlett	11/13	CBS	made-for	9pm
Shadows of Desire	9/20	CBS	made-for	9pm
Star Trek VI	11/6	NBC	theatrical	9pm
Suburban Commando	5/27	NBC	theatrical	8pm
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II	12/27	FOX	theatrical	8pm
Texas Justice	2/12	ABC	made-for	9pm
Texas Part II	4/17	ABC	made-for	9pm
The Bodyguard	5/1	ABC	theatrical	8pm
Walker, Texas Ranger: Flashback	5/6	CBS	made-for	9pm
Walker, Texas Ranger: Standoff	5/13	CBS	made-for	9pm
Walker, Texas Ranger: War Zone	2/11	CBS	made-for	9pm
White Sands	9/30	NBC	theatrical	9pm

Appendix G--Television Movies with Violent Titles

ABC

Against Their Will: Women in Prison
Betrayed: A Story of Three Women
Columbo: No Time to Die
A Dangerous Affair
Death in Small Doses
Fighting for My Daughter
MacGyver: Doomsday
Nowhere to Hide
Without Consent

CBS

Come Die with Me
The Danger of Love
Dangerous Intentions
Deadline for Murder: From the Files of Edna Buchanan
Falling for You
Fatal Vows
A Killer among Friends
Lady Killer
The Shadow of Evil
Simon and Simon: Under Attack
Walker: War Zone
With Hostile Intent
Without Warning

FOX

Deadlocked: Escape from Zone 14
Deadly Invasion: The Killer Bee Nightmare
Deadly Vows

NBC

Awake to Danger
Bonanza: Under Attack
Danger Island
Escape from Terror
A Friend to Die For
In the Line of Duty: Kidnapped
Love Kills: Sweet Justice Movie
A Menu for Murder
The Moment of Truth: Caught in the Crossfire
The Moment of Truth: Murder or Memory?
Robin Cook's Mortal Fear

UCLA CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION POLICY

The UCLA Center for Communication Policy is a forum for the discussion and development of policy alternatives addressing the leading issues in media and communication. Communication policy at its core begins with the individual and the family. The Center conducts and facilitates research, courses, seminars, working groups, and conferences designed to have a major impact on policy at the local, national, and international levels. In addition, it provides a base for visiting scholars who are engaged in efforts to examine and shape communication policy. The goals of the Center--one of eight research units within the UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research--include using the vast intellectual resources of UCLA to deal with some of the most important concerns of the day and to have a transforming effect on the issues.

Since the creation of the Center for Communication Policy in September, 1993, it has been awarded a \$1.5 million national research grant, held five national and several local conferences, conducted two nationwide surveys with one of America's leading newsmagazines, and established a national identity in the area of communication policy for the Center and UCLA. Conference keynote speakers have included Vice President Albert Gore, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and FCC Chair Reed Hundt.

👉 The Violence Assessment Monitoring Project is based on an agreement between the four major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC) and Congress. As independent monitors, this qualitative analysis of prime time and children's programming will result in annual reports and policy recommendations for each of the next three years. The reports will be public documents shaping the discussion of this vital issue. Students working with the Center on this project are gaining valuable experience with qualitative methods and important knowledge and insight into the societal issue of violence on television.

👉 In January, 1994, the Center for Communication Policy co-hosted the Information Superhighway Summit with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The conference featured Vice President Gore, Chairman Hundt, and the chief executive officers of practically every major film studio and technology company in America. The Summit was broadcast live on C-SPAN, E! Entertainment, and on the UCLA campus. Over 350 members of the news media attended, providing coverage of the Summit on the front page of every major newspaper and all newsmagazines and network television stations. Not only was this the first public conference bringing together all of the major industry, government and academic leaders in the field, but also began the national dialogue about the Information Superhighway and its implications.

👉 On March 3-5, 1994, the Center served as a co-sponsor of the first annual conference on "Children and the Media" with Children Now and Stanford University. The conference focused on children and the news media. It

considered, for example, how children's issues are treated by various media and what impact news has on children. The keynote speaker by satellite from the White House was First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Conference participants included many distinguished journalists, news media executives, former Secretary of Education Shirley Hufstедler, and former FCC Chairman Newton Minow.

☺ Three of the local conferences the Center for Communication Policy has co-sponsored were a day-long "Working Forum for the Media and Community on Cooperative Responses to Civil Unrest" with the County Commission on Human Relations, the American Jewish Committee, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; a day-long conference on the effects of California's Proposition 13 with Money Magazine; and a press workshop on Children and the Information Superhighway with Children Now.

☺ Last year with U.S. News & World Report the Center surveyed 7,100 members of the entertainment industry's creative community about their attitudes towards the issue of violence in the media. The results, which revealed that a strong majority of entertainment professionals found media violence to be part of an overall societal problem, were published in a nine-page story in May, 1994.

☺ On March 2-4, 1995, the Center again served as co-sponsor with Children Now and Stanford University for a second annual conference, "Shaping Our Children's Values: The Role of the Entertainment Media." The conference featured discussions of such topics as what role does media play in the current national values crisis, how media shapes children's political attitudes, and an industry perspective on values and the media. President Bill Clinton spoke by videotape on "The New Covenant: Media and Values." Keynote speaker Rich Frank, president of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, was joined by numerous distinguished media executives, advocacy group representatives and journalists. Conference participants also included NBC anchor Tom Brokaw and former FCC Chair Newton Minow.

☺ The Center co-sponsored a day-long conference on March 18, 1995, on the "Information Superhighway '95" with GTE and the UCLA Executive MBA Program. Keynote speakers were John Cooke, executive vice president of Disney and member of the National Information Infrastructure Commission, and Michael Phelps, M.D., director of the Crump Institute for Biological Imaging, who gave a multi-media presentation on brain function. Topics included regulation and competition, the role of the media, and an Internet demonstration.

☺ On March 30, 1995, the Center co-sponsored "Images of Aging," a mini-conference for the entertainment industry sanctioned by the White House Conference on Aging. Co-sponsors were AARP, CBS, and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Conference participants included government policy makers, academics, entertainment industry representatives, and gerontology experts. Issues discussed included the demographics of aging,

stereotypes and images of aging in the media, and trends in and impacts of advertising on older viewers.

👉 In 1995 the Center continued its survey with U.S. News & World Report of over 7,000 members of the entertainment industry's creative community. This year's study focused on values, both personal and as portrayed in the media. The results were published in a featured story in the May 15, 1995 edition of the magazine.

👉 On June 1, 1995, the Center co-sponsored with the American Cinema Foundation a conference on "Religion and Prime Time Television." This conference was designed to examine portrayals of religion on television and attitudes of the religious community towards television. Conference participants included a broad variety of religious leaders, atheists, academics, and television creators and executives. Issues discussed included the current status of religion on television, a hypothetical exploration of a proposed television show with religious characters and themes, the impact of our pluralistic society on religion and television, and how this issue should be addressed in the future. As a result of the conference, a number of participants agreed to write articles for a book on the subject and many agreed to come together in a continuing dialogue on television and religion to be facilitated by the Center and the American Cinema Foundation.

👉 On July 9-10, 1995, Vice President Al Gore sponsored "The Family and the Media," a conference in Nashville, Tennessee. The Center consulted on the program and prospective participants and prepared a film on media images, "Mixed Messages," which opened the conference. Center Director Jeffrey Cole participated in a panel discussion moderated by President Clinton and Vice President Gore. The discussion focused on media violence and its relationship to the current legislative agenda, including the telecommunication bill.

👉 The Center also has been involved in discussions on AIDS education in the media and international financing in global communication. In the next year, the Center will co-host conferences on Advertising in Children's Television and the Impact of Special Interest Groups on Television. The following year the Center plans to hold an international conference on global media issues.

👉 In early 1996 the Center will participate in a national conference, "The Impact of Television on Society: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," sponsored by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Center Director Jeffrey Cole is co-chair of the program committee. Leaders in media, politics, and a variety of specializations will address violence, sex, and other television-related issues.

👉 Courses in Communication Policy, Technology, Ethics, and Communication in Society are currently under development for undergraduate and graduate students.

In a short period of time, the UCLA Center for Communication Policy has become a nationally regarded policy studies center. The Center remains fully committed to studying, through a variety of prisms, the important communication issues that will transform our lives.

UCLA Center for Communication Policy

Box 951586

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1586

As of 2004, the Center moved to the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. For more information, contact:

**Center for the Digital Future
USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
11444 Olympic Blvd. Suite 120
Los Angeles, CA 90064**

**info@digitalcenter.org
(310)235-4444**

digitalcenter.org

Additional copies of this study can be ordered from:

The UCLA Store • The Book Zone

308 Westwood Plaza • Los Angeles, CA 90024 • 310-206-0788