

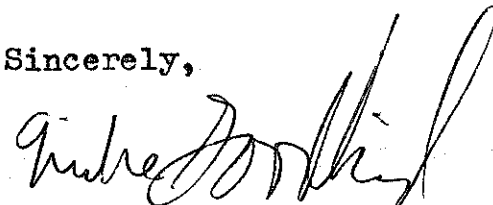
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
1111 SOUTH HILL STREET  
ROOM 263  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015

Dec. 27, 1976

Dear Dr. Gerbner:

Here in almost exactly 900 words is the story which we discussed on the phone. I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Goodkind", written in a cursive style.

Mike Goodkind

s wyfwyfyx

EC-Television, Adv 02 - 2 takes, 400-850

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AGENCIES &amp; RADIO OUT

For release SUN, Jan. 2

FROM AP NEWSFEATURES

APN PRINT SUBSCRIBERS HAVE BEEN MAILED ONE ILLUSTRATION.

EDITOR'S NOTE - Psychologists used to say, don't hit the kid, you'll warp his personality. Now there is concern that if the kid sees people hitting each other, it'll warp his personality. Whatever, the argument over violence in television is getting violent.

By MIKE GOODKIND

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES. AP - There's a real simple way to eliminate television violence from the home. People can turn their sets off - if their kids let them.

Now Dr. Thomas Elmendorf, past president of the California Medical Association, wants to help adults exercise their parental control by letting them know in advance if a particular program episode is going to contain any violence. He thinks parents have a right to know if "Starsky and Hutch," for example, are going to knock the teeth out of their prisoner.

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, doubts that most parents have the authority to control their kids' viewings.

"In the average home, children control the dial. What we need is to change programming," says Gerbner.

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BC-Television, Adv 02 - 1st Add, 450

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AGENCIES AND RADIO OUT

For Release Sun Jan. 2

LOS ANGELES: of violence.

Over a six week period, the service recorded each instance of violence and how long it appeared on the screen. Then all 63 shows seen on each network were ranked from least to most violent.

The industry objected to rating all forms of violence - from slaps to knifing - equally. When a new study is released by the end of the year, says NCOB Executive Director Ted Carpenter, acts of aggressive violence will be rated separately from such things as pratfalls in comedy shows or natural disasters.

The wider definition of violence was used in the original study, he said, because Gerbner's research has indicated that all forms of violence, regardless of their context or severity, appear to affect small children equally.

The winner of the first study was the Bob Newhart Show, a situation comedy depicting the life and daily doings of a Chicago psychologist.

Ironically, the two most violent shows in the first batch of rankings, "SWAT," and "The Rookies," have been cancelled. Network authorities agree violence per se doesn't bring ratings.

Carpenter believes a rating system may be helpful. "But what we're really trying to do is put the pressure on the industry itself."

Elmendorf thinks the ratings would lead to greater public awareness - hence public pressure.

Tom Kersey, ABC's West Coast Broadcast practices chief, and Sauter are opposed to published violence ratings, even though both networks monitor the violent content of shows for their own use.

"I think it's naive to assume that someone watching Kojak in the fifth year of its existence does not know what Kojak is," says Sauter.

"I hope nothing ever comes of the idea" of publishing violence ratings of individual shows, says Kersey. He says the number of violent acts is meaningless unless placed in a creative context which he believes the average viewer couldn't understand.

Sauter insists that with millions of viewers "there is no feasible way you can develop a rating system that can be used by that incredible range of people.

"We apply a set of standards to all of our programming which we think represents the expectations, the tastes and the standards of the mass television audience."

Sauter notes that despite the objections of media researchers, and even powerful national groups like the AMA, "we get very few letters from viewers complaining about violent programming."

"If there is popular groundswell, things will change," he notes.

"I think we do children a disservice by not luring them to books" and other forms of educational entertainment, says Sauter.

"My children now grown could watch anything they want on television but they could only watch it for a limited number of hours each week."

End Adv Sun Jan. 2, sent Dec. 18.

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But Elmendorf wants at least to give parents a fighting chance. He believes that violent television "is an element in antisocial behavior."

Gordon Van Sauter, CBS' program practices vice president, is less sure. "There is no agreement on the effect of violence," he says.

Elmendorf and Sauter agree, however, that it's up to the parents to decide what kids should watch and that public opinion and pressure is a key to what you see on the tube.

And Elmendorf is quietly pressing for greater public awareness — not censorship or even a radical change in program format.

"We want the networks to have maximum of freedom and a minimum of government interference," says Elmendorf.

"I would really like to see the networks release something that would go into the TV listings which would assist parents in selecting appropriate viewing for their children," says Elmendorf, who practices emergency medicine at Davis, Calif.

At the American Medical Association's annual convention last month in Philadelphia, Elmendorf sponsored a resolution asking the networks to rate each program episode by a formula they would set up themselves. The AMA turned down the proposal because "the intent of the resolution was already being carried out."

In efforts to define TV violence, the AMA has forked over \$25,000 to a Washington-based nonprofit outfit called the National Citizens Committee for Better Broadcasting to compile ratings of individual shows. The money, says an AMA spokesman, was directed as a first step to "encourage the TV industry to reduce the amount of violence."

The NCCB received widespread media coverage when it ranked each show last summer on its relative content of violence.

MORE

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