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# Poll finds that 80 percent in U.S. believe TV violence harms society

By Diane Duston  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — More Americans worry about the effects of watching dramatized TV violence than about the real thing on the news, but they still think news shows pay too much attention to violent crimes, according to a survey released yesterday.

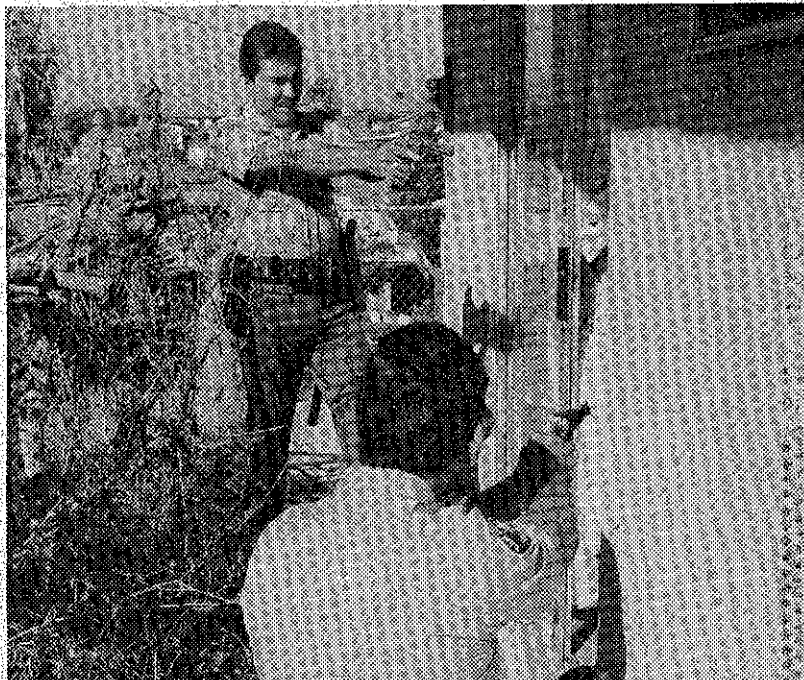
The Times Mirror nationwide poll also indicated that Americans were increasingly disturbed by the violence on TV entertainment shows, and that 80 percent of them believed it is harmful to the nation.

The survey of 1,516 Americans conducted Feb. 20 to 23 showed a link between age and concern about television violence.

Those least concerned about televised violence were young people, nonwhites, men and lower-income groups. Those groups also were the heaviest viewers of "reality" crime-action shows such as *Cops*, *Rescue 911* and *Top Cops*.

People 50 and older were most bothered by televised violence and were the least frequent viewers of reality crime shows. Viewers under 30 were more inclined to watch violent entertainment, and were less likely to think that the news is too full of violence or that TV violence in general is harmful to society.

However, the majority of Americans — 72 percent of those surveyed — said that entertainment television



**Real-life crime-action shows, such as "Cops," are most popular with young people, nonwhites, men and lower-income groups.**

depicts too much violence. About 25 percent characterized it as a "reasonable amount" and the rest said there is "very little" violence on TV or had no opinion.

The opinion breakdown was virtually the same as found by a national poll taken in 1971.

What's different this year, according to Times Mirror, is that more Americans are troubled by entertainment violence now, and more believe it has a poisonous effect on society.

Americans who said they were "personally bothered" by violence in entertainment shows jumped to 59 percent from 44 percent in 1983, with those saying they were "bothered a great deal" rising to 24 percent from 16 percent.

Furthermore, 80 percent said entertainment violence was "harmful" to society, compared with 64 percent in 1983. The number who think it is "very harmful" increased from 26 percent of the public to 47 percent.

Almost twice as many people — 58 percent compared with 31 percent — said entertainment violence bothered them more than news violence.

Nevertheless, 57 percent said TV news gives too much attention to stories about violent crime — only slightly more than the 53 percent in 1983. However, 55 percent of the respondents believe TV news is not exaggerating the amount of violence in the country.

Parents showed concern about letting youngsters watch violence on the news: Half of those with children between 8 and 13 said they had turned the TV off or changed the channel because there was something on the news they did not want their child to see.

The survey was based on telephone interviews of adults 18 years of age and older. It had a possible sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, and was conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press.

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**POLL FINDS THAT 80 PERCENT IN U.S. BELIEVE TV VIOLENCE HARMS SOCIETY** by Diane Duston (Associated Press)

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