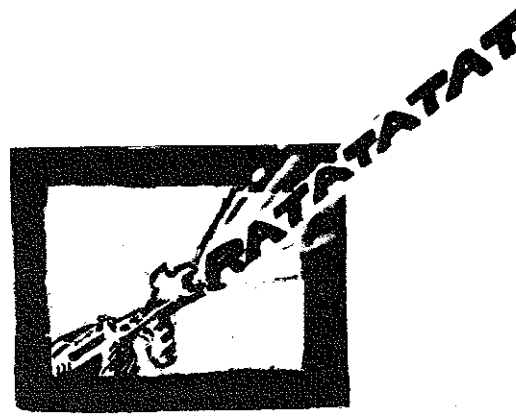

Does TV Violence Affect Our Society?

YES

By Neil Hickey

The jury is in. After hundreds of formal scientific studies and decades of contentious debate, reasonable men are obliged to agree that televised violence does indeed have harmful effects on human character and attitudes, and that something ought to be done about it.

". . . There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action," said the U.S. Surgeon General as long ago as 1972, delivering to Congress one of the most exhaustive ($1 million, three-year) research projects ever undertaken by social scientists. "The overwhelming consensus [is] that televised violence does have an adverse effect on certain members of society." The evidence was "sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action," said the Nation's chief health officer, and he added: "These conclusions are based on solid scientific

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data and not on the opinion of one or another scientist."

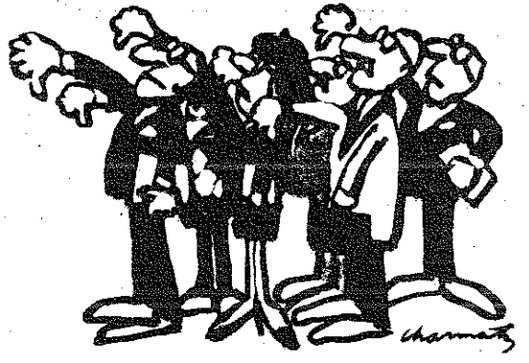
In the three years since that ringing and unequivocal declaration, TV watchers have been treated to uncounted thousands of brutal homicides, rapes, robberies, fist fights, muggings, maimings and all-out mayhem. TV networks continue their reliance on violence as a staple of their action-adventure series and regularly air theatrical movies like "Bonnie and Clyde," "The Godfather" and "In Cold Blood." In addition, local stations daily offer old gangster, Western and war films, reruns of rampageous prime-time melodramas, and old cartoons now considered too violent for network use.

Thus, it is virtually impossible for Americans, of any age, to avoid the depiction of violence on their TV screens. (One scientist estimates that by the age of 15 the average child will have witnessed 13,400 televised killings.) Also, many local stations have adopted "tabloid" news formats in which they compete for ratings by emphasizing homicides, riots and catastrophes.

As a result, the whole angry debate about blood-and-guts TV continues, as private citizens complain to Congress and the FCC, and those bodies in turn demand that the TV industry rid itself of gratuitous violence. A so-called "family viewing hour" will commence on the networks in September; and the National Institute of Mental Health is supporting research to develop a "violence index" to quantify and categorize TV violence.

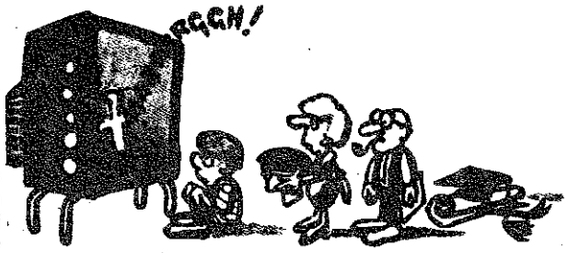
Meanwhile, violent crime has been increasing at six to 10 times the rate of population growth in the United States. (Obviously, nobody blames all of that on television.) Our homicide rate is roughly 10 times that of the Scandinavian countries; more murders are committed yearly in Manhattan (population 1.5 million) than in the entire United Kingdom (population 60 million); from 1960 to 1973, violent crime in the U.S. jumped 203.8 per cent.

'After hundreds of formal scientific studies and decades of contentious debate, reasonable men are obliged to agree that televised violence does indeed have harmful effects on human character and attitudes, and that something ought to be done about it.'



Proof that levels of TV violence have remained unacceptably high—even after the Surgeon General's report, and subsequent supportive studies—is easily at hand. In the 1973-74 viewing period, for example, violence occurred in 73 per cent of all TV programs and in 54 per cent of adult prime-time TV plays, according to the most recent Violence Profile, published in December, by Dean George Gerbner and Prof. Larry Gross of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

While the actual "incidence" of violence is somewhat lower than in past years, say Gerbner and Gross, the current profile shows the highest rate of "victimization"—a ratio of those who commit violent acts to those victimized—in the seven-year history of the study. And perhaps even more important, their experiments now indicate that heavy TV watchers tend to overestimate the danger of physical violence in real life. (Such unreasonable fear was found most acute among young watchers, and, in particular, among young women. Significantly, women are frequently portrayed as "victims" in televised mayhem.)



'One significant study showed that "it was not a boy's home life, not his school performance, not his family background, but the amount of TV violence he viewed at age 9 which was the single most important determinant of how aggressive he was 10 years later, at age 19".'

Yet another recent study (by University of Utah researchers) appears to prove that children who are heavy TV watchers can become "habituated or 'desensitized' to violence" in the real world. Normal emotional responses to human suffering become blunted, the researchers conclude, and this desensitization may easily cause "not only major increases in our society of acts of personal aggression but also a growing attitude of indifference and nonconcern for the victims" of real-life violence.

Dr. Robert M. Liebert, a psychologist at the State University of New York (and a principal investigator for the Surgeon General's report) says unequivocally:

"The more violence and aggression a youngster sees on television, regardless of his age, sex or social background, the more aggressive he is likely to be in his own attitudes and behavior. The effects are not limited to youngsters who are in some way abnormal, but rather were found for large numbers of perfectly normal American children." That conclusion arises from analysis of more than 50 studies covering the behavior of 10,000 children between the ages 3 and 19.

Liebert added that one significant study showed that "it was not a boy's home life, not his school performance, not his family background, but the amount of TV violence he viewed at age 9 which was the single most important determinant of how aggressive he was 10 years later, at age 19."

So incontrovertible is the case against televised violence that most high network executives no longer bother to dispute it. CBS president Arthur Taylor confesses that "TV is increasingly one of the probable determinants" of antisocial behavior. At hearings in April 1974, before Senator Pastore's subcommittee (convened to assess recent progress in reducing television violence), network officers contented themselves with recitations of their good deeds and good intentions toward reform. NBC chairman Julian Goodman, for example, admitted that the Surgeon General's study "told us more than we had ever known before about the relationship between viewing violence on television and subsequent behavior," and agreed that "that relationship is now generally recognized."

That tableau—network bosses in the dock—has become a familiar sight. As long ago as 1954, Sen. Estes Kefauver was demanding hard answers to questions about televised violence. He never got them. In 1961, Sen. Thomas Dodd heard testimony that TV's utilization of violence had remained (as one observer put it) "both rampant and opportunistic." (One independent producer told of being asked to "inject an 'adequate' diet of violence into scripts." A network official told another program supplier: "I like the idea of sadism.") Dodd held follow-up hearings in 1964.

Following the 1968 assassinations of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King, as well as bitter rioting on campuses and at political conventions, President Lyndon Johnson established the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (headed by Dr. Milton Eisenhower), to undertake a "penetrating search into our national life" in the attempt to get at the roots of our seeming lawlessness.

'Twelve scientists of widely different views unanimously agreed that scientific evidence indicates that the viewing of violence by young people causes them to behave more aggressively.'

The commission, while pointing out that TV is not the sole culprit, concluded that "Violence on television encourages violent forms of behavior, and fosters moral and social values about violence in daily life which are unacceptable in a civilized society . . . it is a matter for grave concern that at a time when the value and the influence of traditional institutions . . . are in question, television is emphasizing violent, antisocial styles of life."

The commission further complained that, despite repeated promises over the previous 15 years, the TV industry had failed to reduce violence levels and failed also to conduct research into the effects of televised violence.

An incredible 94.3 per cent of cartoon shows contained violent episodes in 1967 (according to data developed for the commission by Dean George Gerbner), and in 1968 there were 23.5 violent episodes per hour in cartoons. That same year, 81.6 per cent of all prime-time entertainment shows contained violence. Said the Commission: "If television is compared to a meal, programming containing violence clearly is the main course . . ."

Enter Senator Pastore. In 1969, he set in motion the Surgeon General's investigation, which produced the toughest and best-documented indictment yet on televised violence. During hearings on the completed report in 1972, Senator Pastore labored to cut through scientific jargon and elicit unequivocal testimony on the report's root meaning. He ultimately succeeded.

Pastore: You, Dr. [Jesse] Steinfeld, as the chief health officer of the United States of America, have said, "There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come." Is that your unequivocal opinion?

Steinfeld: Yes, sir.

Political scientist Ithiel de Sola Pool, a member of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee, voiced the consensus: "Twelve scientists of widely different views unanimously agreed that scientific evidence indicates that the viewing of violence by young people causes them to behave more aggressively."

Even network representatives on the →

Advisory Committee, under dogged questioning by Pastore, confessed their general agreement with the findings. CBS's Dr. Joseph Klapper, for example, admitted that "there are certainly indications of a causal relationship" between TV violence and aggression by children. And NBC's Dr. Thomas Coffin agreed that the time had come for some remedial action.

'The "family hour"—slated to be unveiled in September—is perceived by most experts as a subtle carte blanche for "business as usual," or, as one writer put it, "gore as before".'

Even so, a number of network operatives and partisans chose to misinterpret the report in the mischievous hope of blunting its effect. A few network spokesmen, emphasizing its cautious tone (normal for such social-science documents), insisted to friendly journalists that the report was inconclusive and largely meaningless. Similarly, a few ideologues focused their own disagreement on the conviction (unrelated to TV violence's effects or the lack thereof) that government has no business even studying the content of TV programs. That pincers movement was short-lived and unsuccessful. The report easily outlived its critics.

In the heightened glare of public attention, the networks then took a long, hard look at the violence quotient of their programs and did, in fact, significantly reduce the senseless mayhem on Saturday-morning cartoon shows. (Those deposed, violence-ridden cartoons are, nonetheless, seen every afternoon on hundreds of local TV stations.) Less successful, however, was the industry's effort to reduce violence in its prime-time series and movies.

Or, at least, the effort didn't satisfy Congress, which last year demanded of the FCC some concrete proposals on how to mitigate, once and for all, the wearisome problem. FCC Chairman Richard Wiley summoned the network chieftains to Washington, and after several powwows there emerged the "family viewing time" concept: a nightly no man's land (7-9 P.M. ET) sanitized of violent and sexy incidents and guaranteed "OK" for the whole family to watch. The plan also provided for "advisories" to warn viewers (both during and after the "family hour") of material that might be harmful or offensive.

While Chairman Wiley called the concept a "landmark" and Senator Pastore said it was "a wonderful idea," hardly anybody, privately, considered it anything but a gentlemen's agreement between Congress, the FCC, the networks and the NAB to take the heat off all of them. (Variety called it the "biggest public relations hype" since Evel Knievel fell into the Snake River Canyon.)

Framers of the scheme conveniently chose to overlook data proving that televised violence can have deleterious effects on adults as well as children; and that kids by the millions are glued to their television sets at *all* hours of the day, not just between 7 and 9. Thus, the "family hour"—ratified this April by the NAB and slated to be unveiled in September—is perceived by most experts as a subtle carte blanche for "business as usual," or, as one writer put it, "gore as before."

Others take it as final proof that self-regulation of the TV industry can't work; that networks will always place self-interest above the public interest when profits are jeopardized. As Robert Liebert put it: "A significant conflict of interest has existed between people concerned about children and people concerned about profit." So far, that conflict remains unresolved.

Traditionally, TV people have invoked the First Amendment at the mere hint of any government meddling with their right to air violent programs. Lately, however, that argument has been challenged by a growing body of media theorists and civil libertarians who—weary of the television industry's chronic inability to police itself—are saying, in effect, "Bunk!" Says Liebert: "It is a pseudo-issue for broadcasters to claim that they have a right, by reason of Constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, to give kids any sort of junk they want to on the argument that if the broadcaster isn't free and unmonitored, then democracy will be endangered. That isn't so. There is no precedent whatever for believing that adults' freedoms are endangered because a society enforces policies that are necessary for the welfare of its youth."

No society can be indifferent to the ways its citizens publicly entertain themselves, argues Prof. Irving Kristol of New York University. Bearbaiting and cockfighting were prohibited by law, not so much out of compassion for the animals, he points out, but mostly because such spectacles "debased and brutalized" the audiences who flocked to see them. That prohibition (among many others) has been counted an acceptable, formal limitation upon people's constitutional rights.

The case for controls in the area of television is debated in a new book called "Where Do You Draw the Line? An Exploration into Media Violence, Pornography, and Censorship" (edited by Victor B. Cline, Brigham Young University Press). "The battle for civil liberties should not be fought on the backs of children," writes psychiatrist Fredric Wertham. The argument that protecting children from harmful media exposure is an infringement of civil liberties "has no historical foundation," he says.

"It has never happened in the history of the world that regulations to protect children—be they with regard to child labor, food, drink, arms, sex, publications, entertainment or plastic toys—have played any role whatsoever in the abridgment of political or civil liberties for adults."

A growing number of legislators are inclined to agree. Rep. Torbert Macdonald, chairman of the House Communications Subcommittee, has chided the FCC for putting its "seal of approval on the manner in which self-regulation has worked." In his view, said Macdonald, self-regulation "has been and continues to be a dismal failure," and he threatened controls "that the networks won't like" if they continue to pursue ratings and profits at the public's expense.

'After 18 years, I think it is safe to conclude that we cannot rely on the industry to police itself.'

Rep. John M. Murphy (D.-N.Y.), sponsor of a pending bill that would drastically delimit network control over TV programs, says, "After 18 years, I think it is safe to conclude that we cannot rely on the industry to police itself." TV programmers have enforced only "token reduction" in violence, he maintains, and used a "system of phony euphemisms and cosmetic language" to cover up what are "still the most violent programs in history."

In March, after reviewing the "family hour" plan and calling it a "snow job," Murphy inquired of the FCC: "How can you possibly ask that we give the TV industry another chance to clean up its own house?" (A few critics suggest getting at the networks through their affiliates by requiring all local stations to specify at license-renewal time how much violence they have purveyed. If the level is too high, the license might be withheld.)

Thus, the specter of censorship wafts into view like an unwelcome visitor. It's a solution nobody claims to want, but it may become less unthinkable in the current atmosphere of dismay over televised violence and the industry's stewardship of the public's airwaves. END

RD July 1975

What You Can Do About TV Violence

Burnings. Stabbings. Mayhem. Television beams a steady flood of such pollution into our homes, causing immeasurable damage. It's time for concerned citizens to stand up and stop it

By Eugene H. Methvin

The American Broadcasting Company's "Sunday Night Movie" on September 30, 1973, was *Fuzz*, which depicted thrill-seeking delinquents who doused waterfront tramps with gasoline and set them afire. Two days later, 25-year-old Evelyn Wagler ran out of gas while driving through a Boston slum. She was carrying a two-gallon can from a nearby filling station when six young men surrounded her, dragged her to a vacant lot and beat her until she followed their orders and poured the gasoline over herself. Then they set her ablaze and left her, a human torch, rolling frantically in the dirt. Four hours later, Evelyn Wagler died.

A horrified public recoiled. Boston authorities indignantly denounced the television network for airing a movie that seemed to incite just such an atrocity. "I saw *Fuzz*," said Mayor Kevin White, "and I think there was a relationship." The New York *Times* agreed: "The dreadful coincidence cannot be ignored."

If the point needed emphasis, Miami provided it three weeks later. There, four 12- and 13-year-olds, one of whom had seen the *Fuzz* telecast, stole some lighter fluid. They doused three winos sleeping behind a vacant building, ignited a match and laughed hilariously as the men woke screaming, running and beating the flames. One died of his burns.

The evidence is overwhelming

that televised violence inspires imitation. Consider the following:

• On March 8, 1973, Atlanta's WAGA-TV broadcast a CBS movie called *The Marcus-Nelson Murders*. On March 29, a young woman was raped and murdered, her head bludgeoned, her throat slashed. "The crime scene looked exactly like the one on TV," said homicide detective W. F. Perkins. A 17-year-old boy pleaded guilty to the rape-murder, stating that he had reenacted the whole movie.

• On September 10, 1974, at 8 p.m., NBC aired *Born Innocent,* a drama about a juvenile detention home in which a gang of inmates corner a young girl in a shower and sexually violate her with a plumber's tool. Four days later, near San Francisco, four children, ages 9 to 15, seized two little girls on a public beach and replayed the scene with beer bottles. Three of the perpetrators told police that they had seen the *Born Innocent* telecast.

Dozens of studies by behavioral scientists reiterate the harmful effects of television violence.* In March 1972, the Surgeon General reviewed findings of a panel of social scientists and declared: "The causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant immediate remedial action." Subsequently, the presidents of the three networks agreed that it was time to take such action. Yet today, three years later, television violence is as prevalent as ever.

Television, as we have allowed it to develop, constitutes a massive stream of violence pumped daily into our homes. Approximately 97 percent of U.S. households have television sets, and the average receiver is on six hours and 14 minutes daily. Every day, television reaches an estimated three fourths of our 60 million youngsters.

For eight years, the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communications has charted the violence broadcast by the three networks. Defining violence as "overt physical force intended to hurt or kill," they find that it prevails steadily in four out of every five hours

*See "TV Violence *Is* Harmful," The Reader's Digest, April '73.

of evening prime time and weekend morning drama. In the average hour, eight violent episodes occur. Moreover, the Annenberg researchers found that heavy viewers of television (more than four hours daily) develop an unreal view of the world. They significantly overestimate the frequency of violent crimes and also the likelihood of their being involved in violence.

Television's flood of mayhem stems from one cause: it is profitable. Michigan State Prof. Thomas F. Baldwin conducted interviews with 48 producers, writers and directors of 18 television series containing substantial violence. "We discovered that the primary motivation is to deliver enough 'action'—used almost synonymously with 'violence'—to hold attention." A typical scriptwriter's comment: "The advertiser wants something exciting to get the audience. Violence equals excitement equals high ratings."

And the profits are vast. Latest FCC figures show that in 1973 the TV industry earned a record $653 million on a total revenue of $3.4 billion—a hefty 19-percent profit.

Meanwhile, public outcry over TV violence has reached stunning proportions. Citizen complaints about it to the FCC swelled from 2000 in 1972 to 25,000 in 1974. A Gallup poll indicated that two out of every three Americans object to present levels of violent programming.

So, in June 1974, the House and

violence may be undermining the suitability of television as a medium for their advertising messages."

In fact, eight potential advertisers who previewed NBC's *Born Innocent* withdrew as sponsors. Leo S. Singer, president of Miracle White Co., read about the Evelyn Wagler immolation in Boston, canceled $2 million in advertising on crime shows, and vowed that his firm "would never advertise on another violent show again." Within 18 months, Singer got 100,000 letters praising his stand. It's time for all advertisers to "stand up and be counted," says Singer.

Local Broadcasters. By Congressional mandate, the FCC parcels out the exclusive use of the public airwaves. Every three years, to renew their license, broadcasters must prove that their performance is "in the public interest" and justifies their trusteeship.

Rarely do local broadcasters buck the network penchant for violent programming. But, in February 1972, CBS scheduled a "cleaned-up" version of the X-rated movie *The Damned*—a fictional representation of German life under the Nazis, dealing at length with sexual deviation. Despite the "sanitization," 30 of the usual 169 CBS "Late Show" stations refused to carry the program. As a result, CBS decided not to show X-rated films again.

In landmark decisions in 1966 and 1969, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, then a lower-court judge, handed the American people a powerful legal weapon with which to reform television. He ordered the FCC to revoke the license of WLBT-TV in Jackson, Miss., on grounds that it had overloaded the airwaves with commercials and entertainment while failing to give adequate and unbiased coverage of local racial conflicts. Moreover, Burger ruled that "some 'audience participation' must be allowed in license-renewal proceedings," that the FCC must listen to "community organizations"—civic associations, professional societies, unions, churches and educational groups—in deciding if a TV license merits renewal.

Following Burger's ruling, two public-interest groups, the National Association for Better Broadcasting (NABB) and Action for Children's Television (ACT), launched a grassroots crusade to prod broadcasters toward more responsible programming. NABB in 1971 assembled 30 volunteers, including a dozen lawyers and law students, to monitor and analyze all programming over a Los Angeles independent station, Metromedia-owned KTTV. Then NABB and ACT presented the FCC with a 270-page study opposing renewal of KTTV's license. They documented such programming sins as overloading the airwaves with violent movies and mayhem-ridden programs for children. As the price for renewing its license, KTTV, in October 1973, signed an agreement with NABB, ACT and two local groups, promising to drop three violent daily serials and not to show

Senate Appropriations Committees laid down an ultimatum to the FCC: *Do something or face punitive funding cuts.* Last January, FCC chairman Richard Wiley called in the National Association of Broadcasters and the three network presidents, and won their agreement to two reforms: *1.* The 7 to 9 p.m. (prime time) hours on the East and West coasts, and 6 to 8 p.m. in Midwest and most Mountain-time-zone areas, will become violence- and obscenity-free "family viewing" time, with programming suitable for children except for occasional preannounced exceptions. 2. When programs unsuitable for children are set in the family time, the networks will publicize advance warnings.

FCC commissioner Abbott Washburn hails this innovation as positive action that "will be popular with millions of parents." But, he cautioned, it remains to be seen, "whether the new Code provision is lived up to in spirit or letter, or whether it is merely a device to assuage the mounting criticism."

Critics maintain that the move is grossly inadequate. Their main reason: An astonishing number of children watch television far past 8 p.m. Nielsen surveys show that, on the average week-night at 10 p.m., 10 million 12-to-17 year olds are staring at television; 7.7 million are still there at 11, and 3.8 million at midnight.

Take a look at what happened last February 10, at 9 p.m., when ABC aired a two-hour fictionalized dramatization of the 1892 trial of Lizzie Borden, accused of the ax murder of her father and stepmother. The final half-hour portrayed incest, necrophilia, murder and nudity. At 10:30 p.m., according to a Nielsen survey, the audience included 3.3 million 12-to-17 year olds and 1.7 million 6-to-11 year olds.

The networks have made plain to the FCC that they expect to continue their violent programming unchanged after 9 p.m. Indeed, a recent survey conducted by the staff of Rep. John M. Murphy (D., N.Y.) disclosed that violent sequences occur in 71 percent of the prime-time (8-11 p.m.) shows on NBC, 67 percent on ABC and 57 percent on CBS.

Americans do not have to accept the present reign of violence. Sustained, well-aimed action *can* clean up the public airwaves. Indeed, the networks *have* improved their weekend children's programs and specials in response to public and sponsor complaints. Further reform should be pressed with two groups:

Advertisers. Last year, one company president told Senate investigators: "Most media buyers I have dealt with buy on sheer numbers alone. They are not interested in whether the show is a comedy or a violent drama; if it will give them a good cost-per-thousand-viewers ratio, they buy."

But many advertisers are changing. *Advertising Age* finds among admen "increasing concern that

other unsuitable programs during children's viewing hours.

The KTTV pact shook the broadcasting industry. ACT affiliates in Pittsburgh, and Lansing, Mich., persuaded stations to keep harmful programs off the air and to start local programs for children. The KTTV pact can become a national pattern. Here is how you can help:

Organize. The Burger WLBT decisions put responsibility squarely on each community to see that local broadcasters adhere to high standards. If you would like to get involved, write for information to Action for Children's Television, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, Mass. 02160. For information on the KTTV monitoring program, write to NABB, P.O. Box 43640, Los Angeles, Calif. 90043.

Put your feelings in writing. When TV programming offends you, write the station's manager, who is legally responsible for programming "in the public interest," and ask for the name and address of the president of every company advertising before, during and after the program. Ask him to make your letter and his reply part of the "public inspection file" that the FCC requires him to keep, and to include both as part of his next license-renewal application. Send copies to NABB, ACT, your Congressman and Senators, plus chairman John O. Pastore and Torbert H. Macdonald of the Senate and House Communications subcommittees.

Contact each advertiser. Let all advertisers know how you feel about the violent programming.

Take legal action. If you find a station's programming unduly offensive, and its management unresponsive, make a formal protest to the FCC. Any citizen has the right to oppose renewal of a station's license, and to demand a local FCC hearing on such opposition. For information on securing this hearing, write to the Citizens Communications Center, 1914 Sunderland Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The FCC encourages such citizen complaints: "It is the public that must bear final responsibility for the quality of television service. Hence, individual citizens and communities have a duty to take an active interest in the television service which stations and networks provide and which, undoubtedly, has a vast impact on their lives and the lives of their children."

For information on reprints of this article, see page 18

Mark of Distinction. In a speech to the Anglo-American Press Association in Paris, Ambassador Kenneth Rush said, "I doubt whether any society submits itself to a more probing and constant self-analysis than the United States. It has been said that 'The Star-Spangled Banner' is the only national anthem in the world that both begins and ends with a question."

August 18, 1975 | Volume 6 | Number 29

behavior today

The Professionals' Newsletter | 1 Park Ave. N.Y. | 10016

NEW MH CENTER PLANED

The Nat. Inst. of Mental Health is setting up a new Center on Aging. According to sources within and outside the agency NIMH director Bertram Brown has given the go-ahead to upgrade a section on aging and give it center status. It looks as if the new unit will be a "coordinating" rather than an "operating" center, which means it will have brainpower but probably won't have its own line item budget, give out its own grants or run its own programs. The Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health, for example, is a "have-not" coordinating center, while the Center for Minority Group Mental Health Problems is an operating center. Psychiatrist Gene Cohen will head the center, but he says its too soon to tell what the structure will be. Final approval is still needed.

It's curious timing for the aging center. Researchers have been pushing NIMH to set up such a unit for some time. Now that Congress has created a Nat. Inst. on Aging at the Nat. Institutes of Health with a mandate to look at the biomedical, behavioral and social aspects of aging, NIMH ups with an aging center of its own.

DEVELOPING VERBAL SKILLS

For eight years a Long Island, N. Y. group has been helping children from low-income families get off to a good start in school. Toy Demonstrators (TDs, for short) from the Verbal Interaction Project use books, toys and personal attention to involve two and three years olds and their parents in successful learning experiences.

The TD brings selected toys and games into a home when a child is two years old, a time when language skills are ready for rapid growth. For two years the TD visits twice a week during the school year to work with the child and whichever parent is available. In reading a book, for instance, the TD might ask the child if a shoe is *under* the table, or if both a bird and a shoe are *red.* Questions like this help the child understand relationships and develop conceptual thinking ability. The TDs also encourage the girls and boys to talk about what they are doing and thereby improve their skills with words.

Parent involvement is a key part of this program. Studies have shown that many low-income parents either don't realize how important verbal skills are in school or don't know how to help their child develop them. As a result, their children often aren't as well prepared for school as middle-and upper-class children, fall behind early and develop a dislike/fear of schoolwork which pushes them further back every year. The Verbal Interaction Project attempts to stop this self-perpetuating cycle of fear and failure before it starts.

The TD's goal is to have the parent take over the TD role when he or she isn't there. They do this not by *telling* a parent what to do with a child but by *doing* it – what psychologists call *modeling behavior.* In theory, the parent emulates what the TD did to get the child involved. In practice, it seems to work pretty well. Many TDs, in fact, started as mothers in the program.

The project isn't all cognitive calisthenics. There is also emotional support which helps the child's intellectual growth. TDs and parents compliment what a child does well and ignore mistakes, helping him develop self-confidence and reinforcing the feeling that learning is fun. Program originator and director Phyllis Levenstein puts it this way: "Every child – low-income or middle-income – has to face the system . . . . . we hope we are building a kid who can take it, someone who trusts parents and strangers, who has seen books before and knows that learning is fun, and who does not see school as frightening."

The project has been keeping track of its children by testing each one before the program, during it, and each year thereafter. The average youngster starts the program with an I.Q. rating of 90 and scores 105 two years later – a gain, Levenstein says, which "can be the difference between learning how to read and having to struggle." More important, the tests show that children maintain the gains over the years.

Verbal (Cont.)

It costs the Verbal Interaction Project about $500 for each child. Levenstein is encouraged by the results thus far, but she feels the real test is how well the idea travels; how successfully it can be applied elsewhere in the country. With money from the National Institute of Mental Health, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and other foundations, the project is now being used with 900 children in 30 other areas, ranging from an Indian reservation to an industrial city. Early results, Levenstein reports, match what was achieved in Long Island: an average gain of 15 I.Q. points.

Levenstein is Director of the Verbal Interaction Program, 5 Broadway, Freeport, N. Y. 11520.

TV RESEARCH TODAY

Research on television and human behavior may bring yawns to many—the 1973 Surgeon General's study wore the topic pretty thin — but a new Rand Corp. report calls it a diverse and promising field of inquiry. The report looks at television research from the investigators' vantage point and scans what they consider the most important lines of current work and future activity.

According to the report by George Comstock and Georg Lindsey, the activity generated by the Surgeon General's study has had an impact on the research field. There's less interest in the causal issue, although authors predict that work on television's possible contribution to antisocial behavior will continue. It's just that there is "simply some weariness with the simple cause-and-effect question," and some doubt among social scientists that they can produce more evidence than has been submitted on that score.

The Surgeon General's inquiry has also influenced methodological priorities and the goals of research to some extent. Comstock and Lindsey found an increasing interest in naturalistic experiments, use of multiple methods within the same design, and other strategies to bolster the credibility of laboratory experiments. The authors discovered growing interest among researchers in providing work of immediate relevance to programming, a course which may cause conflict between theory-oriented researchers and policy-oriented researchers. Much social science is still caught up in causal thinking which may inhibit useful research for policy, the report notes.

The top research priority, according to investigators, is inquiry into how television affects the socialization of young persons, especially prosocial behavior. Other priorities named by investigators include television and politics — news coverage and TV's effects on political beliefs and behavior; TV and special populations, particularly minorities, poor, elderly and women; and the psychological and behavioral effects of television viewing. The three areas most likely to receive continuing researcher attention in the latter category include the "arousal hypothesis," the dynamics behind effects and prosocial behavior.

The report notes that television research has as many perspectives as it has participators, and it lists those perspectives most likely to influence future research: views ranging from the "micro social engineering" stance of Stony Brook psychologist Robert Liebert to "macro holism" perspective of content analyst and surveyor George Gerbner at the Annenberg School of Communication, U. Pa. In addition, the report provides descriptions of more than 50 research projects in progress that reads like a who's who in TV research: Bandura, Berkowitz, Ekman, Gans.

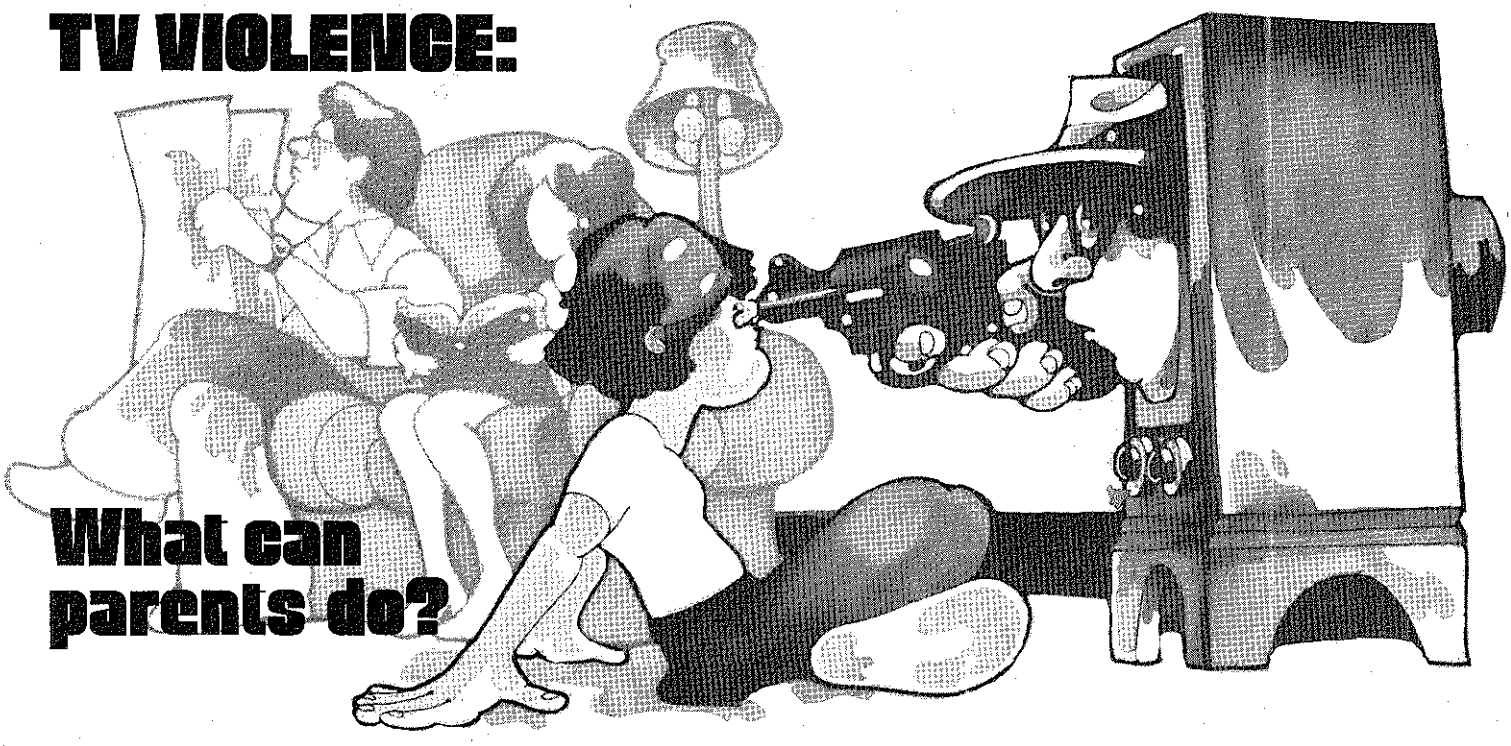
Television and Human Behavior: The Research Horizon, Future and Present (R—1748—CF) is available from Rand Corp., 17 Main St., Santa Monica, Ca. 90406.

TV AND CHILDREN

The Nat. Science Found.'s program of Research Applied to National Needs (RANN) has given Harvard's Graduate School of Education a $126,000 grant for a multidisciplinary and inter-institutional study on television and children, particularly children's responses to television advertising. The study will identify policy issues, conduct a literature review, and identify needed research. An interim report is expected late this year, with the final report due next April. The project's principal investigator is Harvard's Richard Adler. Other members of the research planning group are U. of Hartford psychologist Bernard Friedlander; Gerald Lesser, Harvard; Thomas Robertson and John Rossiter, Wharton School, U. of Pennsylvania; and Scott Ward, Harvard Business School.

The policy planning group is compiling a national roster of researchers and research facilities that qualify as behavioral science resources to be mobilized to help the Federal Trade Commission and other agencies set rules for children's advertising. Researchers who want to know about the roster should contact Friedlander, Children's Television Research Project, Dept. of Psychology. U. of Hartford, W. Hartford, Cn. 06117.

TV VIOLENCE: What can parents do?



Your child, if he's typical, will watch 13,000 people die on television before he is 15 years old. If he were to see every show on network prime time this year, he would witness murders, beatings, rapes, muggings, and robberies at the rate of eight an hour, with three out of four programs featuring violence.

Editor's note: *Almost since the first television set entered the living room, conscientious parents have been concerned about the number of murders and muggings flung at their children. Yet, despite public protest (and even national investigations), televised violence has steadily escalated. Finally, last spring, widespread concern forced the National Association of Broadcasters to decree an additional hour of early-evening time for violence-free family viewing.*

The so-called "family hour" has not wiped brutality off television. After 9 p.m. in the East and West and 8 p.m. in the Midwest, the old rules still apply. After-school hours and the Saturday-morning "ghetto" are not affected, either. It will remain the responsibility of the parent to determine what is suitable for his child to watch.

Beginning with this issue, Better Homes and Gardens *offers a two-part series to assist parents in these decisions. Below, the subtle —and not-so-subtle—effects on children of a steady diet of televised violence are reviewed, with guidelines for minimizing the amount to which a child is exposed. Next month's issue will feature a parents' guide to television viewing—describing not only the best of children's shows but programs the family can enjoy together. In the furor over violence, the "good side" of television is too often overlooked.*

Beating up Bobo

American television goes its gory way even though the harmful effects of televised violence on children (and adults, too, for that matter) have been demonstrated so many times that even network officials seldom publicly dispute them. More than 15 years ago, Dr. Albert Bandura of Stanford University established that violence begets violence with his famous "Bobo doll" experiments. Three groups of children watched an adult pummel and kick an inflatable doll—one group through a one-way window, one group on TV, and the third in an animated film sequence.

Allowed to play with the doll themselves, all three groups of children—the TV watchers no less than the others—mimicked the adult even to angry shouts and gestures. Six months later, they could still repeat the attack in every brutal detail.

Since then, according to Dr. Robert M. Liebert of the State University of New York, more than 50 studies involving 10,000 children between the ages of three and 19 have shown that the more violence and aggression a child watches on TV, the more likely he is to be violent and aggressive himself.

TV also "desensitizes" viewers to human suffering, according to Dr. Victor Cline of the University of Utah. He once screened a sequence from the classic fight film *Champion* for two groups of boys —one of which seldom watched TV while the other averaged 42 hours a week. The boys' heartbeat, respiration, perspiration, and other indicators of emotional response were monitored. The heavy viewers consistently showed less reaction, indicating they had been desensitized to the violence.

Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, who compiles an annual Television Violence Profile for the National Institute of Mental Health, says TV is creating a "generation of fear" which believes that violence is all around us and a significant part of everyday life. His 1974-75 profile showed that heavy viewers *over*-estimated the number of police in America, the percentage of violent crimes, and their own chances of being mugged in a given week. Fear was worst among those frequently portrayed as victims—young women, the aged, minorities.

And, critics say, TV also teaches that the gun or fist is a legitimate means of problem-solving. Reason, logic, the civilizing influences are underplayed. Killing is sanctioned in the name of "right." Morality becomes dependent on such considerations as who holds the gun.

Probably the cruelest irony of all is that programs specifically produced for the young have their own high quota of violence. Dr. Gerbner says that Saturday morning cartoons—"the slum of television"—feature much more violence than adult shows. Although the violence in cartoons seems fanciful and often involves animals, Dr. Gerbner says it reinforces the message that violence is everywhere.

What can be done?

Throwing out the TV set is not the answer. Even so persistent a critic of TV as Peggy Charren of Action for Children's Television (ACT), a nationwide group which has spearheaded the fight for quality children's shows, acknowledges television is here to stay—and commends some of its programming.

Banning television from the home merely cuts off the child from his peers and brands him a freak. And such a ban can't really be effective; the child will still be exposed to TV at a friend's home, at school, or elsewhere.

There are, however, safeguards parents can take to offset TV vio-

Drawing: Heilman Design Assoc.

continued on page 16

begins on page 4

TV Violence

lence. Here are some:

● **Keep control of the set.** According to one expert, three out of four parents set viewing rules for children—but generally in terms of time only. Few limits are set for what can be watched, apparently on the presumption that any programming before a certain hour is childproof. A few minutes' after-school watching would disabuse parents of this notion.

● **Watch shows together, and discuss them with the children.** Peggy Charren of ACT likens family viewing to reading a child's book. "It's a dialogue," she says. "You don't just read, you talk about the story." Make your opinions of the program evident, but urge the children to express theirs as well. Ask leading questions that will help them learn: "What other way might the policeman have settled that? What would you have done if you had been the victim?"

● **Preview programs and schedules, and call attention to worthwhile shows coming up.** Skim the Sunday newspaper listings or *TV Guide;* mark highlights and post them on the family bulletin board or refrigerator door. Make viewing an activity to be anticipated, not something done out of habit. Remember that all three commercial networks and public television offer fine children's programming amid the not so fine.

● **Recheck programs from time to time.** Series change from week to week and year to year. ACT cites the case of Lassie, which parents remember as a warm story of a boy and a dog. In an attempt to "hook" more viewers during the ratings war, the show gradually included more and more frightening episodes.

You can obtain a very good rating guide that previews each season's programs on a family-viewing scale from the National Association for Better Broadcasting (NABB), Box 43630, Los Angeles, Calif. 90043. Include $1.

● **Protest.** Call or write stations, networks, the Federal Communications Commission, your congressman or senator—and particularly the sponsor—about shows you find objectionable.

Sponsors are especially vulnerable. Dr. Alberta E. Siegel, a Stanford child psychologist, proposed to a Senate hearing the establishment of a "violence-rating scale," like the regular ratings of tar and nicotine content in cigarettes, which would list sponsors of the most violent shows. "No one wants to sell the most harmful cigarette, and no one would want to be known as the leading violence vendor," she says.

● **Set a good example.** If you are a television addict who switches the set on automatically to "see what's on tonight," chances are your children will be similarly nonselective. If you spend long hours riveted to the set, your children probably will be likewise mesmerized.

● **Provide other experiences.** Every study of children's viewing habits shows that children watch TV when they have time on their hands—and can be easily lured away when offered more interesting pastimes. Encourage them to take up stimulating hobbies, participate in sports, read. Provide games and toys; take the children on trips.

ACT's *Family Guide to Children's Television* suggests a Saturday-morning family walk as a substitute for the TV ritual. You might even revive the old-fashioned custom of reading aloud as a replacement for children's shows.

● **Join other parents in concerted action.** The recent lesson of television is that organized viewers *do* make a difference. The history of the NABB and of ACT is instructive.

Three years ago, NABB and ACT filed a petition with the FCC opposing license renewal of a TV station in Los Angeles, on grounds that the station offered "excessively violent" programming. After considerable legal maneuvering, during which the renewal was held in abeyance, the station capitulated. Three programs were dropped outright, 42 cartoon series were banned for a minimum of three years, and the station agreed to precede all violent programs prior to 8:30 p.m. with a warning to parents that the shows might be unsuitable for children.

Flushed by this success, NABB has now challenged a second station, also in Los Angeles, on similar grounds.

Both the ACT and the NABB welcome members from concerned parents everywhere. The NABB's address is given earlier. For information on joining ACT, and a free copy of its newsletter, write ACT, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, Massachusetts 02160.

How will it all end?

Perhaps the ultimate answer to the problem of TV violence is a rating system similar to that of the movies, now being tried on TV in several countries; another approach may be more restrictive guidelines by the broadcasters themselves for what can and cannot be shown. The idea of government censorship may be appealing, but most people can easily recognize *that* as a much greater danger.

Meanwhile, control of the channel selection switch—and even at times the on-off switch—lies with parents. Protecting your child from the harmful effects of media violence—at least for the time being—is up to you. ■

On Television and the Public Taste

To the Editor:

William V. Shannon has made his triennial attack on television as the cause of all societal ills [column Sept. 3]. He wrote a similarly intemperate piece in 1972, in which he indicated that he had banished television from his household. Presumably in Mr. Shannon's world, one does not have to watch television to criticize the medium in expert fashion.

I am not troubled by Mr. Shannon's dislike of television. It is unfortunate, however, that he feels no journalistic obligation to get the facts straight.

For example, Mr. Shannon says: "When the networks extended their national news shows from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes in 1963—time that was taken away from local stations—they gained five additional minutes for network commercials. This five minutes a night earned CBS $36-million in a year."

CBS went from an average of two-and-a-half minutes to four minutes of commercial time in 1963 and to five minutes in 1965; we did not "gain" five minutes at any time. The total sales—not earnings—for the CBS Evening News have never approached $36 million in any year and were less than half that in 1963. CBS News was not a profit-making activity in 1963 and is not one today. The fifteen minutes "taken away from the local stations" was more than compensated for with the simultaneous return to stations of thirty minutes earlier in the schedule.

Mr. Shannon claims that a University of Pennsylvania survey showed that "nearly three-quarters of the programs aired in the 1973-74 season contained violence." The survey covered only 75 hours during the year, primarily in the evening and concluded that 73 per cent of those hours contained at least one act of "violence." Mr. Shannon has misinterpreted the study to include the entire broadcast day and year.

Mr. Shannon protests that the networks "have long since settled upon the least common denominator of popular taste and the most secure routes to pleasing it." Presumably he objects to our presenting the programing that the public wants rather than the programing he feels the public should have.

Mr. Shannon has a solution. He suggests that "television channels ought to be controlled by churches, universities, foundations and nonprofit associations of writers, directors and actors." He might look at the commercial channels already owned by churches and universities to see whether he approves of their programing. I think that he will recognize all of his favorite dislikes.

JOHN A. SCHNEIDER
President, CBS/Broadcast Group
New York, Sept. 8, 1975

the positions of conservative President Ford. If these Senators are moderates, who then are the liberal Senators?

To be properly oriented it would seem that a reader must remember to shift a notch to the left when reading political labels.

D. W. SPIDELL SR.
Chatham, N. J., Sept. 5, 1975

The League Explains

To the Editor:

The League of Women Voters appreciates your Sept. 17 editorial, calling attention to the complicated November ballot and the explanations to be found in the League's Facts for Voters and the Supplement on New York City charter questions.

While Facts for Voters and the Supplement are presented without support or opposition, the league does support and oppose selected legislation and ballot issues, and for this reason contributions to it are not tax exempt, as stated in the editorial. Contributions of $50 or more may be made to the tax-exempt Foundation for Citizen Education at the League address, 817 Broadway, New York, 10003. The foundation provides funds for a variety of educational projects.

LYN CARVER
President
New York, Sept. 17, 1975

Sexual Ethics

To the Editor:

Sad and chilling is John Money's suggestion [Op-Ed Sept. 13] that we set a new national code of sexual ethics in the same way societies have converted to the metric system and that we use sex research to "guide us in formulating" one. Just what does he think we are?

It's my hope Americans will guard against those like Money who try to sell sex research and modern codes of behavior in articles containing not even cursory mention of the distinctly personal and emotional aspects of human sexual relations.

May the day never come when, as Money divides it, sex is only for recreation or procreation.

LAURA J. WEILL
New York, Sept. 14, 1975

NY Times Monday Sept. 22, 1975

11/30/75 NYT

Sec. 7, p. 6

Tube of Plenty

The Evolution of American Television.
By Erik Barnouw.
518 pp. New York:
Oxford University Press. $14.95.

Television

Technology and Cultural Form.
By Raymond Williams.
160 pp. New York: Schocken Books.
Cloth, $7.50. Paper, $3.45.

By JOHN LEONARD

Quite simply, Erik Barnouw's three-volume "History of Broadcasting in the United States"—"A Tower in Babel" (1966), "The Golden Web" (1968) and "The Image Empire" (1970)—is what everybody who writes about television steals from. Mr. Barnouw, Emeritus Professor of Dramatic Arts at Columbia University, did all the work, burrowing through the bins of business and government, bringing back every fact that was portable. Those of us who play with the subject, impulsive sermonizers, *soi-disant* pop-cultural hit-men, rely on his trilogy the way mountaineers rely on the mountain: because it is there, we can be, too.

"Tube of Plenty" is a one-volume condensation of that trilogy, 1,131 pages boiled down to 518, with some minimal update to accommodate "Sesame Street" and Richard Nixon at the Watergate. It is perfectly worthy, in fact the best single-volume history of radio and TV in this country that money can buy. But why, aside from the practicalities of making an enterprise more commercial, throw away more than half the mountain?

Nevertheless, most everything important is here. "Five hours a day, sixty hours a week—for millions, television was merging with the environment," concludes Mr. Barnouw; "Psychically it *was* the environment." He has been at pains to explain how it happened, how broadcasting grew up from a child of the military (wireless, radar, etc.) to a creature of a huge economic consortium (A.T. & T., General Electric, Westinghouse, RCA) to a mindless conduit of advertisers and the programs packaged by their agencies (the food, auto and cosmetics industries, those wonderful folks who gave us the quiz show scandals) to its present, uneasy eminence—our principal source of news and entertainment, standing in

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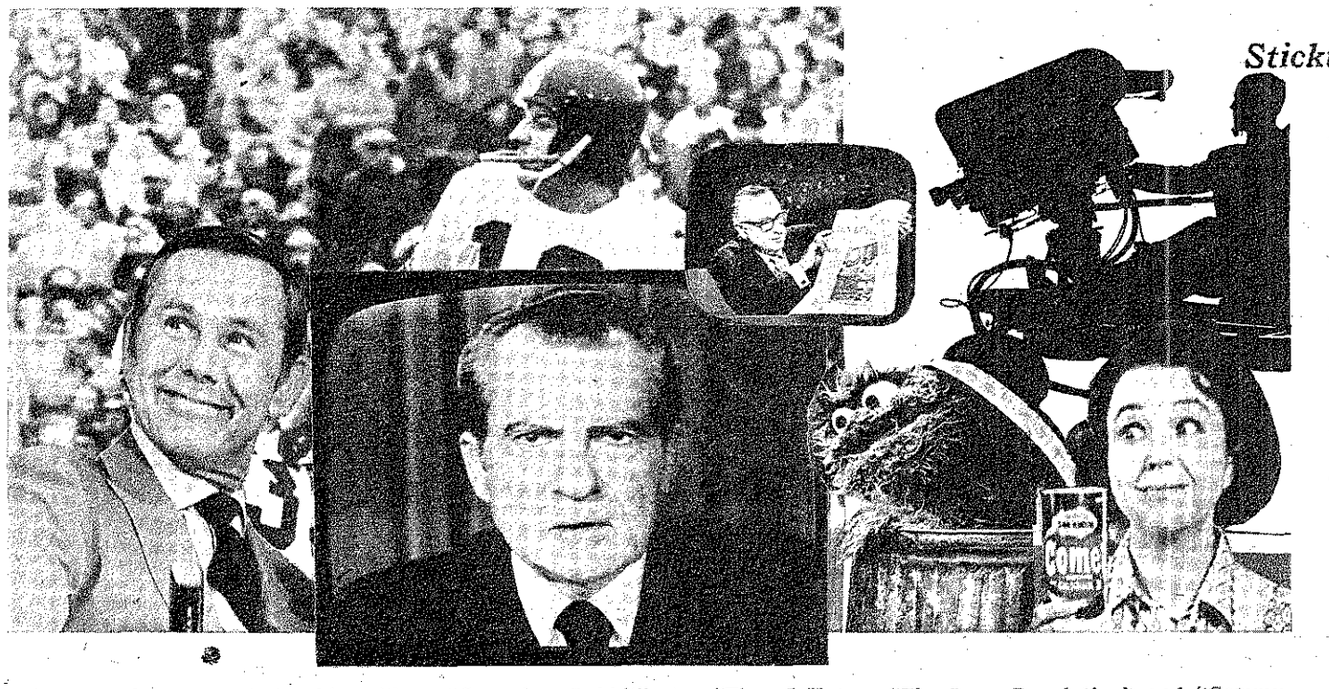
John Leonard is chief cultural correspondent of The Times.



rather an adversary relationship with the President of the United States, and petitioned for redress of grievances by every disaffected group and special interest in the country.

In the beginning, clearly, nobody really knew what he was doing. Radios came first, and programs were only developed later on as a way of increasing the sales of radios: that's where RCA expected to make its profits. Advertising, which of course proved to be the golden egg, was an afterthought, and could have been stopped by any one of the many branches of government with a stake to claim. (The military were obviously interested. At one point, God help us, the Post Office was considered an appropriate monitoring agency. At another, A. T. & T. thought the whole world should belong to A.T. & T., and probably still thinks so.) And now the only reason for the programs is that people watch them, and the people watching them are then sold by the networks to the advertisers.

With remarkable good humor, Mr. Barnouw marches through the legislation, synopsizes the corporate huggermugger, prognosticates the future—lasers, cassettes, a nation wired together by cable systems, a star fleet of communications satellites weaving a seamless web of information and propaganda over the earth, Con III, effort zero. With fine indignation, he flays the industry for its cravenness during the blacklist years of the 1950's (Ed Sullivan, alas, leading the pack), and his account of Edward R. Murrow's confrontation with Joe McCarthy is splendid (the chapter is called "High Noon").

Almost alone among scholars of broadcasting—George Gerbner at the Annenberg School of Communications, with his "Violence Profiles," is another exception—Mr. Barnouw discusses the actual entertainment programs, from "Crusader Rabbit" to "The Jeffersons," believing that these are just as influential as the news programs and the commercials in mucking about with the styles and values of the American public. But even Mr. Barnouw spends much more time on the big events, the bombshells, the Khrushchev visits and nominating conventions and Watergate hearings, the moonshots and assassinations, than he does on the compost, the pulpwork, the basic stuff TV puts into our heads.

It is odd, for instance, to find no mention in "Tube of Plenty," or in the trilogy from which it derives, of such annual rites as the Super Bowl and the Oscar presentations, when the national sappiness rises. The murderous Munich Olympic games are likewise ignored. There might have been, from so intelligent an observer, some consideration of the situation comedy as a socializing agency (telling us that it's all right to behave the way Mary Tyler Moore or Alan Alda behaves), or of Johnny Carson, who is, it seems to me, what Ed Sullivan used to be, a legitimizing agency of the culture at large (telling us that this is celebrity, this is what's permissible to laugh at, this is important).

One niggles, and will desist, because if Mr. Barnouw didn't exist we should have to invent a facsimile to tell us what we need to know, and we would probably botch the job.

Raymond Williams is always provocative, sometimes engaging, an English perpetual motion machine for producing radical books about almost everything—"Culture and Society," "The Country and the City," "Modern Tragedy," "Drama From Ibsen to Brecht," "The English Novel From Dickens to Lawrence," three novels of his own, three plays, short stories and a silly essay on George Orwell published in Frank Kermode's Modern Masters series. Two of his books, "The Long Revolution" and "Communications," dealt specifically with relations between communications technology and culture, emphasizing the print medium. Now, after having somehow found the time to write a monthly column of television criticism for four years for The Listener, he pounces once again.

"Television: Technology and Cultural Form" is not up to his elegant best. He has chosen to browbeat the subject with numbered paragraphs, italicized hypotheses, tables and charts that seem to have been borrowed from some order of Mendelians: it is monographism rampant, without a lyric spark in the whole clay clump. And yet, as ever when Mr. Williams sits down to ponder, it bristles with intelligence.

His argument goes like this. Television, and other communications systems, are the "intrinsic outcome" of earlier transformations of industrial production and the new social forms dictated by those transformations. Thus, the "great mobility, with new separations of families and with internal and external migrations," that an advanced industrial society requires of its workers, "a new and powerful form of social integration and control" is needed. Of this impermanence, this experience of new relations among men and between men and things, "the traditional institutions of church and school, or of settled community and persisting family, had very little to say." In the exurbs, one is confused, and yet wherever one happens to be, for however long, the home is a retreat, in its gadgets self-sufficient, resulting in what Mr. Williams italicizes as "*mobile privatisation.*"

Broadcasting, then, and especially TV, is the stickum that coheres a nation of nomads. It focuses our attention, assures us of community, establishes norms, defines desires, and we need only shuttle from job to bed without any pit-stops. It developed as it did, no matter the differences between American, British, French, Mexican or even Soviet logics, because the domestic arrangement of the particular society required pretty much the message center, mission control, electronic Elmer's Glue-All that it got, in order to go on doing what it wanted to.

Indeed, Mr. Williams argues persuasively that in this age of Sarnoff *père* a "public process"—a debate on policy or ethics or even the legitimacy of a sitting government—is "*represented*" (italics, inevitably, his) by "television intermediaries" who exhaust "the necessarily manifold and irregular processes of true public argument." In other words, who elected Lawrence Spivak ombudsman?

This is not an entirely original point of view. Herbert Schiller, in his somewhat Marx-ridden "Mass Communications and American Empire," snuffles in the vicinity of the same perception, and Mr. Williams acknowledges him. Wearing a different suit of clothes, the more conservative Daniel J. Boorstin, newly installed as our Librarian of Congress, refers in "The Americans: The Democratic Experience" to TV as one more application—like movies, cars, frozen foods and mechanized farming—of a "flow technology" that marries mass production to mass marketing. Moreover, TV has hubris: it manufactures and markets not only things, but experience itself as well. Mr. Boorstin is not acknowledged. (None of these three critiques explains how American television could ever have gotten itself into the position of being perceived as the enemy of the Government, and of the Government's corporate accomplices, that it is purported to serve.)

If we press Mr. Williams's notion of TV as "a new and powerful form of social integration and control" on top of Mr. Barnouw's claim that "psychically" it constitutes our environment, what does the amalgam suggest? Together with the currently popular and quite proper suspicion of institutionalized political authority, it suggests to me that the medium has more than it can handle. Church and state, literature and the arts, schools and architecture seem incapable of accommodating and resolving the tensions of this distressed democracy. Thus television ends up being our sympathetic magic, our purgative, our way of stylizing our anxieties, our method of worshiping (an inauguration), of celebrating (the Super Bowl, the Academy Awards, Armstrong cold-footing on the moon), of mourning (the assassinations). Too much, but all we've got. ■

Des Moines Register 12/28/75

Child psychiatrist calls TV violence 'national scandal'

By JANE E. BRODY

NEW YORK, N.Y. — By the time the average American child is graduated from high school, he has seen on television "some 18,000 murders and countless highly detailed incidents of robbery, arson, bombing, forgery, smuggling, beating and torture," according to a Seattle physician who wants the medical profession to protest televised violence.

Calling the amount of violence depicted on television "a national scandal," Dr. Michael B. Rothenberg noted that 146 research articles based on 50 studies involving 10,000 children had all shown that viewing violence produced increased aggressive behavior in the young.

"No study I could find in reviewing the entire literature on the subject showed that violence did not have such an effect," said Dr. Rothenberg, who is a pediatrician and child psychiatrist at Children's Orthopedic Hospital and Medical Center, Seattle, in a recent interview.

In an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Dr. Rothenberg said that one violent act was depicted every minute in television cartoons for children under age 10 and there was, on the average, six times more violence during one hour of children's television than there was in one hour of adult programing.

Although network tabulations for the fall's television season indicate a decline in violence during prime-time programing, Dr. Rothenberg said that surveys by Action for Children's Television had not shown any significant change.

He added that reducing violence during "family" viewing time — between 7 and 9 p.m. (Eastern time) — did nothing to protect children from the "enormous amount of violence" depicted between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. and 13 million children are still watching television after 9 p.m. when there is heavy violence content, he said.

This year, a study conducted by CBS Inc. showed that children's programs with "pro-social" content produced the desired positive effect among those who watched them. By the same token, Dr. Rothenberg said, "children pick up antisocial messages from television."

Dr. George Gerbner, professor of communications at the University of Pennsylvania and long a student of television violence, said that his preliminary findings showed that violence content was up in 1974 so that a purported decrease this year "is meaningless."

Dr. Gerbner's research has shown that heavy viewers of television are inordinately fearful — "they think the world is even more dangerous than it really is." Television violence, he said, "creates victims. It teaches people what they can get away with against other kinds of people. In order to have social violence, it's not enough to train people to be aggressive, you must also train people to be afraid, to act like victims."

Arthur R. Taylor, president of CBS Inc., acknowledged in a recent speech before the Hollywood Radio and Television Society that "the public feels there is too much violence on television."

Calling this a "warning signal," he said the networks were acting responsively to "the needs of our society."

Early in December, 1974, Governor Shapp — sharing the concerns of many mental health professionals, interested citizens and consumers, wrote to the Presidents of the three major television networks. The Governor's letter is reproduced here along with the replies from the networks with the hope that viewers will share these concerns over TV portrayal of the mentally ill citizen.

Dear Sir;

I am writing to express my concern about a problem affecting the human condition which I believe is of special interest to your network.

I refer to the need faced by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (and, of course, by all other states) to provide humane and enlightened care for the mentally disabled. Important progress is being made at federal, state and local levels in the struggle to assure that quality care is offered to the mentally ill, toward the objective of helping this group return to useful lives as productive members of society. An integral part of this process involves preparing the individual for community living, as well as strengthening the community's willingness to accept him wholeheartedly back in its midst.

The situation which occasions this letter is the tendency that seems to exist for television programming (and to some extent, radio programming) to portray mental patients in the most frightening and menacing manner. All too often, acts of violence, assault, murder, etc. are associated with or attributed to mental patients and former mental patients. As a result, the deep-seated misunderstanding and fears held by the general public toward persons with emotional problems are reinforced and intensified. These negative attitudes in turn interfere with effective treatment methods and worsen the climate for the community rehabilitation of this group.

I am informed by my mental health officials and consultants that this kind of portrayal of mental patients is not only unfair, but clearly inaccurate. Reliable data exist which shows that, as a group, the mentally dysfunctional are characteristically non-aggressive, and that acts of violence occur no more frequently in this group than in the general population.

I am writing, therefore, to urge that the officials of your network review this question with these facts in mind, so that any inadvertant disservice to persons who have experienced mental disorders can be corrected. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which is working steadily to improve the quality of mental health care being given to its citizens, has developed many innovative programs and factual information pertaining to this question. We would be glad to share our information and resources with you, as part of an effort to arrive at a more fair and realistic portrayal of mental patients throughout the broadcasting media.

Sincerely,
MILTON J. SHAPP
Governor

continued on next page

The networks quickly responded to Governor Shapp's letter. Excerpts are reproduced here.

Dear Governor Shapp:

I appreciate your very thoughtful letter of December 9, and I understand and sympathize totally with the points you make.

Let me say at the outset that NBC shares your concern, and we have long expressed it in the handling of program material relating to mental illness and the mentally ill. This is the responsibility of the NBC Program Department, which maintains creative supervision over entertainment programs produced for NBC, and the NBC Broadcast Standards Department, whose task it is to see that the entertainment programs we broadcast meet generally accepted standards of taste and propriety.

It is true that on occasion, within the context of a dramatic show, there may be a criminal who is mentally ill. We take special precautions to see that the creative people make clear that the individual is atypical. But, more important, such instances are, we believe, more than balanced in dramatic programs in which treatment of the mentally ill, the causes of mental illness or the representations of persons with emotional problems are presented sensitively and sympathetically. In addition, we have presented numerous news and information programs and program segments designed to inform the public factually and fairly about mental illness.

When necessary, we seek the guidance of professional consultants in reviewing story ideas and scripts. We don't claim perfection, and there may be occasional lapses in our efforts. While I do not believe we have an immediate need to use the resources of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we would welcome any specific criticism or other observations, both positive and negative, your professional people might care to make.

As I said, we share your concern, and I am circulating your comments among the executives and staffs of our Program and Broadcast Standards departments, and they in turn will make them known to the suppliers of our programs at an appropriate time.

Cordially,
Herbert S. Schlosser
President, NBC

Dear Governor Shapp:

Your letter of December 6, 1974, . . . has been referred to me for reply. ABC's Department of Broadcast Standards and Practices, which reviews all entertainments programs prior to telecast for compliance with internal policies and those of the Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters, report to me.

I want to assure you at the outset that ABC shares your concerns regarding the mentally disabled. In this connection we follow detailed procedures to insure generally that our programs are sensitively and responsibly produced, requiring, among other matters, that special precautions are taken to avoid demeaning or misrepresenting victims of mental disease . . .

You may also be interested in knowing that we have gleaned insights into televised portrayals of the mentally infirm during the course of our sponsored independent research into the effects of televised violence on young people. (Dr. Melvin Heller, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Division of Forensic Psychiatry, and Dr. Samuel Polsky, Professor of Law and Director of the Institute of Law and Health Sciences, both at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., have been studying the effects of TV violence on varying groups of young people.)

For your further information, ABC public affairs programming during the past year has included a number of offerings on the subject of mental health. "The Fragile Mind,", for example, an hour-long Network special which focused on five people with varied mental or emotional problems, was produced in cooperation with The National Association for Mental Health and The National Institute for Mental Health. Our owned stations have featured reports on California's mental health care system, autistic children and the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, to name a few.

Finally, I would also add that numerous mental health public service announcements on behalf of a variety of organizations are regularly broadcast over our network and local facilities.

We appreciate your offer of information and resources and would be delighted to review any material you wish to furnish.

Very sincerely yours,
Alfred R. Schneider
Vice President, ABC

Dear Governor Shapp:

In response to your letter of December 6, may I assure you that we share your concern over the portrayal of the mentally disabled in television programs. In fact, over the past year, we have broadcast several episodes dealing either with mental retardation or the problems of mental health.

The most notable of our efforts was the ALL IN THE FAMILY episode entitled "Gloria's Boyfriend," concerning a 20-year-old retarded boy who has a crush on Gloria. Many positive statements were made, debunking the myths about the retarded person and, for that, the program received a special award from the National Association For Retarded Children (Citizens).

The same organization also provided technical assistance in producing the highly acclaimed General Electric Theater presentation of "Larry," a sensitive account of the rehabilitation of a "mental retard" who really isn't.

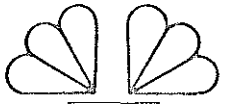
In addition, four episodes of MEDICAL CENTER in the past year dealt quite positively with the subjects of retardation and psychiatry. A forthcoming episode of MANNIX will show the problems involved in raising a retarded child. Granted, in some of our police dramas, the villian may be depicted as a psychopath, but great care is taken to explain that he or she is in great need of professional help which could turn their lives around.

I'm sure you will agree that it would be quite misleading to totally avoid the subject. For television to remain contemporary, it must deal with problems and situations as they exist.

You can rest assured that we will continue to take special precautions in dealing with programs concerning the mentally disabled.

All good wishes.

Cordially,
Robert D. Wood
President, CBS



Despite the expressed concerns of the major networks, frequent portrayals of the mentally ill as perpetrators of violent acts continue. There is a growing body of literature and much ongoing research that studies the social effects of television violence. One such study -- authored by Drs. George Gerbner and Larry Gross, professors at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications -- outlines the ways which television dramas affect their viewers. It speaks particularly to the effects of a frequent fare of TV violence, which accounts for 56% of prime-time programming. Their "Violence Profile No. 6: Trends in Network Television Drama and Viewer Conceptions of Social Reality" points out not only that heavy TV viewers tend to become inured to violence, but also that the viewers' sense of reality tends to become distorted. Heavy TV viewers are more likely to over-estimate the frequency of violent incidents in society and are likely to take their cues from TV dramas in deciding which people they believe to be dangerous. Current TV programming seems to be cueing the public that acts of violence are frequently the acts of the mentally ill. In an earlier work, Dr. Gerbner commented that mental illness was most often portrayed in the TV dramas of the 1950s either as divine retribution for sinful living or as a plausible explanation for violence. The misconceptions that these portrayals impose upon the public about the origins of mental illness and the frequency of violent acts by the mentally ill is particularly damaging at a time when growing numbers of mental patients are returning to community life.

In fact, as the Governor's letter indicates, this stigmatizing is both unfair and inaccurate. There have been seven major research efforts to study the "dangerousness" of the mentally ill. Five of them, done between 1922 and 1947, concluded that ex-mental patients were far less likely to be arrested for violent behavior than the general population. Two more recent studies in the 1960s modify those reports with data indicating that ex-mental patients may be equally, slightly more, or significantly more likely to commit acts of violence than is the general public, depending on the particular crime studied. Two important points should be noted, however. First, Joseph E. Jacoby at the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Pennsylvania argues in a recent paper that each of these studies has serious methodological shortcomings. He stresses that the scientific community does not have sufficiently conclusive evidence to argue the case either way. Second, whether the ex-mental patient is less, equally or more likely to commit violent acts than is the general public, even the most damaging statistics of these studies do not justify the popular misconception that most ex-patients are violence prone.

Jacoby's work with Dr. Terence Thornberry at the University of Pennsylvania is also demonstrating the low rate of violent acts of former mental patients. For the past two years they have been following the community careers of 438 men released under court order (Dixon v. Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) from Farview, Pennsylvania's only institution for mentally ill offenders. Nearly 600 men, many of whom had been Farview inmates for years, were recommitted to Farview on the basis of their "dangerousness" in 1967. The court ruled in 1971 that the process of recommitment followed in that case had in fact been unconstitutional. Subsequently, most of the men were transferred to civil hospitals: since then 438 have been released to the community. After an intensive four-year community follow-up, the report states, fully 86% of the men have exhibited no dangerous or violent behaviors at all, a strikingly high figure among a class of former patients previously viewed by mental health professionals and the public alike as most likely to be dangerous.

For more information:

- See: Melvin S. Heller, M.D., and Samuel Polsky, Ph.D.; "Television Violence" Archives of General Psychiatry; Volume 24, March, 1971; or
- Henry J. Steadman and Joseph J. Cocozza "We Can't Predict Who is Dangerous" Psychology Today: January, 1975; or
- Write: George Gerbner, Ph.D. and Larry Gross, Ph.D. for their "Violence Profile No. 6: Trends in Network Television Drama and Viewer Conceptions of Social Reality" at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19174; or
- Terence P. Thornberry, Ph.D., and Joseph E. Jacoby for their paper "The Uses of Discretion in a Maximum Security Mental Hospital: The Dixon Case" at the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19174; or
- Joseph E. Jacoby, at the above address for his paper "Dangerousness of the Mentally Ill -- A Methodological Reconsideration."

cont'd from page 33

TV SEX AND VIOLENCE—

Showdown Nears in Washington

BROADCASTING MAGAZINE

Members of the Federal Communications Commission are pressuring TV networks to improve program standards. But they are hampered by lack of enforcement powers.

A new wave of complaints about the fare being offered on home screens is prompting this warning to television's rulers: Clean up—or else.

The television industry is finding itself in trouble again with the public and with officials in Washington.

This trouble flows from the increasing portrayals of violence and sex on home screens, despite past promises of TV executives to change their ways.

Result: The three major networks are heading for a showdown with Congressmen and the Federal Communications Commission in the next few weeks.

Influence on children? Complaints center on prime-time evening hours, viewed by children who—some authorities contend—could be led into imitating the brutality and sex seen on TV.

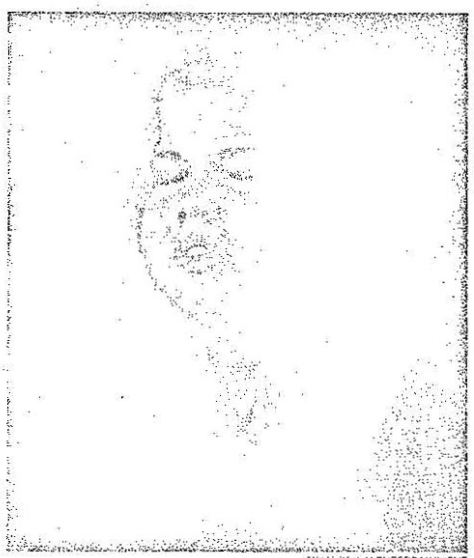
Broadcasters respond that their programs only mirror society. And they argue—with the backing of some of their critics—that entertainment and news programs have been showing improvement in the 1974-75 season.

But critics also point to an apparent "new permissiveness" on many programs, and cite recent cases of mayhem, explicit sex, indecent dialogue, nudity, beatings, torture and perverse behavior unlike any ever shown on prime time before. Among the examples:

One feature-length NBC movie entitled "Born Innocent" included a scene in which a young girl is molested in a shower room by a group of youngsters using a broom handle.

A telecast of the CBS situation comedy "Maude" contained dialogue on the subject of abortion that struck some viewers as obscene.

In an episode of ABC's "Marcus Welby," the story involved a homosexual attack on a teen-age boy by his science teacher.



TOMORROW ENTERTAINMENT

NBC's "Born Innocent" movie portrayed an explicit sexual attack on a young girl.

CBS-TV

Viewers of "Maude" on CBS complained that dialogue on abortion was offensive.

NBC also recently aired in two parts an edited version of "The Godfather," the movie industry's biggest money-maker of all time—yet one of the most violent films ever made.

Some authorities see a cause-and-effect relationship between TV and real-life violence.

In Los Angeles last month, police asked NBC to set up a special screening of a "Police Story" episode that some believe may have inspired a killer to slash the throats of three sleeping derelicts on skid row.

The plot of the "Police Story" program, detectives said, featured the same kind of crime.

Legal action. A California woman has sued television producers of the film "Born Innocent," charging the program's graphic rape scene may have stimulated a similar sexual attack on her daughter.

Local television stations, fearful of community reaction to some shows, are complaining to their affiliated networks. And individual viewers are flooding legislators with complaints about television sensationalism.

"Please do all you can to clean up the screen—the crime, violence, sex and all," an Iowa couple wrote Senator John O. Pastore (Dem.), of Rhode Island, who chairs the Senate's Communications Subcommittee. "We believe [the violence] has a great influence on children and young adults, and this is why there is such an increase in bad behavior among them."

At the FCC's complaints branch, letters from viewers who are irate about violence and sex on TV numbered 24,644 in the year that ended June 30, up from only 2,142 two years before.

(continued on next page)

TV SHOWDOWN NEARS

[continued from preceding page]

More than 90 per cent of the recent letters—many apparently the result of organized letter-writing campaigns by pressure groups—complained about increasing use of explicit sexual themes on television. Complaints about violence dropped sharply.

A warning. Members of Congress are putting the FCC on notice: Come up with a policy to "protect children from excessive programing of violence and obscenity" or risk a cut in funds for operating expenses.

Federal Communications Commissioner Abbott Washburn, noting that nationwide levels of crime and violence are rising, observed "an inordinate number of high-tension, crime-drama shows running night after night in prime time on television stations across the country."

Why do networks continue to show explicit violence and sex despite citizen complaints?

Network officials assert that most programing is determined by extensive surveys that show what a majority of viewers want—light comedy, games and variety shows, action-adventure and horror stories, and movies.

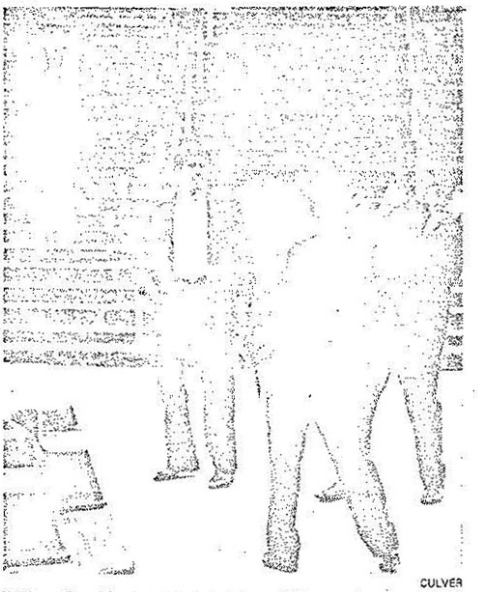
Prime-time programs, they say, will continue to reflect changing attitudes in American society, particularly as public interest grows in such issues as race, sexuality, behavior and psychology, and human relationships.

"Delicate balance." Herbert S. Schlosser, president of the National Broadcasting Company, explained:

"Television must strike the delicate balance between following public taste and leading it by offering new forms and styles of entertainment. . . . We do not seek through entertainment to create a new morality. But we must serve the millions of viewers who want at least part of their entertainment to relate to experience of the real world with which they can identify. In keeping pace with the times, we do not intend to leap too far ahead of what viewers will accept, but we cannot lag so far behind that they leave us and turn elsewhere."

Other industry spokesmen point out that prime-time programs account for about half of each network's revenue, thus enabling presentation of less-profitable news documentaries, cultural programs, public-affairs and educational shows and network "specials," such as the extensive coverage given to the Watergate proceedings last year.

Such arguments leave TV's critics unconvinced, and their pressure on the FCC to clean up TV programs is growing. But most industry observers doubt the Commission can effectively do the job by itself.



CULVER

"The Godfather," a violent film televised in prime time, got high audience ratings.

For one thing, the Commission's only enforcement power over networks is to crack down on license renewals of the relatively few stations owned directly by networks. For another, any attempt at prior censorship of network programs could be viewed by courts as a violation of the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech.

As a result of these limiting factors, FCC Chairman Richard Wiley in recent weeks has met with network executives in a series of "head knocking" sessions, and has threatened to hold public hearings if networks do not comply with his plea to apply self-imposed standards to eliminate gross excesses.

By so doing, Mr. Wiley said, they could present "sensitive or controversial programing with taste, discretion and decency."

Suggested changes. Among the options Mr. Wiley has in mind are these:

- A rating system similar to that of the movie industry, with the grading of programs according to their content and suitability for children.
- Scheduling of heavily violent or explicit shows in later evening hours when children are likely to be in bed.
- Advance warning in published TV listings about the broadcast of programs that some might find objectionable.
- The placing of a small visual symbol—such as a white dot—in the corner of the TV screen during programs that contain explicit violence or sex to alert those who tune in that such a program is in progress. This system, used in France, could be done optionally by local stations in the U. S.

Networks in the past have generally rejected these proposals. They note that different time zones make scheduling changes impracticable. They insist that programs publicized as excessively violent or sexual would get the highest ratings. And they suggest that parents should decide what adolescent TV viewers can watch.

In the current controversy, however, the FCC seems determined to keep pressing the industry giants until a satisfactory solution is agreed upon.

Network co-operation may not be long in coming. In a statement December 31, CBS President Arthur Taylor urged the National Association of Broadcasters to require that networks reserve the first hour of prime time for entertainment "suitable for family viewing." And he called for advance warning of programs that might disturb adults.

Profit stakes in the prime-time competition are enormous, and network programers are reluctant to tamper with successful formulas.

According to published figures, the three major networks took in 2.05 billion dollars in advertising revenues in 1973—and prime-time hours accounted for about half that total. When all figures are tallied, receipts in 1974 are expected to top the previous record by 9 or 10 per cent.

Ad fees and ratings. Networks base their advertising fees almost solely on all-important viewership ratings compiled daily by such firms as the A. C. Nielsen Company of Chicago.

Advertisers pay about $120,000 per minute of each commercial to sponsor "All in the Family"—often rated television's most popular program, watched by some 42 million Americans each week.

Even more important to advertisers than ratings are the kinds of persons watching. The most attractive viewers are supposed to be those persons in the 18-to-49 age group—young adults described as more affluent, with tastes running to Westerns, police dramas, movies, variety and game shows and situation comedies.

"Basically, networks produce the kinds of programs that the audience demonstrates it likes," said Herb Jacobs, president of TelCom Associates, a top authority on television ratings. "If the public wants police stories and Westerns, it's pretty hard to dramatize them without some violence. The situation comedies have gotten away from slapstick and are moving toward more real-life subjects, and viewers are loving it."

One of the most obvious changes is in language being used on the air. Network programers recall that only a few years ago words such as "hell," "damn," "virgin," "pimp," "fag" and "bigot" and various ethnic characterizations would

not have been broadcast. The relatively unrestrained dialogue of such highly popular programs as "M*A*S*H," "Sanford and Son" and "All in the Family" has changed all that.

The violent offerings, however, remain a strong concern for citizen pressure groups, who contend that networks increasingly use new techniques to imply violence, rather than to portray overt brutality.

"Psychological horror." "Many of the new programs impart a psychological horror in viewers—the kind of thing that gives people nightmares," said Father Morton A. Hill, head of Morality in Media, Inc., a New York-based citizen group. "You may see vicious dogs chasing people, or women being dragged down dark alleys by assailants, or families being held under siege by unseen and nameless attackers. It paints the world as a terrifying, dangerous, wicked place."

The cleryman's view is supported by the newest "violence profile" that is compiled annually by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

The report for the 1973-74 television season found that although the prevalence of prime-time violence declined slightly from a year ago, the number of victims of violent actions increased. For every 10 characters portrayed as violent, 14 were injured or killed on television.

In addition, the report found that a disproportionate number of television's victims are female, elderly, lower class, foreign and nonwhite.

"Fear of victimization pervades the world of television drama and may cultivate a corresponding sense of danger" in the real world, said Prof. George Gerbner, who heads the violence research for the National Institute of Mental Health.

The network view. Network executives insist that there is enough variety on television that most viewers can find suitable alternatives of high quality on one channel or another. As evidence, they point to such recent products as "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," "The Missiles of October," "The Execution of Private Slovik," "QB VII," "The Merchant of Venice," "World at War," and the Public Broadcasting System's noncommercial presentations, including "Masterpiece Theatre."

Programers also assert that the increasing frankness and candor of programs on some cable-TV systems and educational stations have led the way to increased experimentation on networks.

An official of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences said:

"Violence and sex on TV is a serious question that people in the industry should be concerned about and should resolve by taking the more outrageous and titillating scenes off the air. But this is also a good political issue in Washington, and sometimes people in Congress are a little hypocritical when they say the public deserves better programs. Basically, networks give the public what the public wants."

As a Leading Jurist Sees TV Industry—

By David L. Bazelon, Chief Judge of U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

U. S. Appeals Judge David L. Bazelon

The power of television is commensurate—and I do not think I exaggerate in the least—with the power to produce atomic energy and the power to modify human conduct by use of bio-behavioral controls. . . .

It is the perils of these new forms of wizardry which, I fear, will be overlooked in the excitement to exploit new discoveries. Thus it is that the potential evils of the power of television require great sensitivity on the part of the programing executives and their clients, the advertisers. . . .

I think that many of us, as members of the bench and bar, would be willing to walk more than an extra mile to resist those pressures and to uphold the traditional view of the First Amendment.

But one may question whether . . . the broadcasters are not making such resistance more difficult. . . .

The broadcast media surely must strenuously resist all Government attempts to interfere with their wide legitimate discretion. But on the other hand, they must also have the strength to admit their shortcomings, their abuse of the immense power of television for the private profit of a few, to the serious detriment of the nation at large.

The broadcast media know—or should know—when their programing is simply and only mass-appeal pablum designed to titillate a sufficiently large majority to enable the broadcasters to sell the most advertising. They know when they are presenting only one side of a major public issue, when they are shading the facts to present their own point of view, and when they are ignoring the concerns of the community.

They know the impact of their programs on children, they know about the marketing of human emotions and of the prurient interest in violence and sex. They know when they subvert the professionalism of their own news teams in order to reach the demographic audiences which will attract advertisers.

They know that wide exposure of subjects ranging from the names of rape victims to the private grief of a mother on the death of her son constitutes unconscionable invasions of privacy. And they know when they are overcommercializing their programing to amortize the inflated cost of the broadcast license.

In sum, I think they know the times they may have prostituted the tremendous potential of television as a human communication tool. They know this and they know what should be done about it. The programing executives and their advertiser clients must stop their single-minded purpose to achieve higher ratings, more advertising and greater profits, and stop to consider what greater purposes television should serve. And they must do it soon if we are to preserve our First Amendment values for telecommunications.

(Foregoing are excerpts from an address to the Federal Communications Bar Association on November 15 by Judge Bazelon, whose court hears all appeals from the licensing decisions of the Federal Communications Commission.)

GREENSBURG, PA.
TRIBUNE-REVIEW
D. 26,000

JAN 19 1975

JUST WHAT YOU WANTED

Six New TV Cop Shows Air

By RICHARD K. SHULL

With a touch of cloying cuteness, ABC Network mailed a letter with four shiny pennies attached along with an admonition to watch its "four new coppers."

The letter went on to explain it has just what we've been waiting for this year, four more cops 'n' robbers series scheduled to premiere in January and February.

Along with one each being contributed by NBC and CBS during the same period.

When all the new shows are in place by mid-February, there won't be many hours each week in the evening when a cop show isn't playing on the networks.

If the old movies being offered happen to have cops 'n' robbers themes, then it's possible to reduce that figure to even fewer viewing hours a week in which crime and punishment aren't being featured.

Depending on what constitutes a cop show in your mind, 40 to 50 per cent of all the shows on the network schedule for late winter and spring will have that theme.

Do these massive injections of antisocial attitudes and sado-masochistic characters have any effect on the viewers' attitudes?

Yes, according to the continuing survey on TV violence being conducted since 1967 at the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

Heavy viewers of TV tend to overestimate the danger of violence in everyday life more than light viewers, the latest report showed.

Another thing the network headmen have been ignoring is the message they have been getting from the audience.

The audience has been sending the networks a message via the Nielsen charts this season, but so far the poobahs in the front offices haven't received it.

Some strange things have been happening to the Nielsen ratings.

NBC broadcast an uninspired documentary on unidentified flying objects in a perfectly lousy time slot and it placed No. 12 on the rating chart for the week.

You can read these indications two ways to account for the high audience tune-in:

Either these documentaries were exceptional, which they weren't, or audience disenchantment with the regular TV fare has reached such a level that viewers will grab at anything which appears to be an alternative to the wall-to-wall bang-bang and ha-ha which is pitched at us as "prime time."

A third possibility, of course, is that reality in this land - political skulduggery, inflation and recession - has become so bleak that viewers welcome shows about the inexplicable such as UFOs and unearthly monsters.

Better to think about those things no one understands that to confuse the mind with things we're supposed to understand.

Perhaps the networks should be looking to the front page of the National Enquirer instead of the paperbook libraries for their inspiration.

(United Feature Syndicate)

(continued from page 3)

strict psychiatric testimony to plain descriptive phrases excluding specific diagnoses, medical opinions and psychological predictions to improve the accuracy and fairness of commitment decisions.

HAPPIEST MARRIED COUPLES ARE CHILDLESS. Results of a recently released survey of more than 2,000 men and women by a team of researchers headed by Angus Campbell of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research indicate that childless married Americans between the ages of 18 to 29 are most satisfied with their relationship. Couples over 29 without children were the second most happy group, while the least content proved to be divorced or separated individuals. Additionally, after children are grown and parents are alone again, the percentage of satisfaction generally surpasses their pre-parenthood level.

DRINK-WATCHERS. Two former Alcoholics Anonymous members in Stony Point, New York have founded a new organization to help problem imbibers cut down on their intake - but not out. It's called Drink-Watchers, and incorporates programs of "connoisseurship" and behavior modification for those not physiologically addicted to alcohol rather than one of complete abstinence. Information and their newsletter are available from P.O. Box 245, Stony Point, N.Y. 10980.

TELEVISION-INDUCED PARANOIA. Exposure to violent television programming is creating a "Television Generation" of people under 30 who are neurotically fearful of the dangers of life, according to a study of habitual viewers for the National Institute of Mental Health by Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania. While the proportion of airtime that offers violence is down 5% from a 1967 high, Gerbner has found that 75% of all video fare still dwells on unusual aggression. Additionally, the most common victims of this syndrome are women, who manifest the most paranoid feelings about their future in society.

HUMAN PHEREMONES ISOLATED. The long-suspected existence of human sex-attractant chemicals has finally been proven. Dr. Richard P. Michael, a psychiatrist at Emory University School of Medicine and the Georgia Mental Health Institute directed a study which found the pheremonal aliphatic acids present in the vaginal secretions of healthy young women. Although pheremones are most conspicuous during the female's fertile period, and have been proven to stimulate sexual behaviour in other primates, Dr. Michael feels that because of American douching habits, the attractants play a very small role in the mating habits of our society. Oral contraceptives have also been found to suppress the vaginal bacteria which produce pheremones - the same bacteria which in turn prevent yeast infections in the female.

MUSIC TO MAKE LOVE BY. Syntonic Research is a New York-based record company that pioneered the environmental sound series featuring transcriptions of ocean waves, thunderstorms, bayou swamps and mountain forests. All these were designed to create a background for work, meditation or sleep. Now, after three years of research, they claim to have engineered the perfect aural complement for coitus. It's a 20-minute recording of a female heart, called "The Ultimate Heartbeat." Syntonic's president, Irv Teibel claims that all traditional romantic music, such as "Bolero" are basically pace-makers, and that his album - as pre-tested by 1000 volunteers - coordinates a couples' sexual responses best.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305
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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Bob Beyers
EDITORS: Details follow asterisks.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
STANFORD –

Three years ago, in a widely misreported study, the Surgeon General's Committee found preliminary, tentative evidence of a causal relationship between televised violence and aggressive behavior.

Today televised violence "continues at a high level," with several new studies supporting the same basic conclusion reached by the committee, according to a new book on *TV Violence and The Child: The Evolution a Fate of the Surgeon General's Report.* Coauthored by Douglas Cater and Stephen Strickland, and published by th Russell Sage Foundation (167 pp., $5.95 available from Basic Books, 10 E 53 St. NYC 10022 or Aspen Institute Program on Communications and Society, 360 Bryant St. Palo Alto, Ca 94301).

A consulting professor in the Stanford Department of Communication, Cater directs the Aspen Institut Program on Communications and Society in Palo Alto. Strickland directs the Washington office of the health poli program of UC-San Francisco and is a faculty member at the Georgetown University School of Medicine.

"Violent incidents on prime time and Saturday morning programs maintain a rate of more than twice t British rate, which itself is padded by American TV imports," they note.

While debate over TV's impact has persisted for more than 20 years, "Violence on TV—even on prograr aimed at children—continues apace. The industry has taken little action and has not invested significant funds in supporting research into TV's effects for good or ill. . . .

"Congress now has more than adequate scientific justification for periodic review of what the TV indust is doing in both children's programming and the larger area of violent content viewed by children.

"There is no requirement that a law be passed. Indeed, it would be impossible to formulate a clear and sensible statute on the basis of present evidence. Moreover, the First Amendment. . .should operate as a strong restraint in this area of lawmaking. . . .

"The time may be fast approaching, however, when (Sen. John O.) Pastore's 'Dutch uncle' pronouncements and even the threat of license forfeiture may be of little avail.

"Technology—by cable, satellite, cassette, and perhaps ultimately by fiber optics—promises a fissioning o our communication channels. Increased competition could open the way for greater diversity and choice in TV viewing. But it also could push program producers to extend ever further the limits of audience arousal.

"The question is whether the TV industry can be made more sensitive and self-conscious about its responsibility. Given the evidence available, there is cause for concern, and good reason for demanding changes. . .

"Many of those who produce, program, and sponsor TV programs, including programs specifically designed for younger audiences, are utterly unaware of the social implications of those programs. . . .

"The communication gap between most TV experts and child development specialists is great. The burde should be on the industry to close that gap."

While it will not be easy to develop a "violence profile" to measure programming, "the systematic pursui of better indicators will help create a continuing awareness in parent, producer, and advertiser which could have beneficial results," they declare.

* * *

One laboratory study at Fels Institute, conducted as part of the Surgeon General's analysis, showed that exposure to only three and a half minutes of a violent TV sequence caused children aged five to nine to behave more aggressively immediately afterwards.

A longitudinal study also included in the Surgeon General's report showed a strong correlation between early TV violence viewing and aggressive behavior in the teenage years. A child's TV habits at age eight were more likely to predict aggressiveness at age 18 or 19 than family social and economic status, relationship with parents, IQ or any other single factor in the child's environment.

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The New York Times coverage of the Surgeon General's report was both "premature and erroneous," Cater and Strickland contend. Broadcasters greeted the findings with "conspicuous silence," but appeared "vaguely supportive" of the need for programing changes at hearings subsequently held by Pastore. The hearings themselves were "practically ignored" by network news reporters.

Studies shortly thereafter showed no change in the prevalence of violence on prime-time shows, although the percentage of leading characters involved in violence dropped from 73% to 58% and the proportion involved in killing dropped from 19% and 10%.

The fact that increasingly more TV characters suffer than inflict violence "cultivates a margin of fear and demonstrates a structure of power that TV viewers may project upon reality," researchers reported. Those watching TV four hours or more daily were significantly more likely to overestimate the percentage of real life violent crimes and the danger of their own personal involvement as victims.

All three networks did create vice-presidents in charge of children's programing after the hearings, however, and voluntarily cut commercials on Saturday morning childrens' programs from 16 to 12 minutes per hour—the same rate as prime time programs.

The Kellogg Company shifted its TV commercials from "hard sell" toward "consumer education" messages, several vitamin companies dropped ads urging children to think of their products as candy, and NBC carried counter-commercials warning children about eating sweets and even suggesting they shouldn't spend all their time watching TV.

"To a degree, such steps are the result of pressure by the National Advertising Review Board. . .and citizen's action groups, such as ACT and the Council on Children, Media, and Merchandising.

"Clearly, the matter of what a child learns from his TV set has become of concern to a wider constituency than ever before," the authors note.

Research on TV and social behavior has attracted new sponsors, including General Mills, General Foods, and the Eli Lilly Endowment. To date, however, social science efforts have largely been limited to measuring the impact of TV on aggression, either in a laboratory setting or after rather brief exposure to a program.

The cumulative impact of these studies has been to show discernible differences in behavior, the authors note. But "it is more important to know that happens to the child whose TV viewing norm is six hours a day, year in and year out.

"That is the significant phenomenon which makes TV distinctly different from books, movies, and every other form of communication.

"TV has become an enveloping environment through which values and life styles are transmitted. Somehow social science has got to develop better environmental measures, if its findings are to be persuasive."

There is a need for continuing research capable of undergirding large public policy investigations, they suggest. "But we are dubious of the practice of recruiting social scientists into posses searching for quick solutions. . . .

"The present system whereby social science entrepreneurs are obligated to contract their services on a random basis hardly provides the best use of their time and talents."

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Established in 1907 by Mrs. Russell Sage, the foundation seeks to improve social and living conditions in the U.S. In carrying out this purpose, the foundation may conduct research in close collaboration with other institutions and support programs to encourage productive working relations between social scientists and other professional groups.

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Police Shows Consume One Third Of Prime Time

By LEE MARGULIES

LOS ANGELES (AP) — If American cities were as lucky as the television world, it has been suggested, there would be a cop on every corner.

With the recent addition of six new mid-season shows — "Archer," "Baretta," "Barney Miller," "Caribe," "Khan" and "S.W.A.T." — law and order series now constitute an unprecedented one-third of the entire weekly prime time schedule on the three networks.

Subtract the time given over to airing feature films and the figure climbs to more than 40 per cent.

Little wonder then that the annual study of TV violence by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg school of communications reports that persons who watch four or more hours of television a day tend to overestimate the danger of violence in everyday life.

Why so many cops 'n' robbers series?

Producers who make them and network executives who buy them offer many theories on why the genre is in such abundance. They agree on a couple of basic points.

First, they say, the murder mystery is one of the most popular and enduring formats in Western culture, spanning novels, films and plays as well as television.

Second, the pressures of producing an entertaining story week after week are more easily met by a character who is involved in a life-and-death situation, be he policeman, private detective, doctor or lawyer.

"I think it's quite simple," says Ben Roberts, coproducer of "Mannix," currently TV's longest running detective series.

"In terms of drama, the issue is life and death. It's very hard to get concerned with anything less than that when you're doing a show every week.

"You have to stir the emotions, otherwise the audience is going to be distracted by the phone ringing or the kids screaming."

Says Frank Price, president of television at Universal Studios where "Kojak," "Adam-12" and "The Rockford Files," among others, are made:

"You can do the compelling one-shot about almost any character, but on a week-in, week-out basis, who do you believe gets into all these great adventures?

"If your central character is a botanist, how many great adventures of his do you believe? But you're conditioned to believe that the cop or doctor has very important things coming at him that he has to solve."

Others see the law and order series merely as the current programming fad, in place of the westerns or comedies or spy shows emphasized in past seasons.

"I think the cop shows are contemporary society's westerns, down to the good guys and bad guys, the chase and the showdown, with the good guy winning and reassuring us," says Terry M. Keegan, vice president of program development at NBC.

It is true that westerns faded into the sunset as the modern day cop shows proliferated. But more than trends were involved, according to Universal's Price.

"A successful detective show has greater appeal to a younger audience," he explained.

"Westerns tended to appeal to a rural and older audience. Therefore sponsors and networks have leaned more toward the detective show because of the people they're trying to reach. That's the real explanation."

What do producers consider to be the key ingredient for a successful police or private eye series?

More than good stories, it is an interesting lead character and an engrossing actor to portray him, says Quinn Martin. And he should know.

Martin is executive producer of "Cannon," "The Streets of San Francisco," "Barnaby Jones," "The Manhunters" and "Caribe."

"If I did the same story without Bill Conrad or Karl Malden or Buddy Ebsen — with actors who weren't as good or as charismatic — shows would go down the drain," he said.

The recent University of Pennsylvania study found that although the number of violent characters on television has dropped over the past six years, the number of persons each harms before being killed or apprehended has increased.

Reacting to antiviolence pressure from Congress and parents' groups, the networks recently agreed to set aside the first hour each day's prime tin schedule, beginning ne fall, for programs suitab for viewing by the enti family.

Although the network have yet to define what the consider family viewing, th general feeling is that the 8 to 9 p.m. time slot will be filled with variety shows, situation comedies and copies of "The Waltons" and "Little House on the Prairie."

CODES FOR TV ADS HELD FRAUDULENT

Consumers Group Petitions F.T.C. for Tight Controls on Children's Shows

By DAVID BURNHAM
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 15—Two industry-backed codes that have been sanctioned by the Federal Government to regulate television advertising aimed at children are "fraudulent," according to a consumer group.

The criticism was made in a petition filed yesterday with the Federal Trade Commission by the Council on Children, Media and Merchandising. The petition called for the abandonment of self regulation and the adoption of tight Federal controls.

The codes were established last year by the National Association of Broadcasters and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, which promised to protect children from harmful or misleading advertising on television.

The codes, under which the television and advertising industries agreed to regulate themselves, were approved by the Federal Communication Commission and the Federal Trade Commission.

The consumer group charged that the two trade groups so narrowly defined children's television advertising that eight of the 10 programs most viewed by children were not subject to regulation.

Weekend Stress Cited

The council said that industry self-regulation was focused on Saturday and Sunday morning. "It does not reach the vast majority of programs, and hence commercials, most watched by children, which are often scheduled in the late afternoon or early morning," it added, continuing:

"On these programs with large child audiences many products deemed harmful to children are advertised. For instance, advertisements for Contac, Bufferin, Anacin, Nytol, Sleep Eze, Clorex Bleach, Drano, Dow oven cleaner and other products—all with warnings against child use on the label—appear during such programs, generally without child warnings."

The council charged that the industry organizations to whom the Federal agencies have delegated resposibility for regulHting children's advertising "mislead and deceive the public when they hold out that their private guidelines are adequate for their purported task—the protection of children. Children, i nmost of their TV watching, are not protected," the council said.

A spokesan for the broadcasters association said that the consumer council was taking "an extreme position. Our rules try to protect the most vulnerable kids. There is no way to protect everyone," he said.

William H. Tankersley, president of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, said that his organization's advertising review unit had been "focusing on the truth, accuracy and fairness of children's advertising" since May. "We believe we have been faithful to that mandate," he said. "In no way can we accept the charge that we are misrepresenting our function."

To support its allegation that voluntary regulation had failed, the Council on Children, Media and Merchandising cited broadcast advertiser reports and the A.C. Nielsen CompanY on the number of potentially dangerous television advertisements carried on the 40 television programs with the largest audience of children before 9 P.M. from Sept. 23 to Oct. 13, 1974.

Advertisements in Period

During this period, the council said, there were 67 advertisements for over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin, sleeping pills and cold remedies, 36 advertisements for household chemicals such as toilet, oven and floor cleaners, 10 advertisements for aerosol personal care products, and three advertisements for cigarette lighters and razor blades.

May 6, '75

LA TIMES

Kicking Around That Report on TV Violence

BY DICK ADLER
Times Staff Writer

A colloquy called "Can Research Influence Television: The Surgeon General's Report on Television and Violence Revisited" isn't what I'd care to swallow instead of lunch every day. But last Friday's mutual discourse on that subject at USC's Annenberg school of communications managed to stir up a lot of dust in less than two hours.

You all remember the Surgeon General's Report on Television and Violence—that impressive $1.8 million study that in 1972 indicated in convoluted jargon that watching people being beaten to jellies might have an adverse effect on children. Three years and thousands of tedious car chases later, a bunch of academic communicators, media pundits, social researchers and a few ankle-kickers from the press got together to see if anyone had been listening.

Two of the speakers on the three-man panel that took up the first 45 minutes had very few kind words for the report or its subsequent influence. Douglass Cater, the writer and editor now in charge of the ambitious Aspen Institute Program on Communications and Society at Stanford, quoted his old boss L.B.J.'s story about a farmer who said, "I ain't made up my mind yet, but when I do I'm prepared to be bitter."

Highly Predictable Outcome

Percy H. Tannenbaum, the distinguished psychologist and expert on social behavior who was one of the people prevented by the broadcasting industry from taking part in the research for the Surgeon General's Report because of his outspoken attitudes, said that due to its extremely limited methods, the study had a highly predictable outcome. "But what can you expect when they won't let social scientists perform the only test that would prove if television violence really affected behavior—letting kids watch a violent show and then turning them loose with real guns to see if they killed each other?" he asked.

Only Thomas E. Coffin, NBC's vice president in charge of research planning, had a sympathetic footnote to the report which—as a member of the surgeon general's advisory committee—he helped to draft. As a result of the study, Coffin said, there is "now some evidence of causality—which previously there had not been." And although he thought that the evidence as to the connection between televised and real violence wasn't conclusive, he was glad to announce that "NBC is proceeding as though it were true and as if the causality were proven."

Cater, who last year wrote a book (with Stephen Strickland) on the Surgeon General's Report, said he had been forced to conclude "how ill-equipped are this nation's institutions for recruiting expert talent, providing clear findings and carrying out enlightened objectives in an area of such delicate human concern." The press didn't get off lightly, either; he chastised them for treating "communication problems as not deserving serious news and editorial attention."

Frequent Skull Sessions

Coffin, responding to a request by Cater for a more efficient way of linking social science to government and broadcast industry policy makers, claimed that NBC was developing just such a mechanism by having frequent skull sessions with some of the leading researchers in the field. "Management is receptive, and we will continue to arrange to get them the best input we can," he said.

And Tannenbaum pointed out that all Sen. John Pastore (D-R.I.) probably hoped to get when he launched the work on the Surgeon General's Report in 1969 was "a stronger statement about potential undesirable effects of gratuitous violence on television than was available up to that point." Pastore got that certainly—as anyone who has been able to see the National Film Board of Canada's account of the subsequent Senate hearings can testify. There were so many network executives blushing on the screen when I saw highlights on Channel 68 last year that

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USC COLLOQUY

A Rerun on TV Violence

Continued from First Page

I had to adjust my tint; it also explained why no commercial networks covered the hearings.

Questions from the rest of the some 80 people gathered for the colloquy were then fielded by the panel. Lawyer and media activist Geoff Cowan asked about legal aspects of the Surgeon General's Report; he cited a case where the parents of a girl attacked in the same manner as in an NBC movie called "Born Innocent" were suing the network, and asked the panel if more such cases should be expected.

Coffin declined to comment, belonging to the network involved. But Tannenbaum pointed out that while it was proven that viewed behavior can be and has been imitated, who could say how many times it had to occur before a network was legally or morally responsible? "Every year there are kids who tie a bedsheet around their shoulders and jump off a building because they've read a Superman comic book. Where do you draw the line?" he asked.

Cater regretted the fact that there had been no research into incidents of this type in the report—no tracing back of cases to their cause, to see if television violence was indeed responsible. He indicated that the advisory committee had been preoccupied with the fear of general violence in major cities brought on by television, and hadn't paid enough attention to specific incidents.

Not Entirely Up to Parent

Tannenbaum wondered how many of his own colleagues in the social research field had changed their own or their family's TV viewing habits since the report had appeared. Eleven people indicated that they had. Cater pointed out that it was not entirely up to the parent; that in his particular "family environment," when a warning notice of possible program unsuitability appeared on the screen, he couldn't possibly ask his 12-Year-old son to leave the room. "It's more likely that I'd leave," he said.

Asked how they would like to see violence replaced or eased on commercial programs, the panel agreed that a greater diversity of types of shows was needed. Tannenbaum and Coffin seemed to think that the existing network structure could provide that diversity; Cater felt that some sort of pay alternative was needed to break the mold of the commercial marketplace.

Tannenbaum struck a responsive chord in at least this listener when he reminded us that it wasn't necessarily violence as portrayed on television which created aggressive behavior.

'Immunization to Violence'

"Most of us as individuals and parents can condition a sort of immunization to violence on TV; we don't really take it seriously," he said. But so-called "sanitized" violence—minus the blood or the actual death scene—causes more aggressive reactions than the uncensored version, he claimed. "And leaving out acts of violence altogether when they seem to follow logically in the story leads to still more aggressive behavior."

Most of the participants in the colloquy seemed to think that government intervention in program content wasn't what was needed to replace televised violence with something—as yet unspecified—more satisfactory. It's hard to disagree.

But it's also hard to forget that the government used to be on our side, and that the $1.8 million spent on the Surgeon General's Report came out of our pockets. It would be a shame to conclude that it all went down the drain; when at the very least the report has prompted dialogues like USC's. And this year alone, shows like Caribe, Manhunter, Archer, Ironside and Khan have all been shot down.