Terrified viewers stay home and shiver

By STACY MARKING in the "Guardian," London

Suddenly, though rarely, a new idea may send a tired topic like television violence spinning around, putting on it a completely new perspective. Professor George Gerbner and Dr Larry Gross, of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, have recently published the results of four years' research into the effects of television viewing in the United States, and have spun around the conventional approach to television violence in such a dramatic way.

It was previously held that something (if only common sense) told us that it must be harmful for society to saturate the population in a cultural flood of murder and violence. Research showed that violence on television could stimulate real-life violence, either by suggesting ways to commit crimes, or by arousing aggression in those already prone to violence. But the correlation had never been as close — nor the evidence as conclusive — as one would have supposed.

The new research by Gerbner and Gross, however, examines the viewer's identification not with the aggressors on television, but with their victims. It seems extraordinary that no one has documented this passive (as opposed to aggressive) reaction before. Gerbner and Gross find that people who watch television accept the distorted, violent picture of modern society which they see on television, and identify themselves as victims of it. And the researchers are worried that "the viewers' perceptions about the world are being shaped in such a way as to make them more compliant, more malleable, more hopeless and more fearful."

The violence on American television is far more unrelenting than it is in Britain or New Zealand. It is used because it is dramatic, relatively cheap to produce, and easy to resolve in neat half hour or hourly eposides without complicated characterisations or morality.

Although, with some self-imposed virtue the American networks have been obseving a "family hour" between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. (and, incidentally, are being sued for infringement of the First Amendment, the right to freedom of speech), the violence spills out with renewed vigour on all channels as the clock strikes nine.

Twenty of the prime-time shows are crime/cop series. ABC's ultra-violent Starsky and Hutch is availabe to British viewers. In one episode I counted 75 shots — 60 coming from the police and 15 from the villians. (The programme is being shown in New Zealand on TV2 on Monday nights).

In both countries television reaches 97 per cent of homes. The average television set is on for five hours each day in Britain, and for six hours eight minutes in America. It has an influence, especially on the young: half of American 12-year-olds watch six hours or more a day, and Gerbner and Gross found that regardless of newspaper reading, education, or even viewing habits, people under 30 years old were consistently more influenced by television than their generally less-educated elders.

With the usual controls for differences of education, sex, class, etc, Gerbner and Gross questioned "heavy" viewers (four hours or more each day) and "light viewers" (two hours or less) on their picture of society.

Significantly, they could not find enough non-viewers to form a group. They found that with this violent diet of television heavy viewers "significantly over-estimate violence and danger in the world," and have ' a heightened sense of fear and mistrust" about society and other people.

For example, when asked whether most people can be trusted, 65 per cent of "heavy" viewers answered that: "You can't be too careful." Well over half the "heavy" viewers overestimated the risk of being involved in some violent incident in any given week — many estimating the chances as "fifty-fifty."

These fearful beings are trapped in their own vicious circle of fear. Afraid to go out, they watch more of the television that feeds that fear. And, by isolating themselves, they are less likely to measure television's violent view of society against the experience of real life.

Starsky and Hutch: a hail of bullets.

Gerbner and Gross found that, on American screens, three-quarters of the main characters are male, white, single, and middle-to-upper class. In prime time more than half the characters are involved in violence, 10 per cent of them in killing. But two thirds of the killers are men, while victims tend to be female or — if male — old, lower class, married and foreign/non-white.

From all this Gerbner and Gross go on to consider a more alarming consequence of television-induced paranoia. "To control this mayhem, the forces of law and order dominate prime," they say. "Among those television males with identifiable occupations, about 20 per cent are engaged in law enforcement. In the real world, the proportion runs less than 1 per cent." The increasingly passive and fearful viewer tends to accept unquestioningly the often dubious authority of the hero and the speedy logic of the rewards and punishments he gives.

Indeed, law enforcement seems a misleading description these days. Crime and Cop shows have moved a long way from the wordy courtroom dramas of the sixties, such as Perry Mason. From Barlow to Kojak, the law is seen to be freely broken in the interests of order. In fact there is very little law and a lot of enforcement, which leads Gerbner and Gross to warn: "The acceptance of violence, and passivity in the face of injustice, may be consequences of far greater social concern than occasional displays of individual aggression."

They conclude: "Fear is a universal emotion, and easy to exploit. The exaggerated sense of risk and insecurity may lead to increasing demands for protection, and increasing pressure for the use of force by established authority. Instead of threatening the social order, television may have become our chief instrument of social control."

Television blamed for voter apathy

By PHILIP MEYER
Knight News Service

WASHINGTON — The growing cloud of apathy and distrust enveloping American voters since the early 1960s may be a long-term effect of watching television, some social scientists are beginning to believe.

It makes no difference whether you watch Kojak, Walt Disney, or the evening news. TV makes you cynical, these experts say.

In the view of one political scientist, heavy TV viewing helps explain the strength of George Wallace's following. Polls show that Wallace followers are cynical and that Wallace's greatest support comes from the heaviest TV viewers.

The runaway swelling of public distrust of government and other institutions was discovered by pollsters from the University of Michigan in 1964. Dozens of other polls since then have confirmed and tracked its progress. A variety of causes, the Kennedy assassination, the war in Vietnam, racial trouble, has been suggested. None has been proven.

A present theory among election watchers is that the public is so turned off that fewer than half the potential voters will turn out for the 1976 presidential election. It could be the lowest turnout in history.

The theory says that in responding to the market demands for entertainment, TV feeds our darkest fears back to us, exaggerating them and making them seem excessively real and lasting.

The leading proponent of this view is Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

He has found that TV projects a peculiar and distorted version of the real world and that its distortions are becoming increasingly believed in.

Viewers get, says Gerbner, a picture of a world full of sinister forces, beyond the control of ordinary people.

The differences between light and heavy viewers are generally greatest among older people who grew up before television. Among younger people, there is a stronger tendency to believe in the TV distortions — regardless of the amount of TV watched.

For people born after 1950, it is almost as if they have been deprived of the chance to outgrow the comic-book level of culture that TV gives us, according to Gerbner.

Even the news programs, through the selection of what to show, reinforce the distorted view, he says.

"TV news comes across as another form of entertainment," he says. "People who are TV news viewers don't respond any differently from those who view TV entertainment."

People in Gerbner's study were more likely to resist accepting the TV version of reality if they were regular newspaper readers. Encouraging more use of print media, with its greater variety of messages, may be the only antidote to the TV effect Gerbner says.

1977?

New York Report

PHILADELPHIA METROPOLITAN EDITION

Reasoner May Leave, Arledge Move Up in ABC News Shake-up

At ABC, the great Harry Reasoner/Barbara Walters caper is hurtling toward a resolution. Nobody at the network was denying last week that ABC Sports boss Roone Arledge was heading up (probably to a newly created post as "czar" of news and sports), and that Harry Reasoner was heading down, perhaps to early retirement.

That would leave Barbara Walters—for the moment, at least—as sole anchor of the *ABC Evening News*, and would presage a major shake-up of ABC News executives in an effort to make the news department (long a dismal third behind CBS and NBC) as big a ratings smash as the entertainment division. "It's been like a powder keg around here all week," said one newsman. "The whole experience has been bad for morale."

At week's end, only one thing was certain: when ABC's affiliates convene in Los Angeles eight weeks hence, ABC News will look drastically different than it does today. —*Neil Hickey*

Washington Report

Using its own equipment and personnel, the House of Representatives plans to begin a 90-day screen test on March 15, to see just how it looks on live television. Black-and-white cameras in the House chamber will beam coverage of floor debates to TV sets in the Rayburn House Office Building, where members can tune to a closed-circuit channel and watch. The telecasts will also be video-taped, "for historical preservation," according to one House source. The tapes will not be made available to the public or the networks.

The three-month experiment is being made at the behest of Speaker Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neill, who was opposed, last year, to a plan to have a network pool cover House proceedings. By assigning House employees to do the job, O'Neill can guarantee that coverage will show Congress in the best possible light. O'Neill's plan calls for fixed camera positions, with no panning across the chamber.

The heads of the three commercial networks were lambasted by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Cal.) for "playing semantic games" with the definition of television violence during the recent House Subcommittee on Communications hearings on televised sex and violence. "It's an insult for you to come here and tell us you're doing something," Waxman told NBC's Robert Howard, ABC's Frederick Pierce and CBS's John Schneider. Schneider had cited figures showing that—by CBS's count—overall TV violence has gone down. But Dr. George Gerbner, dean of The Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, testified that network violence, as he defines it, is at its highest level since 1967 despite Family Viewing Time. Subcommittee members were clearly disturbed by the conflicting definitions of violence. Said Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), toward the end of the nine-hour session: "Unless we all have the same standards to go by, we could keep on like this for years."

—*John Weisman*

TV GUIDE, Box 500, Radnor, Pa. 19088. (215) MU 8-7400.

News Watch

One Story TV Avoids: Its Own Impact

By Kevin Phillips

You watch, and you watch, and you watch. But television news can never seem to come to grips with one of the biggest and scariest phenomena around—the great social impact of television itself.

The news stories about television, the surveys, the investigations, the concerned politicians are everywhere, just waiting to be covered. Only the lights, interviewers and cameras are missing.

Last October, speaking at The Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, veteran New York Times television reporter Les Brown, pointing out that the average family immerses itself in six and seven hours of television a day, asked, "Who is there to cover a new government that has quietly grown up, the Government of Leisure?" Brown blamed newspapers for not devoting more space to TV coverage, and he said, "I don't intend to let the networks control the flow of news, or the nature of news, about television."

So far, though, TV news has run very little on television's tremendous impact on the American culture and society. In February, CBS carried a television news symposium of sorts and Chicago's fiercely competitive WLS and WBBM ran news-program minidocumentaries on soap operas. There hasn't been much else.

A suggestion: somebody should do a news program or documentary on Cornell sociology professor Rose Goldsen's thesis that soap operas propagate a culture of "Throwaway Husbands, Wives and Lovers." Ms. Goldsen pored through the 37½ weekly daytime broadcast hours of 1974-75 season "soaps" and published her itemized findings in the December issue of Human Behavior—an endless cavalcade of rape, divorce, drugs, abortion and even incest: "Soap-opera people create a social world for their children that's stuck together with spit and Scotch tape. Every one of the children in the country's daily dosage of daytime serials—every one—goes to bed unsure whether the woman called 'mother' or the man called 'father' will still be around for breakfast."

And we ought to give a word-coinage award to novelist Jerzy Kosinski for explaining how the United States is becoming a nation of "videots"—"I look at the children who spend five or six hours watching television every day, and I notice that when in groups they cannot interact with each other. They are terrified of each other; they develop secondary anxiety characteristics. They want to watch, they don't want to be spoken to." If you credit these analyses, which I do, then Les Brown's aptly named "Government of Leisure" at CBS, NBC and ABC is pushing us a →

lot closer to George Orwell's 1984 than anything Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon ever pursued—and without the slightest fear of 7 o'clock exposure by Walter Cronkite!

Predictably, the network news programs are equally oblivious of events and findings that deal with television's preoccupation with violence. In the December 8 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association, Dr. Michael Rothenberg of Seattle wrote that 25 years of hard data are already available—146 articles in science journals representing 50 studies involving 10,000 children and adolescents from every possible background all showed that viewing violence produces increased aggressive behavior in the young.

But, of course, you didn't see that on the evening news. Nor did you see that New York congressman John Murphy claimed back in October that hundreds of children were severely injured emulating Evel Knievel's televised stunts. Pleading for the Federal Communications Commission to act, Murphy argued there are "hundreds of case histories of children impaled on bicycle handlebars, those with broken necks, backs, arms and legs; those suffering partial and total paralysis, and the thousands more who were less severely injured. These, I emphasize, are directly attributable to the imitation of Mr. Knievel's pointless stunts."

And here's another that deserved coverage. "It's a well-known fact," said Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley in December, "that criminals watch these TV programs for every little detail of what they can do. Details about kidnapings are shown, and the criminal picks them up." He asked housewives to write to TV directors and producers protesting video crime.

In Canada, Ontario's Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry has amassed nearly 2500 studies of the crime/media relationship throughout the world. They are prepared to subpoena top media executives, and according to February reports in the Christian Science Monitor, "The public has been enthusiastic about the Commission's work, both in participating and in supporting the call for controls."

Here in the United States, TV discussion of television's impact shuns lengthy, serious probing. For example, in February CBS ventured to televise a pussyfooting "public accountability" session wherein top CBS News executives talked with a group of community leaders in Hartford, Conn. Let me quote a personal, but appropriate, portion of the transcript:

Moderator: "Kevin Phillips has said television is breeding the violence in our country today and creating a climate, as he put it, for violence and political alienation that leads to assassination. Do we give too much coverage to freaks?"

Richard S. Salant, president of CBS News: ". . . Look, if you carry that [Phillips' idea] to its logical conclusion, there are a great many things that we have to report that will give people ideas that I, for one, wish they wouldn't have. Among other things, what you'd have to do is abolish virtually half the advertisements in The New York Times Magazine—all the [ads for] underthings . . ."

Marvelous. You ask them about cathode violence, and they tee-hee about the parallel suggestiveness of newspaper underwear ads.

But there may be a ray of hope. Numerous critics have been chortling over the way Norman Lear's new non-network super-soap-opera *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* has been slaughtering some news programs in the ratings war. Maybe the local news programs, in self-defense, will begin to examine the pernicious influence of other programming. If not, it's time for a commission like the one in Ontario to do the job. END

As We See It

☐ As many others have observed, it is unfortunate that a question of press freedom must be based on the right of Hustler publisher Larry Flynt to print his magazine. But then, most challenges to First Amendment freedoms involve attempts to suppress material that is offensive to the majority.

Deplorable as Flynt's pornography may be in a monthly magazine bought by a couple of million people, we wonder whether it has as much effect on the national morality, on desensitizing the people of our country, as the murders, beatings, rapes and other terrors we are exposed to on television every night. Is there really much difference between the pandering of Larry Flynt and the pandering of the networks? Flynt is into pornography for a buck. The networks are into gratuitous violence and sexual depravity for a buck.

☐ Flynt's publication has no redeeming features. He does not cover the news, provide discussions of public issues, programs for children, clean entertainment. The networks do all of these things and more. Under the cover of "mature programming," they also frequently appeal to the basest human instincts.

Television films and series this year have featured rape, nymphomania, cannibalism, mass murder, torture and horror. Why? Surveys show that fewer than half of the parents of young children supervise what they watch on television, that millions of youngsters see television after 9 P.M. What more persuasive argument can be found to make the otherwise responsible men and women who run the networks insist that program producers stay within the bounds of good taste, the bounds of good conscience?

☐ We deplore Larry Flynt and his ilk, but in our opinion, Hustler does no more harm to our national character and attitudes, to our standards of good taste, than television programs that fill our screens with garbage.

TV violence: threat or scapegoat?

In recent history, Americans have been especially sensitive to potentially dangerous influences from "outside."

The McCarthy hearings about Communist sympathizers in entertainment and in government during the 1950s is one example. On a smaller scale the current investigation of possible "influence-peddling" by Koreans in the United States is another.

The News World's five-part series, ending today, has examined in depth the latest perceived threat to American culture—violence on television.

The controversy surrounding television violence and its effects on human behavior, especially for children, is partly fueled by parents' fears that their guidance and authority is being displaced by that of the tube. According to spokesmen for the television industry, it is this anxiety that has resulted in the "scapegoating" of TV as the cause of our nation's social problems.

It is certainly true that television is capable of an almost mesmerizing appeal that can attract and hold people's attention especially if it is otherwise unoccupied. And whatever the social effects that graphically-depicted violence might have, surveys indicate that most people consider it distasteful.

Throughout the world Americans are known as generous, naive and impressionable. Such qualities encourage the maintenance of a free society, but also permit susceptibility to negative influences.

Certainly the freedom to own a television, permitting access to a broad spectrum of experiences and ideas, carries with it the responsibility to operate the instrument with self-discipline and moral principle. Only those who have enough character to "know what's good for them" and appreciate areas of themselves that need development can satisfactorally control their own TV-watching behavior and that of their children.

Perhaps it is this broader context of the televison issue that deserves more study and discussion.

TV violence and 1984

I have to say I've been very impressed with the thorough coverage of Robert Morton's series on "The Fight Over TV Violence" in The News World. To me it's very clear about what all this violence on TV is leading up to.

A long time ago I read a book that had a profound effect on me, George Orwell's "1984." The part that I remember most was the first chapter. Even back then it spoke in prophetic terms about what we could expect in the near future. TV violence, as I see it, is conditioniong our human behavior in the same way that Orwell wrote about in his book. For those who never read it, I would like to describe the opening scene. A movie is being shown, and in it a ship has just been sunk by enemy aircraft and survivors scrambled into a life boat. Among those able to get into the boat were a mother and her baby. The enemy aircraft returned, began shooting people out of the boat and finally, the baby was shot out of the mother's arms.

At this moment, the people watching the movie laughed as though that was the funniest thing they've ever seen. Finally, the mother herself was killed and the audience continued to laugh as though they were watching a comedy.

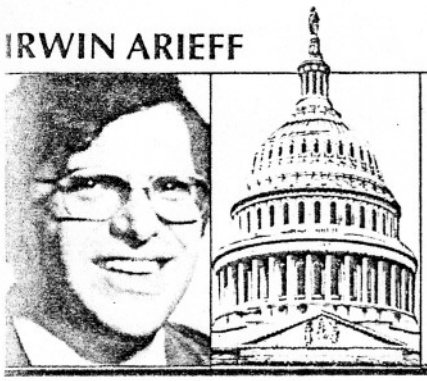
What this meant to me was that people had been conditioned to such an extent by excessive violence they observed that they became numb, and finally totally insensitive, to the violence.

This is what frightens me the most about TV violence. If people see semething long enough, they'll grow more and more insensitive. Finally, their view of life will become so distorted that all violence, on the screen or in real life, will lose meaning. One won't be separated from the other, and people will view people as objects without feelings and will laugh at their misery.

Mrs. Estelle Harding
New York

Washington View

IRWIN ARIEFF



Irwin Arieff is based in Washington, D.C. and writes regularly on communication issues.

MEASURING VIOLENCE: CBS's New Rating Game

CBS, which claims credit for inventing the family viewing period as a way to curb excessive violence on television, has now found it necessary to become involved in a new kind of ratings game in order to assure the family hour's success. Though the network has always competed—and done very well—in the traditional audience ratings, it now is competing in violence ratings as well.

It was then-president of CBS Arthur Taylor who suggested in late 1974 that the broadcasting industry set aside two hours each weekday evening for shows fit for "family viewing." His move came at a time when the networks were under intense pressure from the Federal Communications Commission and the Congress to reduce the amount of "excessive and gratuitous violence" on television. FCC Chairman Richard Wiley had initiated a series of "jawboning" sessions with network executives to encourage them to take self-regulatory action rather than force the federal government to take action that might threaten their First Amendment freedoms.

CBS then had a major stake in showing that the family viewing concept, which debuted in September, 1975, actually reduced the amount of televised violence and was not a mere public relations gimmick, as some critics charged.

The measure of the level of violence on tv traditionally has been the "violence profile" prepared by Drs. George Gerbner and Larry Gross of the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communications. Compiled annually since 1967, the profile gained official recognition from the federal government in 1972 when HEW began underwriting it at the request of Senator John Pastore (D-R.I.), powerful chairman of the Senate Communications Subcommittee. Pastore asked HEW to "develop a measurement of violence so that a report can be submitted annually to this Committee on the level of violence entering American homes."

At the same time that the Annenberg School began preparing its yearly profiles for Pastore, CBS began its own monitoring activities, though its findings were kept strictly confidential. However, when CBS executives learned in advance that the Annenberg profile would report no reduction in the levels of tv violence for the family viewing hour's premiere season, they decided to go public with an internal CBS report showing violence levels down for all three networks both during and after the family hour.

When the Annenberg profile subsequently became public two months later, the CBS study was found to be in substantial agreement with it. The profile further reported, however, that a substantial upswing in violence during children's prime time—weekend mornings—had canceled out the decrease in other time periods. The CBS study, which later was released in full as a press release, had ignored this time-period in reporting its findings. Therefore, while the CBS study found that the level of televised violence "has substantially declined," the Annenberg study found that overall, "there has been no significant reduction."

The Annenberg findings immediately became the focus of a bitter public-relations offensive by the network. CBS vice president-chief economist David Blank called the Annenberg profile "fallacious. . .It is a measure in which I have no confidence. It is an arbitrary measure." He said CBS didn't include weekend mornings in its study because prime time "is the area in which public concern has been the greatest." He also attacked the profile for measuring only one week of programming, while CBS had measured 13 weeks.

How accurate were Blank's complaints? In short, they were almost entirely self-serving statements. In fact, parents and public-interest groups have been just as concerned about the quality of weekend morning programming as about early evening programming, if not more so. In denying this, Blank also directly contradicted the National Institute of Health's Advisory Committee on TV and Social Behavior. The Committee, made up of many of the nation's most prominent behavioral scientists, recommended to HEW in July, 1975, that "primary attention should be given to measuring violence in programs with large child audiences and to reporting the violence profile in a manner relevant to this concern." Of course, the Saturday and Sunday morning programs traditionally have the largest child audiences. The Committee also generally endorsed the Annenberg study's methodology, though—in fairness to Blank—it also recommended that the measuring period be increased from one week to two. Last Spring, Dr. Gerbner implemented this recommendation.

Gerbner also commented at the time that CBS "uses a different standard which is more favorable to them. They eliminate all humorous violence and cartoons." He said that the CBS study thus "presupposes the result" by discounting such programs, while available research suggests that "humorous violence" and cartoons have about the same effect on very young children as do more seriously and realistically portrayed violent acts. CBS's fellow network, ABC, confirmed this finding in a five-year study that concluded that, up to a certain age, children perceive no difference between violent acts committed by cartoon characters—though they can differentiate between, for example, "good guys" and "bad guys," or animal figures and human figures.

Despite the facts, however, in the flurry of cross-charges, the CBS findings somehow emerged on top. The National Association of Broadcasters wrote in its May 6, 1976, newsletter to member tv stations, "the next time some of your viewers complain about violence on tv, cite them a recent CBS study which indicates that prime time dramatic violence on all three networks combined is down. . ."

The FCC, perhaps with its own stake in family viewing in mind, also chose to stick with CBS. In a hearing before the House Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, when Chairman John Moss (D-Cal.) accused the networks

of "reducing [violence] in one period of time and increasing it in another period of time," Chairman Wiley took strong exception. "That is not the case," he said. Ignoring children's prime time, he cited the CBS findings that "while it was dramatically reduced during the family viewing hour, it has also fallen off after the family viewing hour." "You can interpret the upturn on Saturday morning in various ways, I suppose," added then-Commissioner Glen Robinson. "What it means is more violent Bugs Bunny Shows, I suggest."

"I tend to think that the members of this Commission have a bias [toward the family viewing concept] because they are wedded to that policy," charged Congressman Henry Waxman (D-Cal). "There are others who want to be heard on whether in fact it is successful." However, when the House Communications Subcommittee—of which Waxman also is a member—held hearings in Los Angeles on family viewing last fall, it became clear that talk—and not action—was what the congressmen had in mind. No legislation was forthcoming, despite a CBS boycott of the hearing—CBS Washington vice president Bill Leonard telling the Subcommittee that because of the number of family viewing opponents testifying, he'd feel "as lonely as a live moose at a taxidermist's convention."

In the absence of congressional action, the success of family viewing seems assured—at least for the current viewing season. Despite pleas by two House subcommittees to undertake an independent evaluation of the two studies, the FCC has refused. And the man who started the whole measurement business—Senator Pastore—finds his thoughts far from televised violence on the eve of his retirement from the Senate. When asked to respond to the CBS charge that the profile he spawned was "fallacious," he replied: "Well, you have to put yourself in their position, but I'm not getting into that."

Ironically, it has been widely stated in broadcasting circles here that a major reason for CBS Chairman William Paley's dismissal of Arthur Taylor last October was Taylor's drive to get the family viewing policy adopted by the networks. According to these sources, Paley would just as soon have ignored the issue of excessive violence altogether. As long as Congress wasn't going to pass a law, Paley figured, why should a $2 billion-a-year company like CBS even bother?

Unfortunately for Paley and Taylor's successor, John Backe, the controversy over family viewing isn't yet over. Despite CBS's success in selling its own violence ratings, the concern over the behavioral effects of tv on children just won't go away. "I'll betcha that 80 percent of the first 100 bills [in the next Congress] will be on violence on tv," Senator Ernest Hollings, (D-S.C.) predicted at an NAB conference recently. With that kind of conviction, it is certain that the controversy over family viewing is here to stay.

Memo

From the Desk of.....

IRWIN B. ARIEFF

1/4

Dear Dr. Gerbner,

I thought you might be interested in the attached article. It's a little out of date, due to the family viewing court decision which was issued after the article was submitted for publication. Nonetheless, I hope it makes its point.

Best wishes for the New Year,

Irwin Arieff

Television Digest
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AGENCIES & RADIO OUT

For release SUN, Jan. 2

FROM AP NEWSFEATURES

APN PRINT SUBSCRIBERS HAVE BEEN MAILED ONE ILLUSTRATION.

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

By MIKE GOODKIND

Associated Press Writer

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

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

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

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

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

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AGENCIES AND RADIO OUT

For Release Sun Jan. 2

LOS ANGELES; of violence.

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

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

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

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

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

Carpenter believes a rating system may be helpful. ''But what we're eally trying to do is put the pressure on the industry itself.''
Elmendorf thinks the ratings would lead to greater public arwareness henc3 public presssure.
Tom Kersey, ABC's West Coast Broadcast practices chief, and Sauter re opposed to published violence ratings, even though both networks onitor the violent content of shows for their own use.
''I think it's naive to assume that someone watching Kojak in the lfth year of its existence does not know what Kojak is,'' says auter.
''I hope nothing ever comes of the idea'' of publishing violence atings of individual shows, says Kersey. He says the number of iolent acts is meaningless unless placed in a creative context which e believes the average viewer couldn't understand.
Sauter insists that with millions of viewers ''there is no feasible ay you can develop a rating system that can be used by that ncredible range of people.
''We apply a set of standards to all of our programming which we hink represents the expectations, the tastes and the standards of the ass television audience.''
Sauter notes that despite the objections of media researchers, and ven powerful national groups like the AMA, ''we get very few letters rom viewers complaining about violent programming.''
''If there is popular groundswell, things will change,'' he notes.
''I think we do children a disservice by not luring them to books'' nd other forms of educational entertainment, says Sauter.
''My children now grown could watch anything they want on élevision but they could only watch it for a limited number of hours ach week.''
End Adv Sun Jan. 2, sent Dec. 18.
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The NCCB received widespread media coverage when it ranked each show last summer on its relative content of violence.

TEL. 213 — 746-1200

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

Dec. 27, 1976

Dear Dr. Gerbner:

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

Sincerely,

Mike Goodkind

MUTUAL

JAN 3 1977

THE RECORD
Hackensack, N.J.
PM-158,000 S-190,000

TV 'violence rating' proposed

By Mike Goodkind
The Associated Press

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

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

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

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

But Elmendorf wants at least to give parents a fighting chance.

He believes that violent television is an element in antisocial behavior.

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

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

Raising consciousness

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Checking them out

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blasts rating idea

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

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

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

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

"If there is popular groundswell, things will change," he notes. He also believes children need to be lured into reading books and other forms of educational entertainment.

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

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.
OKLAHOMA JOURNAL
DAILY 62,000

JAN 23 1977

ASK THEM YOURSELF

Send the question, on a postcard, to "Ask," Family Weekly, 641 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. We'll pay $5 for published questions. Sorry, we can't answer others.

FOR GEN. WILLIAM WESTMORELAND,
former Army Chief of Staff

How will the soldier 100 years from now differ from the enlisted man of today?—A.G., Little Rock, Ark.

● He will not differ too much physically, except that he will probably be taller and heavier. He will, though, be better educated and more skilled, and he'll be required to man and maintain weapons and machines more technical and sophisticated than today's. In addition, the ratio of officers to enlisted men will be considerably higher than today. The soldier of tomorrow will be better protected, but he will have to undergo the same hardships that soldiers have encountered throughout history.

FOR JANIS SIEGEL,
member of the Manhattan Transfer group

I hear you like to spend your off-hours in an operating room. True or false?—R.C., Chattanooga, Tenn.

● It's true. I have a friend, a surgeon, who lets me watch, and I love it because I'm a thwarted doctor. My idea of heaven would be to be a singer who moonlights in medicine.

FOR DAVID BRENNER, comedian

Got any new plans for your nose?—Jenny Bryant, Latta, S.C.

● So far, my nose has definitely helped my career; it gives me a place to hang my tuxedo while I'm traveling. Nevertheless, I'm planning to do some work on it—wall-to-wall carpeting, then I'll break through the wall and make a kitchenette.

FOR VICTOR BORGE, Danish-born pianist and mime

Did you do crazy things with music when you were a kid?—R.O.B., Medford, Ore.

● Oh sure. When I was about eight or nine, my parents—being very proud of me—would always make me play when they had guests. After a while I got fed up with that, and I started playing tricks: I'd say the next piece is . . . and would mention something by Beethoven or Mozart. I then went on to play one of my own "compositions." And do you know what—very few knew I was fooling.

FOR SALLY FIELD, actress

I heard you say on a talk show that you're shy and introverted. You've got to be putting us on. If this were true, how could you play such extroverted roles as the flying nun?—J.T., Cocoa Beach, Fla.

● I'm not putting you on. I started acting at the ripe old age of two, and it was in my roles that I could be what I couldn't be in real life. In this make-believe world I felt good. Out of it, I didn't. It's still that way. I live a schizo life, either all-actress or all-homebody.

FOR REP. SHIRLEY CHISHOLM (D.-N.Y.)

When you really want something, do you find it hard to compromise?—Mrs. L. Mills, Hobart, Ind.

● It's difficult to fight for issues of human justice and equality and have to make concessions because of the unwillingness of others who are motivated by the politics of expediency. But at the same time, I know that compromise is a necessary tool that sometimes must be used to achieve my goals. Not everyone shares the same opinions or approaches problems in the same way.

FOR EILEEN FULTON, star of *As the World Turns*

Someone told me you wear gloves to bed. Why?—J.R., Grand Forks, N.D.

● Because I have to. My hobby is ceramics, which has a skin-drying tendency. As my hands often appear in TV closeups, I don't want them to look old and withered. What I do after I've finished a work session is oil and grease my hands and fingers, going right under the nails. If I didn't wear gloves, all that stuff would rub off on the sheets.

FOR THE "ASK THEM YOURSELF" EDITOR

Is it true those Russian-exiled dancers, Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov, are sworn enemies?—Mary Oberton, Washington, D.C.

● No. While they're not what you'd call inseparable, one doesn't walk out when the other enters the room. In fact, the night the rumor broke that the two were feuding, a FAMILY WEEKLY reporter saw them together at New York's Russian Tea Room. There is, however, a lack of warmth between Nureyev (*right*) and Natalia Makarova. (All three are products of the famed Kirov Ballet.)

FOR GENE SARAZEN, member of golf's Hall of Fame

What got you interested in golf?—R.M., Dubuque, Iowa

● As a teen-ager I worked in the pro shop of the Brooklawn Country Club in Bridgeport, Conn. I practiced before the shop opened, and then again after it closed. One day a club member hired me to play a round. I shot my first sub-par round (69), and from then on, all the members spoke about the "kid" in the shop. It made life miserable for the pro, and I had to leave. But the *next time* I was in Bridgeport, I was the U.S. Open Champion.

PRO AND CON

Is There Too Much Violence On Television?

Some authorities say that the portrayal of violence triggers more of it in real life.

PRO **Herbert Schlosser,** President, NBC

No. Violence has troubled our society for a long time and represents one of the more difficult problems facing us, and we are acting to deal with the depiction of that violence. The networks maintain Broadcast Standards Departments responsible for taste and propriety. Programs are considered in the light of their context, meaning and purpose. Merely counting violent incidents in a program, without regard to context, does not provide a meaningful measure of their significance or their effect on viewers. It is unfortunate that body-count approach has become fashionable because it can mislead rather than enlighten.

CON **Dr. George Gerbner,** Dean, Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania

Yes. The evidence is convincing that cheap and stereotyped violence on American television is the highest in the world and has not changed much, especially late-evening and children's programming. It is prejudicial to women, older people and minority-group characters as they tend to be portrayed as victims. The consequence of heavy exposure to this diet is acceptance of violence as a ready solution to problems. If we don't want our children to grow up mean and terrorized by vivid images of meanness around them, we need to change the amount and pattern of violence on television.

Dr. Gerbner, "Family Weekly" is comparable to "Parade", with a circulation of 11 to 23 million, depending on whom you talk to. Jane

Fighting TV's Violent Image: a Cosmetic, Futile Approach

BY ELLEN GOODMAN

No one was surprised when the American Medical Assn. came out against TV violence. It would have been more controversial to have come out in favor of motherhood.

The AMA jumped into the rather full alphabet soup of organizations—from ACT to PTA—all decrying mug-and-murder programming. In fact, the only letters still missing are CBS, NBC and ABC.

But the AMA's Richard Palmer took another step. Last week he called on 10 major American corporations to stop sponsoring violent programs.

So far, two have responded: Sears Roebuck, which had already decided to review its policy, and Schlitz Brewing Co., which said it would pull ads on episodes of shows that were "excessively" violent.

Ellen Goodman is a syndicated columnist in Boston.

Today our inclination is to toast any idea that reduces the number of maimings on the airwaves.

Dr. Michael Rothenberg of Seattle estimated more than a year ago that the average child in the United States would see 18,000 murders on the tube before graduating from high school.

George Gerbner, who devised a violence index at the University of Pennsylvania, said half the characters in prime-time TV episodes are involved in some sort of mayhem, and 10% of them get involved in a murder.

Worrying about violence has finally become popular. When the alphabet-soup groups—including the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting—raise the issue with the broadcast industry, the programmers generally throw up their hands—"What can we do about it?"—and blame the advertisers. They say, in effect, no violence, no ads, no money, no network.

The logical next step was to apply pressure to the advertisers themselves. In essence, what the AMA did was to ask advertisers to censor and boycott programming. But there are several sticky problems with this approach.

For openers, if the boycott works it would give the advertisers not less, but more, power over the content of programming on television.

There isn't much promise or progress in that. There is no reason to believe that a more complete control of the medium by business would solve the problems of television.

There is even less reason to suppose that advertisers would be transformed into white hats—solid citizens who felt duty-bound to promote high-quality programming.

Even Schlitz only promised to wear a gray hat. It decided on an episode-by-episode review of its shows (which may not be technically possible), but then it reaffirmed the fact that it wanted to advertise on "action" shows.

Most important, the AMA isn't calling for better programming—only for "less violence." This is a cosmetic approach. Would Kojak truly be less violent with 10% fewer slug-outs? Would reducing TV murders by half have a significantly different effect on the mental health of our youth?

While there is nothing wrong with reducing the number of muggings per minute, the emergence of public-relations-oriented guidelines—no more than two fist fights, one rape and an acid attack every hour—wouldn't do much to substantially change what we are offered for evening viewing.

The real problem is the lack of alternatives, the lack of choice. Competition between the networks has led to the virtual monopoly of violence, to the eternal sameness of the lowest common denominator and the highest Nielsen rating.

Advertisers should be encouraged not to censor but to switch—to switch to quality programming that fills the needs of a diverse (not merely a mass) audience. We don't need cosmetics. We need reconstructive surgery.


WHAT
BUY!
BU
Sugar+Plus
SWEETER THAN SWEET
Marathon
SWEET
TRIVIA
COOKIES
SWEET
BIG EVIL
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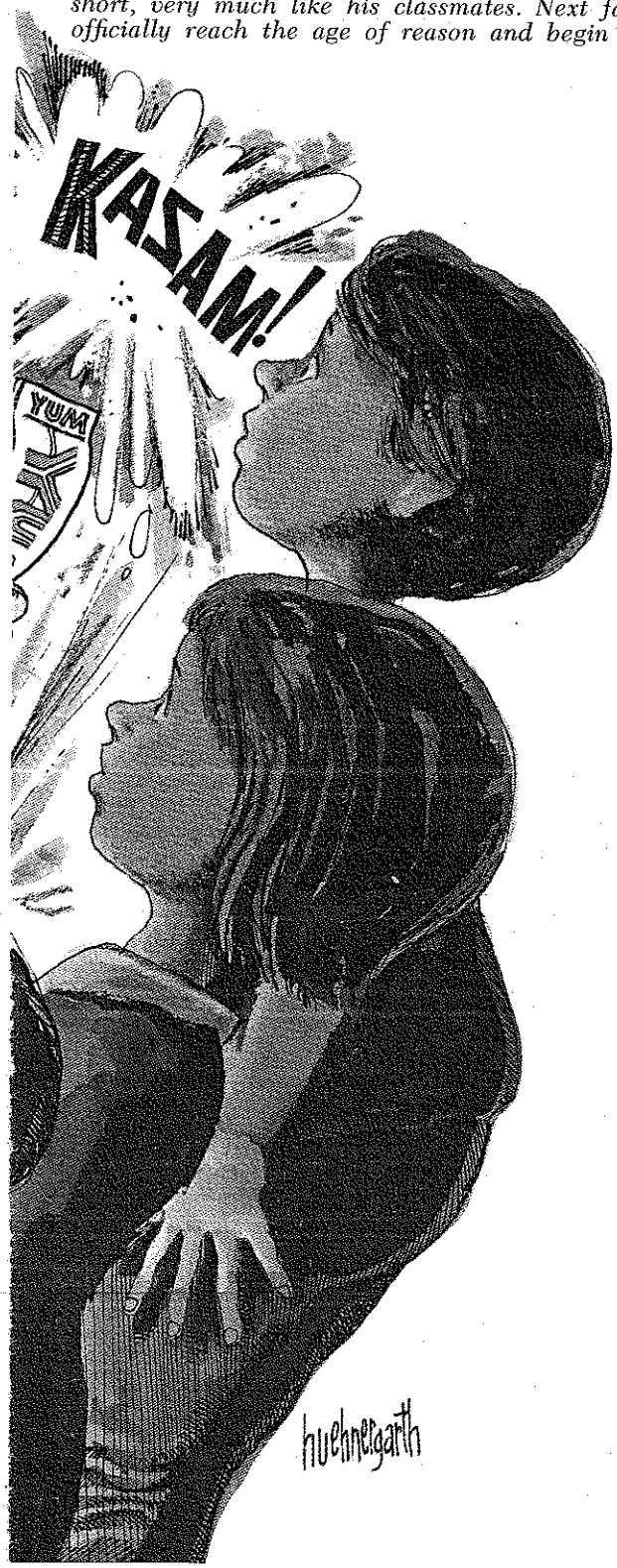
TV DOES TO KIDS

His first polysyllabic utterance was "Bradybunch." He learned to spell Sugar Smacks before his own name. He has seen Monte Carlo, witnessed a cocaine bust in Harlem and already has full-color fantasies involving Farrah Fawcett-Majors. Recently, he tried to karate-chop his younger sister after she broke his Six Million Dollar Man bionic transport station. (She retaliated by bashing him with her Cher doll.) His nursery-school teacher reports that he is passive, noncreative, unresponsive to instruction, bored during play periods and possessed of an almost nonexistent attention span—in short, very much like his classmates. Next fall, he will officially reach the age of reason and begin his formal education: His parents are beginning to discuss their apprehensions—when they are not too busy watching television.



The wonder of it all is that the worry about television has so belatedly moved anyone to action. After all, the suspicion that TV is turning children's minds to mush and their psyches toward mayhem is almost as old as the medium itself. But it is only in recent years—with the first TV generation already well into its 20s—that social scientists, child psychologists, pediatricians and educators have begun serious study of the impact of television on the young. "The American public has been preoccupied with governing our children's schooling," says Stanford University psychologist Alberta Siegel. "We have been astonishingly unconcerned about the medium that reaches into our homes. Yet we may expect television to alter our social arrangements just as profoundly as printing has done over the past five centuries."

The statistics are at least alarming. Educators like Dr. Benjamin Bloom, of the University of Chicago, maintain that by the time a child reaches the age of 5, he has undergone as much intellectual growth as will occur over the next thirteen years. According to A.C. Nielsen, children under 5 watch an average of 23.5 hours of TV a week. That may be less than the weekly video diet of adults (about 44 hours), but its effects are potentially enormous. Multiplied out over seventeen years, that rate of viewing means that by his high-school graduation today's typical teen-ager will have logged at least 15,000 hours before the small screen—more time than he will have spent on any other activity except sleep. And at present levels of advertising and mayhem, he will have been exposed to 350,000 commercials and vicariously participated in 18,000 murders.

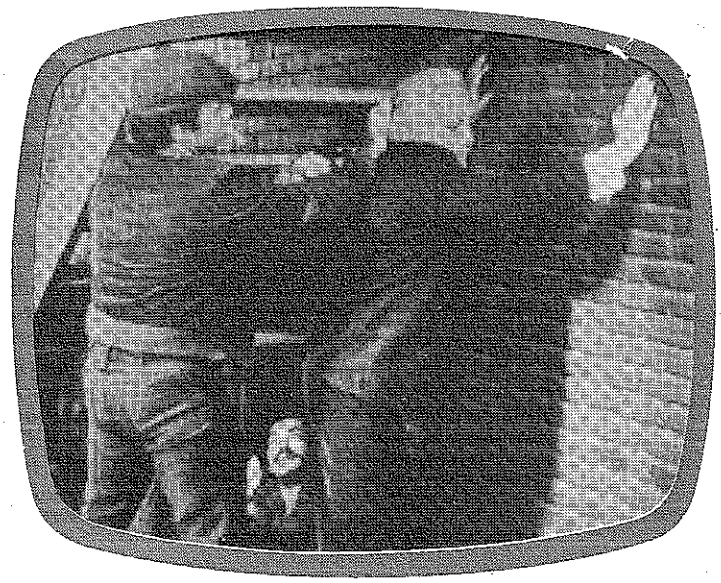
The conclusion is inescapable: after parents, television has become perhaps the most potent influence on the beliefs, attitudes, values and behavior of those who are being raised in its all-pervasive glow. George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, is almost understating it when he says: "Television has profoundly affected the way in which members of the human race learn to become human beings."

A QUESTION OF AIR POLLUTION

Unquestionably, the plug-in picture window has transmitted some beneficial images. Last month's showing of "Roots," for example, may have done more to increase the understanding of American race relations than any event since the civil-rights activities of the '60s. And the fact that 130 million Americans could share that experience through the small screen points up the powerful—and potentially positive—influence the industry can have on its audience. In general, the children of TV enjoy a more sophisticated knowledge of a far larger world at a much younger age. They are likely to possess richer vocabularies, albeit with only a superficial comprehension of what the words mean. Research on the impact of "Sesame Street" has established measurable gains in the cognitive skills of pre-schoolers. And many benefits cannot be statistically calibrated. A New York pre-schooler tries to match deductive wits with Columbo; a Los Angeles black girl, who has never seen a ballet, decides she wants to be a ballerina after watching Margot Fonteyn perform on TV.

Nonetheless, the overwhelming body of evidence—drawn from more than 2,300 studies and reports—is decidedly negative. Most of the studies have dealt with the antisocial legacy of video violence. Michael Rothenberg, a child psychiatrist at the University of Washington, has reviewed 25 years of hard data on the subject—the 50 most comprehensive studies involving 10,000 children from every possible background. Most showed that viewing violence tends to

ABC's 'Starsky & Hutch': Teaching a tolerance for violence?

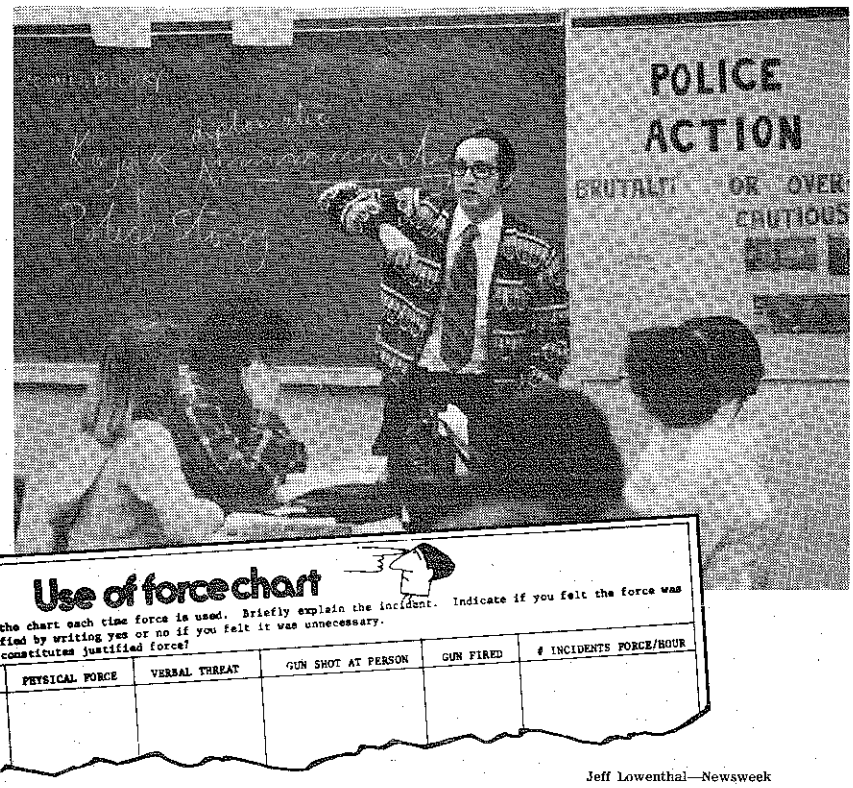


ABC's 'Baretta': A school for criminal techniques?

produce aggressive behavior among the young. "The time is long past due for a major, organized cry of protest from the medical profession in relation to what, in political terms, is a national scandal," concludes Rothenberg.

An unexpected salvo was sounded last week when the normally cautious American Medical Association announced that it had asked ten major corporations to review their policies about sponsoring excessively gory shows. "TV violence is both a mental-health problem and an environmental issue," explained Dr. Richard E. Palmer, president of the AMA. "TV has been quick to raise questions of social responsibility with industries which pollute the air. In my opinion, television . . . may be creating a more serious problem of air pollution." Reaction was immediate: General Motors, Sears Roebuck and the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Co. quickly announced they would look more closely into the content of the shows they sponsor.

The AMA action comes in the wake of a grass-roots campaign mobilized by the national Parent-Teacher Association. The 6.6 million-member PTA recently began a series of regional forums to arouse public indignation over TV carnage. If that crusade fails, the PTA is considering organizing station-license challenges and national boycotts of products advertised on offending programs.



Jeff Lowenthal—Newsweek

Chicago's Prime Time School: Harnessing the tube positively

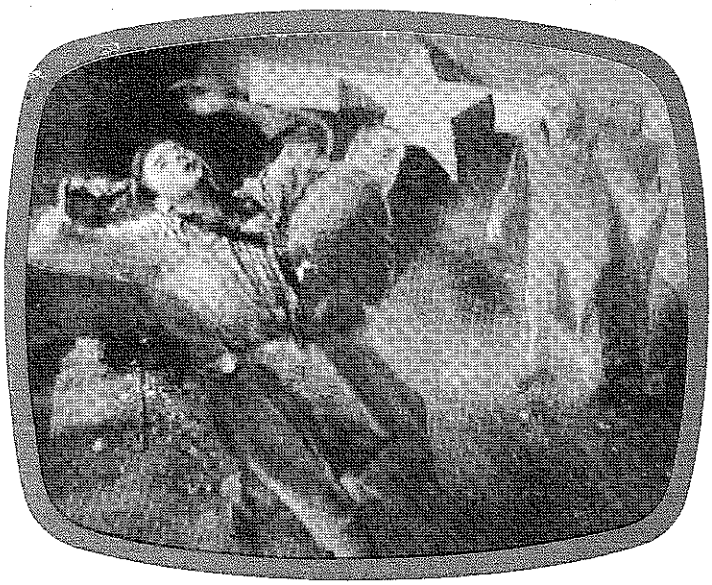
'THE FLICKERING BLUE PARENT'

In their defense, broadcasting officials maintain that the jury is still out on whether video violence is guilty of producing aggressive behavior. And they marshal their own studies to support that position. At the same time, the network schedulers say they are actively reducing the violence dosage. "People have said they want another direction and that's what we're going to give them," promises NBC-TV president Robert T. Howard. Finally, the broadcast industry insists that the responsibility for the impact of TV on children lies with parents rather than programmers. "Parents should pick and choose the shows their kids watch," says CBS vice president Gene Mater. "Should TV be programed for the young through midnight? It's a real problem. TV is a mass medium and it must serve more than just children."

But the blight of televised mayhem is only part of TV's impact. Beyond lies a vast subliminal terrain that is only now being charted. The investigators are discovering that TV has affected its youthful addicts in a host of subtle ways, varying according to age and class. For deprived children, TV may, in some cases, provide more sustenance than their home—or street—life; for the more privileged, who enjoy other alternatives, it may not play such a dominating role.

Nonetheless, for the average kid TV has at the very least preempted the traditional development of childhood itself. The time kids spend sitting catatonic before the set has been exacted from such salutary pursuits as reading, outdoor play, even simple, contemplative solitude. TV prematurely jades, rendering passé the normal experiences of growing up. And few parents can cope with its tyrannical allure. Recently, Dr. Benjamin Spock brought his stepdaughter and granddaughter to New York for a tour of the Bronx Zoo and the Museum of Modern Art. But the man who has the prescription for everything from diaper rash to bed-wetting could not dislodge the kids from their hotel room. "I couldn't get them away from the goddamned TV set," recalls Spock. "It made me sick."

Small wonder that television has been called "the flickering blue parent." The after-school and early-evening hours



NBC's 'Baa Baa Black Sheep': A perpetrator of paranoia?

CBS's 'Kojak': A lesson in aggressive behavior?

used to be a time for "what-did-you-do-today" dialogue. Now, the electronic box does most of the talking. Dr. David Pearl of the National Institute of Mental Health suspects that the tube "has displaced many of the normal interactional processes between parents and children . . . Those kinds of interactions are essential for maximum development." One veteran elementary-school teacher in suburban Washington, D.C., has noticed that her students have grown inordinately talkative when they arrive for class. "At home, they can't talk when the TV is on," she says. "It's as if they are starved for conversation."

THE PASSIVE GENERATION

Even more worrisome is what television has done to, rather than denied, the tube-weaned population. A series of studies has shown that addiction to TV stifles creative imagination. For example, a University of Southern California research team exposed 250 elementary students—who had been judged mentally gifted—to three weeks of intensive viewing. Tests conducted before and after the experiment found a marked drop in all forms of creative abilities except verbal skill. Some teachers are encountering children who cannot understand a simple story without visual illustrations. "TV has taken away the child's ability to form pictures in his mind," says child-development expert Dorothy Cohen at New York City's Bank Street College of Education.

Parenthetically, nursery-school teachers who have observed the pre-TV generation contend that juvenile play is far less imaginative and spontaneous than in the past. The vidkids' toys come with built-in fantasies while their playground games have been programed by last night's shows. "You don't see kids making their own toys out of crummy things like we used to," says University of Virginia psychology professor Stephen Worchel, who is the father of a 6-year-old. "You don't see them playing hopscotch, or making up their own games. Everything is suggested to them by television."

Too much TV too early also instills an attitude of spectatorship, a withdrawal from direct involvement in real-life experiences. "What television basically teaches children is passivity," says Stanford University researcher Paul Kaufman. "It creates the illusion of having been somewhere and done something and seen something, when in fact you've been sitting at home." New York Times writer Joyce Maynard, 23, a perceptive member of the first TV generation, concludes: "We grew up to be observers, not participants, to respond to action, not initiate it."

Conditioned to see all problems resolved in 30 or 60 minutes, the offspring of TV exhibit a low tolerance for the frustration of learning. Elementary-school educators complain that their charges are quickly turned off by any activity that promises less than instant gratification. "You introduce a new skill, and right away, if it looks hard, they dissolve into tears," laments Maryland first-grade teacher Eleanor Berman. "They want everything to be easy—like watching the tube." Even such acclaimed educational series as "Sesame Street," "The Electric Company" and "Zoom" have had some dubious effects. Because such shows sugar-coat their lessons with flashy showbiz techniques, they are forcing real-life instructors into the role of entertainers in order to hold their pupils' attention. "I can't turn my body into shapes or flashlights," sighs a Connecticut teacher. "Kids today are accustomed to learning through gimmicks."

For the majority of American children, television has become the principal socializing agent. It shapes their view of what the world is like and what roles they should play in it. As the University of Pennsylvania's Gerbner puts it: "The socialization of children has largely been transferred from the home and school to TV programmers who are unelected, unnamed and unknown, and who are not subject to collective—not to mention democratic—review."

What does TV's most impressionable constituency learn from prime-time entertainment? No one can really be sure, but psychologists like Robert Liebert of the State University of New York, one of the most respected observers of child behavior, don't hesitate to express sweeping indictments. "It teaches them that might makes right," Liebert says flatly. "The lesson of most TV series is that the rich, the powerful and the conniving are the most successful."

THE VIEW FROM THE VICTIMS

Whatever the truth of that, the tube clearly tends to reinforce sex-role stereotypes. In a Princeton, N.J., survey of sixteen programs and 216 commercials, it was found that men outnumbered women by three to one and that females were twice as likely to display incompetence. By and large, men were portrayed as dominant, authoritative and the sole source of their family's economic support. "These roles are biased and distorted, and don't reflect the way a woman thinks or feels," complains Liebert. "And it's just as bad for blacks."

It may, in fact, be even worse for blacks. Not only do black children watch more TV than whites, but they confront a far greater disparity between the illusions of videoland and the reality of their own lives. Two yet-to-be-published studies conducted by University of South Carolina psychology professor Robert Heckel found that young black viewers regard whites as more competent than blacks, and model their conduct accordingly. In one study, black children were shown a TV film of an interracial group of peers choosing toys to play with—and then given the same toys to pick from themselves. All the blacks selected the toys chosen by whites in the film, even though many of those toys were smaller or inferior in quality. "On TV, the competent roles tend to go to

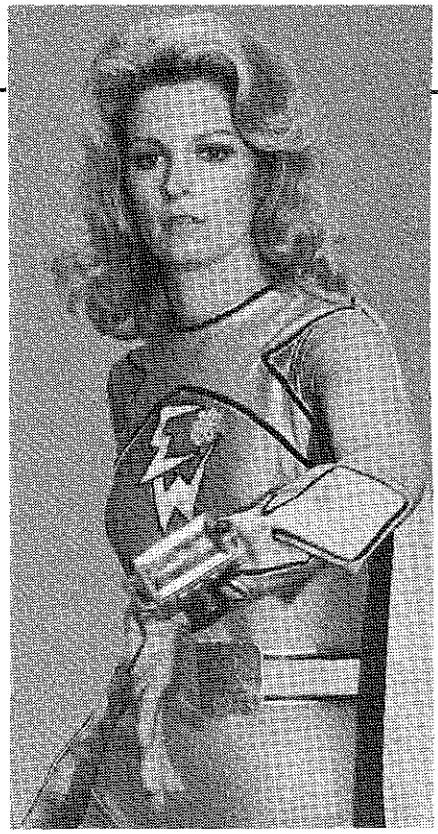
ALL ABOUT KIDVID

In their less circumspect moments, the people who create, manufacture and market weekend-morning children's shows refer to their audience as "mice." Last year, advertisers laid out more than $400 million for commercials ingeniously designed to lure those mice to the corporate cheese. And in return for delivering its most captive audience, the television industry reaped no less than 25 per cent of its annual profit from children's video. Nowhere else on TV is the medium more the message, and the programing so much wrapping around the huckster's package. To watch kidvid is to be engulfed in a tide of sugary glop—Kit Kat chocolate bars, Starburst Fruit Chews, Charms's Blow Pops, Fruit Stripe gum, Moonstones and Honeycombs. The look of kidvid is that of a mouth doomed to dental catastrophe.

What about the shows that interrupt the sales spiels? Reform is fleetingly visible. Those mindless cartoons now make up less than half of the kidvid schedule. And some of the newer shows, such as CBS's "Ark II" and "Fat Albert," gently weave in benign messages: international brotherhood, the perils of smoking and drugs and the joys of facing up to bullies. Of late, the networks' news departments have classed up the act. ABC's "Animals Animals Animals" is a sort of peewee "60 Minutes" with a zoological theme. CBS's periodic "In the News" introduces its audience to such adult concerns as environmental pollution and bankrupt school systems.

Spunky: And then there is "Muggsy." This new NBC series about an orphaned teen-age white girl adrift in an inner-city slum realistically deals with growth pains that afflict all races. Recently, Muggsy straightened out a black youngster who was being mercilessly harassed by his super-cool friends for joining the Boy Scouts. "Why you jivin' around with those honkies?" demanded one tormentor. Sensitively played by 13-year-old Sarah MacDonnell, who has more freckles than Sissy Spacek, Muggsy is spunky, vulnerable and—unlike the polyethylene Disney clones who populate most of kidvid—altogether real.

Unfortunately, the rest of children's video has matured woefully little since the days when Howdy Doody flashed his bicuspids. NBC's "Big John, Little John" stereotypes parents as incorrigible klutzes, while the network's "Speed Buggy" is nothing but a weekly lesson in reckless driving. There are even kiddie game shows to instill avarice early. On Metromedia's "Guess Your Best," the audience of moppets screams in a "Let's Make a Deal" frenzy as its panelist peers compete for AMF sports equipment and Panasonic tape recorders. "Kids are people, too . . . wackadoo, wackadoo," warbles the show's unctuous emcee.



ABC

ABC's Electra Woman: Schlock

The schlock depths, however, are reached by "The Krofft Supershow." With a stupefyingly silly music group called Kaptain Kool and the Kongs acting as host, this one-hour ABC adventure series focuses on Dr. Shrinker, a mad scientist who reduces his victims to 6-inch miniatures. The quality of the special effects would draw boos at a student film festival. The series also features two female magazine reporters who, when evildoers appear, transform themselves into Electra Woman and Dynagirl outfitted in costumes apparently picked up at a Woolworth's post-Halloween sale. When last observed, the superheroines had been ensnared by Glitter Rock, an epicene Elton John type who sported a green Afro coiffure set off by a spangled body stocking. Perhaps this show's most heinous crime is that each episode costs nearly $200,000 to produce.

Lessons: Relief, of course, can still be found on the public-TV channels. Noncommercial television's best new offerings are "Rebop," which imparts lessons in interracial harmony, and "Infinity Factory," aimed at inner-city adolescents who have trouble fathoming math. "Infinity Factory" is after an older audience than "Sesame Street" and it understands the turf. A jive-spouting disk jockey announces: "Let me tell you all about this weird dude—the number 36." A man-in-the-street survey to introduce the concept of six-digit figures asks adults and children how much money the President of the U.S. makes. "I dunno," shrugs a Harlem housewife, "but we sure ain't making none of it here."

No one is proposing that kidvid should be nothing but a sixth day of school. The 14 million youngsters who use it to unwind on weekends are just as entitled to their video Martinis as their elders. But they are also entitled to nourishment for their imaginations, even a brief massage of their thought glands, and on those counts commercial children's programing flunks the test. If there is such a thing as the evil of banality, then it is seeping through the looking glass with every Saturday's dawn. Even mice, after all, deserve an occasional change in diet. How about something truly wackadoo—or at least a spin-off of "Muggsy"?

—HARRY F. WATERS

CBS

CBS's 'Ark II': Amidst the Saturday morning hard sell, a plea for brotherhood

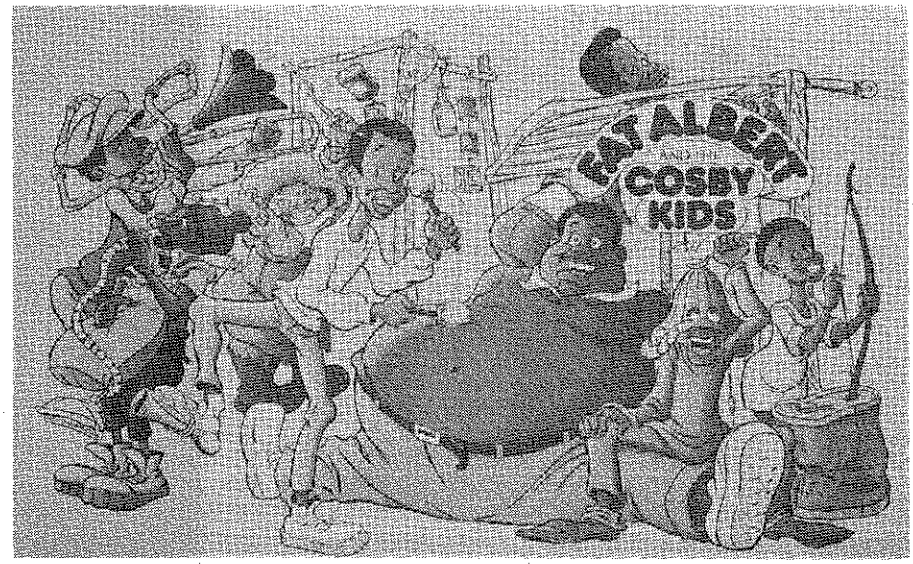
creases children's tolerance of violent behavior in others. In one experiment, several hundred fifth-graders were asked to act as baby-sitters for a group of younger kids—shown on a TV screen—who were supposedly playing in the next room. The baby-sitters were instructed to go to a nearby adult for assistance if their charges began fighting. Those who had been shown a violent TV film just before taking up their duties were far slower to call for help than those who had watched a pro-baseball telecast. "Television desensitizes children to violence in real life," observes University of Mississippi psychology professor Ronald Drabman, who helped conduct the study. "They tolerate violence in others because they have been conditioned to think of it as an everyday thing."

Beyond that, some researchers are finding that TV may be instilling paranoia in the young. Three years of tests directed by Gerbner, who is perhaps the nation's foremost authority on the subject, established that heavy TV watchers tend to exaggerate the danger of violence in their own lives—creating what Gerbner calls a "mean-world syndrome." As for children, he reports that "the pattern is exactly the same, only more so. The prevailing message of TV is to generate fear."

And now a word about the sponsors. The late Jack Benny once quipped that television is called a medium because nothing it serves up is ever well-done. But as the child watchers see it, the not-so-funny problem with TV commercials is precisely that they are so well put together. "Everybody has had the experience of seeing a 2-year-old playing on the floor, and when the commercial comes on, he stops and watches it," notes F. Earle Barcus, professor of communications at Boston University. "TV ads probably have more effect on children than any other form of programing."

Robert R. McElroy—Newsweek

Metromedia's 'Guess Your Best': Instilling avarice early



CBS

CBS's 'Fat Albert': Pacifying the weekend scene with more benign cartoon fare

JUNK FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The hottest battle involves the impact of child-directed commercials on their audience's eating habits. More than 70 per cent of the ads on Saturday and Sunday-morning "kidvid" peddle sugar-coated cereals, candy and chewing gum. Laced with action-packed attention grabbers and pitched by an ingratiating adult authority figure, such messages hook children on poor eating habits long before they develop the mental defenses to resist. "This is the most massive educational program to eat junk food in history," charges Sid Wolinsky, an attorney for a San Francisco public-interest group. "We are creating a nation of sugar junkies."

Research has also established that as the kids grow older their attitudes toward commercials move from innocent acceptance to outrage about those ads that mislead and finally to a cynical recognition of what they perceive as adult hypocrisy. According to a study by Columbia University psychology professor Thomas Bever, TV ads may be "permanently distorting children's views of morality, society and business." From in-depth interviews with 48 youngsters between the ages of 5 and 12, Bever concluded that by the time they reach 12, many find it easier to decide that all commercials lie than to try to determine which are telling the truth. Concludes Bever: "They become ready to believe that, like advertising, business and other institutions are riddled with hypocrisy."

Who is to blame and what, if anything, can be done? The networks argue that the number of violent incidents portrayed on TV has declined by 24 per cent since 1975. That figure has been challenged, but there is little question that the networks have instituted some reforms. The number of "action-adventure" series has decreased of late; and the weekend-morning kidvid scene is gradually being pacified. Such superhero cartoon characters as CBS's "Superman" and NBC's "Granite Man" have been replaced with gentler fare; ABC even canceled "Bugs Bunny" and "Road Runner" because of their zap-and-whap antics.

There is also considerable merit to the broadcasters' argument that parents are to blame if they don't regulate their children's viewing habits. By the time the Family Hour experiment was struck down by the courts last year, it had already proved unworkable because so many parents refused to cooperate. Nielsen found that 10.5 million youngsters under the age of 12 were still hooked to the tube after 9 p.m., when the Family Hour ended. And a recent Roper study reported that only two-fifths of the parents polled enforced rules about what programs their children could watch. "Parents who take active charge of most of the elements of their children's upbringing allow a kind of anarchy to prevail where television viewing is concerned," says Elton Rule, president of ABC, Inc.

THE PUBLIC STRIKES BACK

In rebuttal, public-interest groups point out that TV stations have been granted Federal licenses to ride the public airwaves—a highly lucrative privilege that carries a unique responsibility. In addition to the nationwide pressure being exerted by the AMA and the PTA, local organizations like the Lansing (Mich.) Committee for Children's Television have persuaded local stations to drop gory shows from their late-

afternoon schedules. But no one has achieved more reform than the activist mothers of Action for Children's Television, based in Newtonville, Mass. ACT is largely credited with persuading the networks to reduce time for commercials on children's weekend shows from sixteen to nine and a half minutes an hour, to halt the huckstering of vitamins on kidvid and to end the practice of having the hosts deliver the pitches. ACT's ultimate—perhaps chimeric—goal is to rid kidvid of all advertising. "We feel it is wise to separate children from the marketplace until they are ready to deal with it," explains Peggy Charren, ACT's indefatigable president.

The shrewdest reform movement is aimed at persuading network programmers and advertisers that violence really doesn't sell. J. Walter Thompson, the nation's largest advertising agency, has begun advising its clients to stop purchasing spots on violent series—pointing out that a sampling of adult viewers revealed that 8 per cent of the consumers surveyed had already boycotted products advertised on such shows, while 10 per cent more were considering doing so. To help viewers identify the worst offenders among the shows, the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting now disseminates rankings of the most violent series. At last body count, the bloodiest were ABC's "Starsky & Hutch" and "Baretta," NBC's "Baa Baa Black Sheep" and CBS's "Hawaii Five-O."

Noeleen Chedd

ACT president Charren with constituency: Winning a cutback on commercials

On the brighter side, some educators have begun harnessing commercial TV's power in positive ways. The movement first took hold a few years ago in Philadelphia's school system, which started tying reading assignments to TV offerings. For example, scripts for such docu-dramas as "The Missiles of October" and "Eleanor and Franklin" were distributed to more than 100,000 Philadelphia students in advance of the TV dates.

FROM VIOLENCE TO SOCIAL VALUES

The children watched the shows while following along in the scripts, and discussed them in class the next day. The program has worked so well—some pupils' reading skills advanced by three years—that 3,500 other U.S. school systems are imitating it. This week WBNS-TV, the CBS affiliate in Columbus, Ohio, is transmitting four hours of classroom programing each day aimed at 96,000 local students whose schools are closed due to the natural-gas shortage (page 39).

Prime Time School TV, a nonprofit Chicago organization, has come up with the most innovative approach: PTST uses some of TV's most violent fare to implant positive social values. In one seven-week course, pupils were given questionnaires and told to fill them out while watching "Kojak," "Baretta" and the like. The questions, which were subsequently kicked around in class, dealt with everything from illegal search and seizure to forced confessions. "One boy told us that we had ruined television for him," reports PTST official Linda Kahn. "He couldn't watch a police show any more without counting the number of killings." Says PTST president William Singer: "We are saying that there are alternatives to merely railing against television, and this is just one of them."

LIFE WITHOUT THE TUBE

Unfortunately, the options available to the individual parent are considerably more limited. A few daring souls have simply pulled the plug. Charles Frye, a San Francisco nursery-school teacher and the father of five boys, decided he would not replace his set after it conked out in 1972. Frye's brood rebelled at first, but today none of them voices regret that theirs is a TV-less household. Fourteen-year-old Mark fills his afternoon hours with tap-dancing lessons, Sea Scout meetings and work in a gas station. Kirk, his 13-year-old brother, plays a lot of basketball and football and recently finished "Watership Down" and all four of the Tolkien hobbit books. "I know of no other children that age who have that range of interests," says their father.

Short of such a draconian measure, some parents are exercising a greater degree of home rule. Two years ago, the administrators of New York's Horace Mann nursery school became distressed over an upsurge of violence in their students' play. Deciding that television was to blame, they dispatched a letter to all parents urging them to curb their children's viewing. "After we sent the letter, we could see a change," recalls Horace Mann principal Eleanor Brussel. "The kids showed better concentration, better comprehension, an ability to think things through." Sheila Altschuler, one of the mothers who heeded the school's request, noticed that her 4-year-old son began making up his own playtime characters instead of imitating those on the tube. "If I didn't feel it was kind of freaky, I wouldn't own a set," allows Altschuler. "But these days it's a matter of conformity. Kids would be outcasts without TV."

Clearly, there is no single antidote for the vidkid virus. For the children of the global village, and their progeny to come, TV watching will continue to be their most shared—and shaping—experience. Virtually all the experts, however, agree on one palliative for parents of all socioeconomic levels. Instead of using TV as an electronic baby-sitter, parents must try to involve themselves directly in their youngsters' viewing. By watching along with the kids at least occasionally, they can help them evaluate what they see—pointing out the inflated claims of a commercial, perhaps, or criticizing a gratuitously violent scene. "Parents don't have to regard TV as a person who can't be interrupted," says behavioral scientist Charles Corder-Bolz. "If they view one show a night with their kids, and make just one or two comments about it, they can have more impact than the whole program."

Reduced to the essentials, the question for parents no longer is: "Do you know where your children are tonight?" The question has become: What are they watching—and with whom?

—HARRY F. WATERS with bureau reports

Violence tally: All nets aired more

WASHINGTON—A delegation of top television industry executives appears before Congress this week where it will be confronted by a new "violence profile" of last fall's network schedules showing them to be the most violent since 1967.

The tv execs are scheduled to appear March 2 before the House communications subcommittee for the last in a series of tv violence hearings that began last year.

On the same schedule is Prof. George Gerbner, the University of Pennsylvania communications researcher whose violence tallies have served as a benchmark for any politicians trying to gage the tv violence problem.

The subcommittee has no plans for any legislative action against the industry, subcommittee sources insist, but individual subcommittee members are expected to make things hot for some of the tv men.

Prof. Gerbner's new data, which include humorous and fantasy episodes of violence as well as cops-and-robbers mayhem, indicate that violence actually went up last fall in two very sensitive time periods—"family viewing" time and weekend children's programing.

■ ABC had the most violent "family hour," according to the data that will be presented to the subcommittee this week. NBC showed the most violent children's weekend and late evening programing.

CBS, described in documents from Prof. Gerbner as "leader of the family hour concept," lifted what he called its two-season "lid" on violence during the early evening hours and showed the biggest jump in violence during that period of any of the nets.

In total, however, NBC still aired the most violent schedule, judged by the Gerbner profile method, followed by ABC and then CBS.

Among those scheduled to testify this Wednesday are John Schneider, president of CBS; Robert Howard, president of the NBC television network; Herminio Traviesas, vp-broadcast standards, NBC; Fred Pierce, president of ABC television; Alfred Schneider, ABC vp; Vincent Wasilewski, president of the National Assn. of Broadcasters; Wilson Wearn, NAB's chairman, and Richard Wiley, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. #

Amounts to call for censorship, Pierce warns

ABC exec hits AMA stand on tv violence

By MAURINE CHRISTOPHER

NEW YORK—ABC Television last week defended the tv industry against the American Medical Assn.'s "untrue and unwarranted" charge that tv programming consists largely of violent content, and the network leveled its own charge against the AMA for issuing an "implied call for program censorship."

Frederick S. Pierce, president of the ABC-TV division, launched his counterattack in a letter to Dr. Richard E. Palmer, AMA president. Mr. Pierce accused the AMA of making unfounded and unproved allegations based on the unscientific, though well intentioned research from BI Associates and the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting. The AMA then used these allegations to exhort major corporations to boycott specific telecasts, he said.

■ To demonstrate the lack of validity of the NCCB studies, Mr. Pierce, who moved to top management by way of research, cited these examples of the BI-NCCB technique and conclusions:

• If Marie jokingly pushes Donny in a comedy sketch on "Donny and Marie," this is given the same weight in the violence scoring as a murder scene in a theatrical film.

• In the most recent ranking, NBC's "World of Disney," family viewing favorite, was ranked as the 21st most violent show; Carol Burnett's CBS comedy hour ranked higher in violent incidents than the dramatization of the war novel, "Once An Eagle," and ABC's "Six Million Dollar Man," a family-oriented fantasy adventure program, "is mechanically and unreasonably ranked with realistic police programs as among the most violent shows."

The ABC executive said that even within the AMA there had been sharp differences among psychiatric and medical experts as to how much today's children have been influenced by seeing violence on tv. "The AMA has long stood for excellence and achievement based on careful analysis, thorough research and the highest professional standards," Mr. Pierce wrote Dr. Palmer. "Your recent public actions in addressing your concerns about violence on tv to advertisers who support our free commercial system fall considerably short of such standards."

Pointing out that ABC is con-

(Continued on Page 81)

Training in emergency treatment for heart attack victims is offered by the First Banks of the Twin Cities via this ad in local newspapers. The program, Pulse '77, includes a 3-hour class in life-saving techniques. Grey Advertising, Minneapolis, is the agency.

Broadcasting Feb 28
Vol. 92 No. 9

Top of the Week

Congress's turn on TV violence

The issue of television violence will be discussed where it counts this week—in the shadow of the Capitol dome. Representative Lionel Van Deerlin's (D-Calif.) House Communications Subcommittee will hold a one-day stand that could be the most important crisis-point yet. As one slightly shell-shocked broadcaster noted last week, it's one thing when PTA's or other groups hold hearings in Hartford or Dallas or Portland. But when the fight lands in Washington, things are liable to get hot.

TV violence, et al., has been thrust into the national spotlight by such groups as the American Medical Association, which has pressured advertisers to boycott violent programs, by the National Parent Teachers Association, which last week concluded a series of eight hearings on the subject, and by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, whose research made targets of advertisers shown to be the principal sponsors of the most-violent programs. And as if those initiatives weren't enough, the most-recognized authority on the subject of TV violence—Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications—has released a new violence index purporting to show that the 1976 television season set an all-time record in that regard.

All those and other elements of the violence roadshow move to the Rayburn building for hearings this Wednesday (March 2)—albeit under Mr. Van Deerlin's caveat that they will not lead to legislation affecting broadcast programing practices. "In no way do we want to undercut the First Amendment," the chairman said in a news release last week. "But we are hopeful the hearing will help producers see the error of their ways when, in fact, programs are laced with gratuitous sex and violence."

Lead-off witness at the event will be Dr. Gerbner, who will detail the findings of his latest research. After him, in order, will be Henry Geller, former FCC general counsel now with the Aspen Institute Program on Communications and Society; FCC Chairman Richard E. Wiley; National Association of Broadcasters President Vincent T. Wasilewski and NAB Chairman Wilson Wearn (Multimedia Inc., Greenville, S.C.); John Schneider, president, CBS/Broadcast Group, and Van Gordon Sauter, CBS-TV vice president for program practices; Robert Howard, president of NBC-TV, and Herminio Traviesas, NBC-TV vice president for program standards; Fred Pierce, president, ABC Television, and Alfred Schneider, ABC vice president for program standards; Peggy Charren, president of Action for Children's Television; Richard M. Powell, chairman of the family viewing hour committee of the Writers Guild of America, and William Froug, co-chairman of the Hollywood Caucus; Ted Carpenter, National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting; Professors Bradley Greenberg and Charles Atkin of Michigan State University.

More violence than ever, says Gerbner's latest

Annenberg researchers say their violence index is highest since inception 10 years ago; much of the increase was in family time

Dr. George Gerbner and his colleague, Dr. Larry Gross, of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, who claim to have a yardstick by which to measure television violence, say their calculations show that the TV networks programed more violence in 1976 than they have in any of the years the two researchers have been compiling their "Violence Profiles."

The latest such report, issued last week in anticipation of the appearance of Drs. Gerbner and Gross before the House Communications Subcommittee hearings on TV violence, says the three-network violence index for 1976 was 203.6, as compared to 1967's 198.7, which was the next highest score.

The report says that each of the networks increased its mix of violence in 1976. The 1975 profile rankings by network remained the same in 1976 with NBC first with an index of 224, followed by ABC, 207, and CBS, 181. Compared to 1975, the violence scores in 1976 climbed by 20 at ABC; 16 at CBS and 23 at NBC.

The level of violence took its largest jump in family viewing time, the report said. The violence index for this classification climbed at ABC from 121 in 1975 to 197 in 1976; at CBS, from 60 to 101, and at NBC, from 126 to 138. The authors commented, "CBS—leader of the family hour concept—lifted its two-season lid on violence during early evening hours, showing the highest [percentage] increase of any network."

Violent action, part of the composite index, rose to the highest point on record, as the rate of violent episodes increased from 8.1 per hour in 1975 to 9.5 in 1976. The report said only the number of killings declined slightly.

Three quarters of all TV characters and nine out of every 10 programs sampled displayed some violence, the researchers said. They said there was approximately a 10% increase in each of the last two categories over 1975 programing.

The report said that the 1976 violence profile confirms previous research that heavy exposure to television violence "cultivates fear and mistrust among viewers." The authors said children particularly were affected by television's "mean-world syndrome."

The report includes a series of "risk ratios." After tabulating the number of people who commit violence—"the violents"—and the number of victims, the risk ratio is obtained when the larger of these figures is divided by the smaller. A plus sign indicates there were more "violents" than victims; a minus indicates the opposite.

The report said the over-all violent-victim ratio dropped from −1.25 in 1975 to −1.06 in 1976, suggesting a possible decrease in over-all victimization. The pattern of who inflicts violence on whom did not change. For example, women (−1.32) were more likely to be victims than men (−1.20), with old (−3.00), poor (−2.25) and single (−1.50) women running especially high risks.

The annual violence profile is part of Dr. Gerbner's and Dr. Gross's broader study of cultural indicators sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Gerbner

Pierce runs head-on at AMA

In letter to its president, head of ABC-TV challenges studies and criticism of TV violence

Frederick S. Pierce, the president of ABC Television, said last week that the American Medical Association's recent attacks on TV violence were "untrue, unwarranted and unrepresentative" of the AMA's usual "high standards."

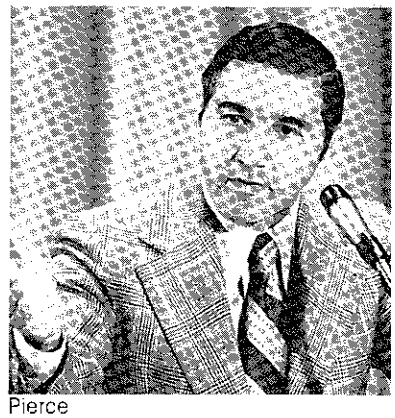
In a letter to Richard E. Palmer, the president of the AMA, Mr. Pierce expressed particular anger at the AMA's campaign to urge major corporations to pull their advertising from violent shows. Mr. Pierce said he regarded that campaign as "an implied call for censorship."

The AMA based its antitelevised-violence statements (BROADCASTING, Feb. 7) on studies conducted by a TV-commercial-monitoring organization called bi Associates and by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, a consumer-advocacy group. Mr. Pierce labelled these studies "undefined and unproven."

Mr. Pierce pointed to one example of the "mechanical" nature of the studies. "In the televised musical variety series *Donny and Marie,*" he said, "a comedy sketch wherein Marie jokingly pushes Donny is counted as a violent action and given the same weight as a murder scene in a theatrical movie on television." Mr. Pierce also ridiculed the placing of *The Wonderful World of Disney* "among the top third most violent programs" by one of the studies, and a ranking by one of the comedy-variety *Carol Burnett Show* "higher in violent incidents than the realistic dramatic portrayal of the war novel, 'Once an Eagle.'" In addition he said, "the *Six Million Dollar Man,* a family-oriented fantasy-adventure program, is mechanically and unreasonably ranked with realistic police programs as among the most violent shows."

There's a split over the violence-on-TV issue even among AMA members themselves, Mr. Pierce said. To Dr. Michael Rothenberg's assertion in the *AMA Journal* of Dec. 8, 1975, that "violence viewing produces increased aggressive behavior in the young," Dr. Robert M. Kaplan responded that "medical professionals must learn considerably more about the relevant research. Censoring TV is a serious issue." Mr. Pierce also quoted Dr. Melvin S. Heller, a Temple University psychiatrist and ABC consultant, as saying, "It is improper and inconsistent with the high professional standards of the AMA to act in such a precipitous manner when the weight of evidence in the social sciences and medical studies do not support the type of political action of the magnitude undertaken by the AMA."

And, according to Mr. Pierce, Dr. Walter Menninger said, "It is the adult models living with children who determine their ultimate violent or nonviolent behavior far more than *Kojak.*"



Pierce

Taking the offensive, Mr. Pierce said that "programs that may include incidents of violence represent a diminishing percentage of ABC's over-all prime-time schedule. He concluded his letter by calling on the AMA to "join with ABC and others in the television industry ... in a meaningful scientific analysis."

PTA ends hearings on TV violence but issue lingers

Familiar critics call for controls; psychiatrist faults violence index; trends away from action are noted

The National Parent Teachers Association's series of regional hearings into the effects and cures of TV violence concluded in Los Angeles last week with shrill calls for reform. Broadcasters, countering, called on antiviolence advocates to restrain themselves.

On the antiviolence side was former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, now chairman of the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, who said the work of NCCB, the PTA, the American Medical Association and others has shown that collective action can bring about change "in spite of establishment power and greed." The struggle must continue, however, he said, "for many months to come. Responsible corporate officials have changed their policies for good. Unfortunately, the irresponsible outnumber them. They will play a waiting game. They hope we will get bored—either complacent or discouraged—and go away. We must not."

There was Frank Orme of the National Association for Better Broadcasting, Los Angeles, who talked of "the plague of violence-for-kicks in television" as "a malignant social issue that must be brought under control." He urged PTA to encourage group action. "You have the numbers," he said, "to swing a heavy club" in Congress and at the FCC.

David Rintels of the Writers Guild of America, West, said the guild supports actions to decrease violence on television, largely because less time given to shows with physical violence means more time for writers to explore other material: social ethical, policial, religious and artistic. "Most of us," he said, "yearn for a broader, freer, truer canvas on which to work."

Appearing in Los Angeles for the broadcasters was Van Gordon Sauter, CBS vice president for program practices, who voiced concern about the antiviolence advocates who would put themselves or government in the programer's seat. "Inherent in all this—through intent or accident—is censorship," he said. "All in the name of that anonymous television viewer, who in the minds of the elitists, lacks the discretion or the discipline or the insight to know what is best for him."

Mr. Sauter said the answer to the dilemma—how much violence on TV is just right—cannot come from science and cannot be solved by "heavy-handed pressure and economic sanctions and government action." What is called for instead, he said, is "reasoned discourse."

Also on hand was Roy Danish of the Television Information Office, a frequent participant in the PTA series. He said there is now a trend away from violent police shows and toward newer forms of programs. "In the case of one network, NBC," he said, "only two or three of some 46 pilots now in development are the traditional police-action type. The network is moving toward more comedy and variety and toward more miniseries and the dramatization of best selling books. I believe you will find that when other networks make their program plans known you will see similar developments in their cases."

A call for restraint among those who want less violence on TV came from Dr. Melvin S. Heller, a psychiatrist who has worked with violent offenders at the Temple University Medical Center, Philadelphia. He objected to research of those such as George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, that use a too-broad definition of violence, in his opinion, when counting the number of violent acts on TV. "In my view, the Gerbner count, pursued with computerized accuracy, is insensitive to the circumstances in which the violence is portrayed," Dr. Heller said. And in his opinion, some violence is good for children to see when in the context of programs such as *Roots,* for example, that provide strong social messages. He finds little danger, either in violence which is clearly in a humorous or fantasy context.

Gerhard J. Hanneman, of the Annenberg School, said parents should have greater control over children's TV watching. He would accomplish that with a system of ratings—G, PG, R and X—for all new TV shows, and a device he calls a "blanker." A rating would carry with it a subaudible tone which could activate the "blanker" installed in the receiver and preset by the parent—to turn the TV picture blank for an entire show. In that way, parents could restrict their children's viewing to G, PG, or whatever.

In Brief

Bill providing for **five-year license term** for radio and TV stations and **exempting all radio stations from ascertainment** was introduced in House by Representative Lou Frey (R-Fla.). Ranking Republican on House Communications Subcommittee explained in introducing measure Thursday (Feb. 24) that bill is merely vehicle for his views; he concurs with Chairman Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Calif.) that subcommittee should suspend action on "piecemeal" legislation during rewrite of Communications Act. New Frey bill (he was author of license renewal legislation that died in last Congress) would also: **base renewal** on finding by FCC that licensee has been "responsive" to problems, needs and interests of community during preceding license period; **change court of review** for renewal appeals from Washington to station's home district; **instruct FCC** to look for ways to cut down on renewal paperwork, especially for smaller market stations; **require FCC** to consider different ascertainment procedures for different size markets.

□

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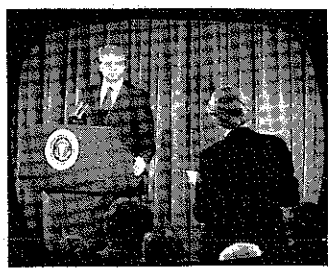

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Broadcasting Feb 28
Vol. 92 No. 9

Top of the Week

Congress's turn on TV violence

The issue of television violence will be discussed where it counts this week—in the shadow of the Capitol dome. Representative Lionel Van Deerlin's (D-Calif.) House Communications Subcommittee will hold a one-day stand that could be the most important crisis-point yet. As one slightly shell-shocked broadcaster noted last week, it's one thing when PTA's or other groups hold hearings in Hartford or Dallas or Portland. But when the fight lands in Washington, things are liable to get hot.

TV violence, et al., has been thrust into the national spotlight by such groups as the American Medical Association, which has pressured advertisers to boycott violent programs, by the National Parent Teachers Association, which last week concluded a series of eight hearings on the subject, and by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, whose research made targets of advertisers shown to be the principal sponsors of the most-violent programs. And as if those initiatives weren't enough, the most-recognized authority on the subject of TV violence—Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications—has released a new violence index purporting to show that the 1976 television season set an all-time record in that regard.

All those and other elements of the violence roadshow move to the Rayburn building for hearings this Wednesday (March 2)—albeit under Mr. Van Deerlin's caveat that they will not lead to legislation affecting broadcast programing practices. "In no way do we want to undercut the First Amendment," the chairman said in a news release last week. "But we are hopeful the hearing will help producers see the error of their ways when, in fact, programs are laced with gratuitous sex and violence."

Lead-off witness at the event will be Dr. Gerbner, who will detail the findings of his latest research. After him, in order, will be Henry Geller, former FCC general counsel now with the Aspen Institute Program on Communications and Society; FCC Chairman Richard E. Wiley; National Association of Broadcasters President Vincent T. Wasilewski and NAB Chairman Wilson Wearn (Multimedia Inc., Greenville, S.C.); John Schneider, president, CBS/Broadcast Group, and Van Gordon Sauter, CBS-TV vice president for program practices; Robert Howard, president of NBC-TV, and Herminio Traviesas, NBC-TV vice president for program standards; Fred Pierce, president, ABC Television, and Alfred Schneider, ABC vice president for program standards; Peggy Charren, president of Action for Children's Television; Richard M. Powell, chairman of the family viewing hour committee of the Writers Guild of America, and William Froug, co-chairman of the Hollywood Caucus; Ted Carpenter, National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting; Professors Bradley Greenberg and Charles Atkin of Michigan State University.

More violence than ever, says Gerbner's latest

Annenberg researchers say their violence index is highest since inception 10 years ago; much of the increase was in family time

Dr. George Gerbner and his colleague, Dr. Larry Gross, of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, who claim to have a yardstick by which to measure television violence, say their calculations show that the TV networks programed more violence in 1976 than they have in any of the years the two researchers have been compiling their "Violence Profiles."

The latest such report, issued last week in anticipation of the appearance of Drs. Gerbner and Gross before the House Communications Subcommittee hearings on TV violence, says the three-network violence index for 1976 was 203.6, as compared to 1967's 198.7, which was the next highest score.

The report says that each of the networks increased its mix of violence in 1976. The 1975 profile rankings by network remained the same in 1976 with NBC first with an index of 224, followed by ABC, 207, and CBS, 181. Compared to 1975, the violence scores in 1976 climbed by 20 at ABC; 16 at CBS and 23 at NBC.

The level of violence took its largest jump in family viewing time, the report said. The violence index for this classification climbed at ABC from 121 in 1975 to 197 in 1976; at CBS, from 60 to 101, and at NBC, from 126 to 138. The authors commented, "CBS—leader of the family hour concept—lifted its two-season lid on violence during early evening hours, showing the highest [percentage] increase of any network."

Violent action, part of the composite index, rose to the highest point on record, as the rate of violent episodes increased from 8.1 per hour in 1975 to 9.5 in 1976. The report said only the number of killings declined slightly.

Three quarters of all TV characters and nine out of every 10 programs sampled displayed some violence, the researchers said. They said there was approximately a 10% increase in each of the last two categories over 1975 programing.

The report said that the 1976 violence profile confirms previous research that heavy exposure to television violence "cultivates fear and mistrust among viewers." The authors said children particularly were affected by television's "mean-world syndrome."

The report includes a series of "risk ratios." After tabulating the number of people who commit violence—"the violents"—and the number of victims, the risk ratio is obtained when the larger of these figures is divided by the smaller. A plus sign indicates there were more "violents" than victims; a minus indicates the opposite.

The report said the over-all violent-victim ratio dropped from −1.25 in 1975 to −1.06 in 1976, suggesting a possible decrease in over-all victimization. The pattern of who inflicts violence on whom did not change. For example, women (−1.32) were more likely to be victims than men (−1.20), with old (−3.00), poor (−2.25) and single (−1.50) women running especially high risks.

The annual violence profile is part of Dr. Gerbner's and Dr. Gross's broader study of cultural indicators sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Gerbner

Pierce runs head-on at AMA

In letter to its president, head of ABC-TV challenges studies and criticism of TV violence

Frederick S. Pierce, the president of ABC Television, said last week that the American Medical Association's recent attacks on TV violence were "untrue, unwarranted and unrepresentative" of the AMA's usual "high standards."

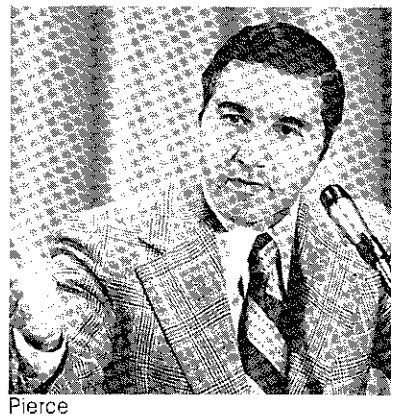
In a letter to Richard E. Palmer, the president of the AMA, Mr. Pierce expressed particular anger at the AMA's campaign to urge major corporations to pull their advertising from violent shows. Mr. Pierce said he regarded that campaign as "an implied call for censorship."

The AMA based its antitelevised-violence statements (BROADCASTING, Feb. 7) on studies conducted by a TV-commercial-monitoring organization called bi Associates and by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, a consumer-advocacy group. Mr. Pierce labelled these studies "undefined and unproven."

Mr. Pierce pointed to one example of the "mechanical" nature of the studies. "In the televised musical variety series *Donny and Marie,*" he said, "a comedy sketch wherein Marie jokingly pushes Donny is counted as a violent action and given the same weight as a murder scene in a theatrical movie on television." Mr. Pierce also ridiculed the placing of *The Wonderful World of Disney* "among the top third most violent programs" by one of the studies, and a ranking by one of the comedy-variety *Carol Burnett Show* "higher in violent incidents than the realistic dramatic portrayal of the war novel, 'Once an Eagle.'" In addition he said, "the *Six Million Dollar Man,* a family-oriented fantasy-adventure program, is mechanically and unreasonably ranked with realistic police programs as among the most violent shows."

There's a split over the violence-on-TV issue even among AMA members themselves, Mr. Pierce said. To Dr. Michael Rothenberg's assertion in the *AMA Journal* of Dec. 8, 1975, that "violence viewing produces increased aggressive behavior in the young," Dr. Robert M. Kaplan responded that "medical professionals must learn considerably more about the relevant research. Censoring TV is a serious issue." Mr. Pierce also quoted Dr. Melvin S. Heller, a Temple University psychiatrist and ABC consultant, as saying, "It is improper and inconsistent with the high professional standards of the AMA to act in such a precipitous manner when the weight of evidence in the social sciences and medical studies do not support the type of political action of the magnitude undertaken by the AMA."

And, according to Mr. Pierce, Dr. Walter Menninger said, "It is the adult models living with children who determine their ultimate violent or nonviolent behavior far more than *Kojak.*"



Pierce

Taking the offensive, Mr. Pierce said that "programs that may include incidents of violence represent a diminishing percentage of ABC's over-all prime-time schedule. He concluded his letter by calling on the AMA to "join with ABC and others in the television industry ... in a meaningful scientific analysis."

PTA ends hearings on TV violence but issue lingers

Familiar critics call for controls; psychiatrist faults violence index; trends away from action are noted

The National Parent Teachers Association's series of regional hearings into the effects and cures of TV violence concluded in Los Angeles last week with shrill calls for reform. Broadcasters, countering, called on antiviolence advocates to restrain themselves.

On the antiviolence side was former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, now chairman of the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, who said the work of NCCB, the PTA, the American Medical Association and others has shown that collective action can bring about change "in spite of establishment power and greed." The struggle must continue, however, he said, "for many months to come. Responsible corporate officials have changed their policies for good. Unfortunately, the irresponsible outnumber them. They will play a waiting game. They hope we will get bored—either complacent or discouraged—and go away. We must not."

There was Frank Orme of the National Association for Better Broadcasting, Los Angeles, who talked of "the plague of violence-for-kicks in television" as "a malignant social issue that must be brought under control." He urged PTA to encourage group action. "You have the numbers," he said, "to swing a heavy club" in Congress and at the FCC.

David Rintels of the Writers Guild of America, West, said the guild supports actions to decrease violence on television, largely because less time given to shows with physical violence means more time for writers to explore other material: social ethical, policial, religious and artistic. "Most of us," he said, "yearn for a broader, freer, truer canvas on which to work."

Appearing in Los Angeles for the broadcasters was Van Gordon Sauter, CBS vice president for program practices, who voiced concern about the antiviolence advocates who would put themselves or government in the programer's seat. "Inherent in all this—through intent or accident—is censorship," he said. "All in the name of that anonymous television viewer, who in the minds of the elitists, lacks the discretion or the discipline or the insight to know what is best for him."

Mr. Sauter said the answer to the dilemma—how much violence on TV is just right—cannot come from science and cannot be solved by "heavy-handed pressure and economic sanctions and government action." What is called for instead, he said, is "reasoned discourse."

Also on hand was Roy Danish of the Television Information Office, a frequent participant in the PTA series. He said there is now a trend away from violent police shows and toward newer forms of programs. "In the case of one network, NBC," he said, "only two or three of some 46 pilots now in development are the traditional police-action type. The network is moving toward more comedy and variety and toward more miniseries and the dramatization of best selling books. I believe you will find that when other networks make their program plans known you will see similar developments in their cases."

A call for restraint among those who want less violence on TV came from Dr. Melvin S. Heller, a psychiatrist who has worked with violent offenders at the Temple University Medical Center, Philadelphia. He objected to research of those such as George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, that use a too-broad definition of violence, in his opinion, when counting the number of violent acts on TV. "In my view, the Gerbner count, pursued with computerized accuracy, is insensitive to the circumstances in which the violence is portrayed," Dr. Heller said. And in his opinion, some violence is good for children to see when in the context of programs such as *Roots,* for example, that provide strong social messages. He finds little danger, either in violence which is clearly in a humorous or fantasy context.

Gerhard J. Hanneman, of the Annenberg School, said parents should have greater control over children's TV watching. He would accomplish that with a system of ratings—G, PG, R and X—for all new TV shows, and a device he calls a "blanker." A rating would carry with it a subaudible tone which could activate the "blanker" installed in the receiver and preset by the parent—to turn the TV picture blank for an entire show. In that way, parents could restrict their children's viewing to G, PG, or whatever.

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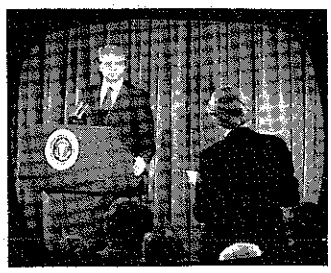

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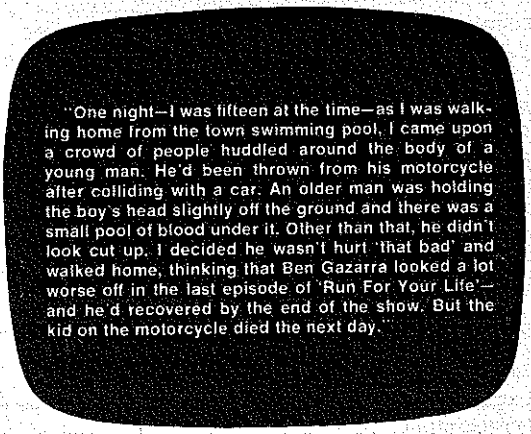
Learning Violence Via TV

At 15, a Young Viewer May Have Seen 13,400 Persons Destroyed, AMA Finds

by Jane Bosveld



THIS was the first time one particular woman realized the effect television had on her. She'd grown up looking at the world through television-coated lenses and suddenly found that her reactions, her basic human feelings, had been hardened by the continuous repetition of its portrayal of the world. Her parents had warned her about drugs and dark streets, but they hadn't told her about TV.

Now, the American Medical Association feels it's time to start blinking the yellow lights and let people know the potential effects of watching television violence. At their 30th clinical convention, AMA experts explained the dangers of, and the most recent studies in, television violence.

One of the most common effects, according to Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania, is "the mean-world syndrome." "Heavy viewing of television with its frequent, repetitive and ritualistic demonstration of power through violence," contends Dr. Gerbner, "generates a sense of risk. Heavy viewers tend to think that they will encounter violence on an average night much more than a light viewer of the same socio-economic group. Heavy viewers are more likely to mistrust people and tend to look at the world as a mean place."

In other words, heavy viewers, those who watch more than four hours a day, have their emotions tampered with by some stranger and don't realize it.

Dr. Gerbner, a soft-spoken leader

in television violence research, believes television exercises too much power over individuals. "Before a child can even speak, let alone read, he has absorbed many of the story-telling functions of culture through television."

Story telling is at the heart of the socializing process; because of this, the stories told on TV, Dr. Gerbner contends, are absorbed by viewers and projected into their definition of social reality.

Combine this aspect of television with violence, which Dr. Gerbner defines as a means to generate either fear or aggression (or both) to make people compliant, and you have the basis for a "tribal religion" that controls its members by structuring their cognitive reality. In other words, television teaches regardless of whether viewers are conscious of its lessons.

The average 15-year-old, for example, has seen on fictional entertainment television alone, the violent destruction of 13,400 persons. What effect does this have on his/her personality?

One experiment done at the University of North Carolina, found television violence to have a definite effect on children. Dr. Faye Stoyer and her associates studied all the children at a local child development center from behind a one-way screen. Observers who did not know the particular purpose of the experiment recorded the frequency with which each child engaged in some overt act of aggression. Whenever a child kicked, pushed or shoved another child, a note was made. After this initial baseline measure was taken, the youngsters were divided into two groups and for 11 successive days, one of the groups saw violent cartoons, and the other group saw neutral, nonviolent cartoons.

Circumstances were so arranged that, at the outset, the two groups were identical in the amount of aggression they displayed towards each other. Dr. Stoyer and her associates observed both groups from behind the one-way screen after the 11-day viewing period. Again, observers who didn't know which children were being exposed to which television diet, recorded every act of aggression. They found that the children exposed to violent cartoons became more aggressive and violent among themselves, than did the neutral cartoon viewers.

Dr. Stoyer, in fact, took the experiment one step further. At the beginning of the experiment, she matched the students into pairs so that there was a mildly aggressive child who saw the violent TV cartoons, matched with a child of similar temperament, who watched the neutral cartoons. For *every* one of the pairs, the child who had been exposed to TV violence was not originally, but *became* the more interpersonally physically aggressive of the pair.

Dr. Robert Liebert, of the State University of New York, Stony Brook, who explained Dr. Stoyer's experiment at the AMA convention, used it as one example of many experiments that produced similar conclusions.

"Most individuals exposed to television violence," says Dr. Liebert, "will show a degree of emotional arousal that can be measured through galvanic skin responses, facial expressions and a variety of other techniques, but the effect is almost always short-lived."

Data showing long-term effects of watching TV violence are rare, but Drs. L. Rowell Huesmann and

Leonard D. Eron, both of the University of Illinois, conducted one study with more than 400 students in a rural upstate New York county. The psychologists interviewed each student at age eight and again at 19. They found that "a boy's aggressiveness at age 19 was directly and significantly related to the amount of violent television he watched at age eight regardless of his initial level of aggressiveness, social status, intellectual ability, or parents' behaviors. Through imitation," say the psychologists, "the child appeared to learn aggressive habits that persisted for at least ten years."

Although increased aggressive behavior resulted for boys who watched violent television, girls' behavior didn't seem to be affected. Drs. Huesmann and Eron explain: "Girls are socialized to suppress aggression and not to express it openly —a training that could inhibit their modeling of the highly physical aggression shown on television. It is also true that most girls are better able to distinguish fantasy from reality than are boys, and perceive TV as less realistic than do boys. We suspect, however, that the major reason for the sex difference was the almost total lack of aggressive female mod-

Tendency to Aggression Long-Lasting

"In science," says Dr. L. Rowell Huesmann, a psychologist at the University of Illinois, "you can't really say something is the cause of something else." Even in a laboratory under controlled conditions, scientists will say "the most plausible single factor in getting this result is . . ." And when they're working outside the laboratory with human subjects, the job of distinguishing cause and effect becomes even more difficult.

"In fact, they're virtually impossible to separate unless the study is longitudinal [conducted over a long period of time]."

Dr. Huesmann and Dr. Leonard D. Eron's longitudinal study explained in our story is one of the most important of the research experiments showing the effect of TV violence on individuals. It's important partially because it was conducted over a ten-year period and asks questions that a short-term experiment would have little hope of finding answers to. For example, is a child's delinquency a product of his parents' disharmony, or does his parents' disharmony stem from the child's delinquency? "Even in a longitudinal field study," says Dr. Huesmann, "it is impossible to answer such questions with certainty; to separate cause and effect with certainty. But the psychologist, using modern mathematical techniques, can use a longitudinal field study to measure the relative plausibility of rival causal hypotheses."

Drs. Huesmann and Eron's study mapped out the long-term aggressive (antisocial) behavior of more than 400 students. Before their study, researchers knew television left short-term effects on individuals, but not whether it produced any lasting ones. Now, with longitudinal studies, scientists are discovering that certain effects, notably increased aggression, may last a lifetime.

TV: 'Who Can Get Away with What?'

Violence on television is unlike that in movies or books because television is a very different medium. It is accessible from cradle to grave; you don't have to go anywhere to see it, and you don't even need to know how to read. It comes home to all classes and groups everywhere in the industrialized world. And it is used nonselectively; most people watch by the clock, not by the program, and the TV clock is on over six hours a day in the average U.S. household. Television is like the environment; it's everywhere and it's indivisible.

Its world view and its values are implicit in the total programming structure, not only in individual isolated programs. To analyze TV violence, one has to examine the distribution of values and power in the entire world of television, not merely in violent programs—just as pollution is a part of the total organization of industry and not only of the chemistry of air and water.

Television reflects the violence of the real world selectively. The leading causes of injury and death in the real world, for example, are highway and industrial accidents, but we rarely see those on television. TV, like all storytelling, presents forms of violence that best serve its dramatic and social functions. It demonstrates how power works in society, and who can get away with what.

—Dr. George Gerbner

els on TV in 1960. When females did appear in aggressive scenes, they were almost always victims, not aggressors."

Such a contention supports Gerbner's position that television violence promotes a social hierarchy of power. "Television violence makes certain groups of people more compliant," says Dr. Gerbner, "by suggesting they have more to fear . . . that they have higher risks than other groups of people. Females, children, lower-class, foreign, and nonwhite characters of both sexes; and older women, are more likely to fall victim . . . than to be perpetrators of violence."

As a result, these groups of victims seek protection. "When large groups of people are asking, needing, and demanding protection from the authorities as a way of escaping their own somewhat synthetically-generated feelings on insecurity," says Dr. Gerbner, "this has individual, psychological and social implications. I'm glad to see responsible scientific organizations like the AMA concerned about it. We need to have national policy based on reliable objective information."

Toward this goal, the AMA is working with other organizations and dispersing various information on the dangers of television violence to the public, in an effort to alert viewers and make the anonymous teacher accountable for its actions. ■

THE WASHINGTON POST
Tuesday, March 1, 1977 B 7

Network TV Violence: A New Record

By Tom Shales

Violence on network television increased in 1976 and reached its highest level in almost 10 years, according to a study released yesterday by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

While depicted killings "declined slightly" last year, the so-called "Violence Profile" found that the number of violent incidents on TV rose from 8.1 per hour in 1975 to 9.5 per hour in 1976. The amount of "violent action" measured rose "to the highest point on record," the survey said.

Release of the study was timed to preface hearings on sex and violence in television to be held Wednesday by the House Subcommittee on Communications. Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School and one of those who developed the profile, will be among those testifying during the day-long session.

The presidents of ABC, CBS and NBC—Frederick S. Pierce, John A. Schneider and Robert T. Howard—will also face questioning at the hearings, which are being held as pressure groups step up efforts to reduce television violence.

> "Release of the study was timed to preface hearings on sex and violence in television to be held Wednesday by the House Subcommittee on Communications."

Gerbner will present his findings to the committee. The study found that the level of violence increased most during the Family Hour period instituted by the networks in alliance with the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and subsequently struck down as unconstitutional by a U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

NBC was found to be the most violent network, with ABC second and CBS third. These rankings were the same in the 1975 profile and also correspond to the result of a separate TV monitoring project conducted by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting (NCCB), a Washington-based group currently in the forefront of the antiviolence campaign. An NCCB spokesman will testify at Wednesday's hearing.

The study also found that women, children and nonwhites were the character types most likely to be the victims of violence and least likely to commit it in TV programs. Heavy viewing of television and its violent programs promotes feelings of "fear and mistrust" about real-life society, according to the survey.

Children, it was found, were "especially vulnerable" to a TV view of the world as a hostile and dangerous environment.

The Post also ran a small AP story about the March 2 hearings. It focused on the NAB + FCC testimony.

Dave
(3/3/77)

P.S. NBC gave about 2½ minutes coverage in the middle of the 6:30 news. After a 20-second intro by Chancellor reporting the Violence Profile there was a 40-second film clip of your testimony where you ~~discuss~~ said that TV is teaching people to be victims. →

The network presidents filled up the rest of the segment (i.e., NBC prez. claiming that they were reducing violence, but couldn't eliminate it completely.)

— We did well on CBS. In the 1 p.m. segment on Channel 10, Spivak had a doctor from Children's Hospital who was supposed to be commenting on the new Temple study. In fact, Spivak used the 4-min. segment to discuss your research.

During the 11 o'clock news, they showed 3 minutes of your testimony.

— No report on Cronkite or ABC

Child Study Finds Many Are Fearful

New York—(AP)—Fear plays a major role in the lives of millions of American children, but in spite of that the vast majority of grammar school-age children are happy about their families, a new survey has reported.

The survey of a national sample of 2,258 children aged 7 to 11, along with 1,700 parents, produced such findings as these:

—One-quarter of the children were afraid to go outdoors to play. Two-thirds of the children fear someone will break into their homes to harm them.

"There is also a strong suggestion that children who are heavy TV viewers - four hours or more per weekday - show significantly higher levels of these fears," the survey found.

—The vast majority of the children are happy about their families and themselves and believe their parents are proud of them. Nearly two-thirds think their parents treat them "more like a grown-up" then "like a baby."

—However, nearly half wish their fathers would spend more time with them, and more than a third wish their mothers would spend more time with them.

—More than one-quarter of American children - more than half of the black children - are not living with their biological fathers. Less than one-third of the children whose parents are separated or divorced see their fathers on a regular basis.

The survey was designed and sponsored by the Foundation for Child Development, a private foundation involved in research and policy affecting children. It was conducted by Temple University's Institute for Survey Research last September through December.

Survey Finds That Most Children Are Happy at Home but Fear World

By RICHARD FLASTE

Most of the nation's grammar school-age children are happy with their family lives but fearful of the world at large—two-thirds are afraid that "somebody bad" might get into their houses; a quarter are afraid that when they go outside somebody might hurt them.

These observations of happiness and fear are part of a mosaic of feelings that emerges from a survey of more than 2,200 7-to 11-year-olds and their parents released yesterday by the Foundation for Child Development, a private group that supports research and policy formulation. The survey was designed by the foundation and by Temple University's Institute for Survey Research, and the children questioned were intended to represent a cross section of 17.7 million youngsters.

Dr. Nicholas Zill, psychologist who directed the project, found the fear of violence to be the most disturbing element isclosed. He said teh children's fears did not simply grow out of their imaginations but that "the survey suggests the children have reason to be fearful."

He said "the majority of the children who say they are afraid to go outside also say that they have been bothered" by adults or children when they were playing.

Fear and TV Watching

Nearly a quarter of the children said they felt afraid of "TV programs where people fight and shoot guns," in an apparent link between TV watching and fear. And heavy watchers—four or more hours a weekday—were twice as likely to feel "scared often." However, it was not clear whether heavy watching caused the fear or was the result of being fearful about going out.

The children were chosen as part of what was described as a "national probability sample" in which they were randomly selected to represent various economic and geographic segments of society. The youngsters and their parents were interviewed in their homes, usually for more than a half-hour.

A sample question was, "How is this neighborhood as a place for kids to grow up in? Do you think it is very good, pretty good, or not so good?" Fewer than a third said "very good." Even in affluent suburbs, only 40 percent said "very good."

Changing Yourself

Some of the questions were open-ended: "If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?" The most frequent response among girls was, "My hair," which Dr. Zill sees as an indication of the power of television commercials. Boys, most frequently, wished they were taller.

At one point in the news conference, a question was raised about the validity of children's responses. Weren't they "whimsical?" Orville G. Brim, the foundation's president, bristled in responding that cildren's responses were "no more trivial than adult responses."

The survey also gave indications of childhood concerns other than fear of strangers. Although generally content with their families, and themselves, the majority of children said they felt afraid when their parents argued and were angry when they were ignored at home.

Dr. Zill said he was surprised to learn that one out of 10 children, when asked to name the person they were most afraid of, named their fathers.

Effect of Unhappy Homes

When marriages were described as "not too happy" by mothers or where the spouses had separated, the effects tended to show up in the children—for instance, such children were more likely to fight at school.

Many children desired more contact with their parents, nearly half wishing their fathers would spend more time with them and more than a third wishing their mothers would.

Among the children who fared the poorest were those born of unwanted pregnancies, nearly one child in seven. These children, who also may have been suffering social and economic deprivations, had poorer health, more accidents and more learning problems.

As might be expected, poorer children frequently seemed to be less happy. As a whole, 8 percent of the youngsters said they felt lonely " a lot." But the figure was 16 percent for blacks.

Reported No Healthier

The survey also found that although more children were seeing doctors today, their parents reported them as being no healthier than parents said their children were 10 years ago. And while more children were receiving professional emotional help than before, that did not seem to be an indication that they were more disturbed. The survey said that parents' reports of tension in their children had decreased from the level reported by parents in the mid-60's.

When the children were asked how they were rewarded and punished by their parents, a hierarchy of discipline emerged. Punishment was reported in this order of frequency: Shouting (eight out of 10), spanking (nearly two-thirds), isolation in a room (six out of 10), restricted play or television time (45 percent), ridicule (6 percent).

The majority were rewarded by praise, affection and gifts such as toys or food. Four out of 10 got money.

Dr. Zill said that the survey reinforced the belief that television violence should be checked in some "big way," not just with a "family hour or 'Sesame Street.'" He said that the Federal Communications Commisson was a "disaster area" in its regulation of television.

TViolence Up; 'Mean World' New On Index

Violence on network tv last year was at its highest level since 1967, according to an annual violence profile drawn by researchers at the Annenberg School of Communications at the U. of Pennsylvania. Chief researchers are Dr. George Gerbner and Dr. Larry Gross. The compilation, begun in 1967, is part of a study of cultural indicators backed by the Institute of Mental Health.

Gerbner and Gross are scheduled to present their findings to the House Communications Subcommittee March 2.

Leader in network depiction of violence was NBC, the study found, as it was in 1975. ABC and CBS followed in that order.

The biggest jump in violence, according to the study, was in family hour, with CBS leading the way in boosting its violence there, though ABC still had the most family hour violence. In weekend kidvid, NBC was the leader, as it was in late primetime.

The study has set up a "mean world syndrome," which it says is a collection of suspicions, fears and mistrust encouraged by tv violence. It was said that all people may be affected by the phenomenon, but children are most affected. Children, along with non-whites and women, are most likely to be victims of tv violence.

The study also found that there is less sign of "mean world syndrome" among those who watch tv for two hours a day or less as compared to those who watch for four or more, regardless of age, sex, income or education. But tv viewing habits appear not to have affected black "mean world" attitudes, with that group showing a high rate without regard to how much tv they watch.

Monte Carlo TV Festiv Has Its Eyes On

By TED CLARK

Monte Carlo, March 1.

The Monte Carlo International Television Festival (Feb. 8-19), in its 17th year, drew entries from 33 countries, as against 24 in 1976. This spurt in importance fits in well with the plans of the organizers, who are now openly talking about boosting the fest's sidebar activity as a program market, and also as a display and sales occasion for production hardware.

Target date for these commercial trimmings is February 1979, when the event will run for the first time in Monte Carlo's new convention centre, which is due for completion in the fall of next year.

This year's meeting helped to better define the nature of the Monte Carlo festival, which has now found its way between the predominance in the light entertainment field of the Golden Rose competition at Montreaux, Switzerland, and the Prix Italia prestige event for television drama.

Program quality in every category this year was high, in the opinion of jurors and critics.

The prize list included several surprises, particularly the failure of the U.S. series "Roots" to gain either an award or even a jury mention in the drama section.

Warner Bros. is currently marketing the production in European territories on a highest bidder auction basis, and the cold shoulder at Monte Carlo will have done nothing to push up offers for the David L. Wolper eight-part series.

Prince Rainier's Views

Prince Rainier of Monaco's desire that selection of programs for the Monte Carlo festival should be inspired by opposition to the spread of violence throughout the world obtains solid support from tv execs.

Francis Essex, director of production at Britain's indie ITV networks, summed up: "We support Monte Carlo because we like the ideas behind the festival. We consider it important that the Prince is making a stand against unnecessary violence on television. We approve of the encouragement given to programs dealing with the defense of nature and protection of the ecology. We like the quality of the programs shown, and we think highly of Nadia Lacoste, Louis Blanchi and the organizing committee for the way things are run."

The 15 companies that make up Britain's ITV network were heavily represented by leading executives at Monte Carl in their honor during which spoken by a written by Col piled by Fran formed.

The 50-minu narrated in F mini-masterpi sent were Bri Lumley, of t Avengers" s Waterman, Sweeny." Rob ly playing Prin ward the Sever

ITV

Brian Tesle of London We chairman of t vision Progra reckoned tha becoming one three televisio ITV would con quality occasi ly commercia

"We always prizes, which run," he adde

Monte Carl

(Contin

ABC Has 1st Shot At Future 'Roots,' Vane Tells Acad

Future spinoffs or sequels to Alex Haley's "Roots" will most likely wind up on ABC-TV, according to web v.p. and national program director Edwin T. Vane. He told *Variety* after a luncheon address last week that the network has first refusal, via "Roots" producer David Wolper, on the current Haley book-in-progress in which the author will tell how he conducted his

'Family' Renewed

ABC-TV has renewed "Family" to "afford maximum lead-in time for production," the web said.

The Mike Nichols, Spelling-Goldberg hour series starring Sada Thompson and James Broderick has been number one in its 10-11 p.m. time slot against CBS' "Kojak" and NBC's "Police Story," with a consistent 33 share. Overall it ranks in the middle thirties of primetime shows. This month, the series will take a rest while ABC tests "Westside Medical" for a possible schedule berth next season.

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By D.

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Study Made in 7 to 11 Bracket

Many Children Said to Live With Fear While at Play

NEW YORK (UPI) — Many American children live in fear — especially when they go outside to play, the Foundation for Child Development reports.

Dr. Nicholas Zill, senior staff scientist at the foundation, said yesterday a survey in which children were given a chance to speak for themselves, showed one-quarter are afraid someone will hurt them when they go out to play.

The survey, conducted for the foundation by Temple University's Institute for Survey Researrch, involved 2,200 children aged 7 to 11. Zill said this was a scientifically selected national sample representing 17.7 million children.

PARENTS ALSO were interviewed in an attempt to develop a national profile of the way children live and the care they receive.

More than two-thirds of the sample, representing more than 11.7 million, feel afraid also "that somebody bad might get into my house." And more than half the youngsters living with both parents said they feel afraid when their parents have arguments.

Other highlights of Zill's report:

• The vast majority of children are happy about their families but nearly half wish their dads would spend more time with them.

• More than half the children said they are allowed to watch television when they want to. More than a third said they are allowed to watch whatever they want.

• More than a quarter said they are allowed to have snacks and eat whatever they want. About one quarter said their mothers made them follow rules "just some of the time" or "hardly ever."

• More than two-thirds think their parents treat them "more like grown-ups" than "like a baby."

THE INFLUENCE of television showed when the children were asked: "Tell me the name of the person you would most want to be like." They responded with a person or character they had seen on television.

Twenty-eight percent named performers including Cher, Marie Osmond and Elvis Presley. After the entertainers came the athletes. Thirteen percent named persons such as O.J. Simpson and Muhammad Ali.

Less than 7 percent of the children chose as a model a U.S. political figure — predominantly George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Less than 2 percent picked an artist, writer, scientist or physician as a hero.

The Evening Bulletin Thursday, March 3, 1977

TV Gore Seen Still on Rise

BULLETIN MAR 3 1977

By JERRY T. BAULCH

Washington (AP) — George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, told a Congressional panel yesterday that TV violence has increased "in all categories including 'family viewing' and children's program time on all three networks."

Gerbner was the leadoff witness in a hearing by the House communications subcommittee to find out what can be done to curb TV violence. Industry officials were asked to express their views.

Richard E. Wiley, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, said it was "disheartening and disturbing" to learn from Gerbner's newest annual report that despite steps the broadcasters have taken, TV violence is not decreasing.

But Wiley said he still believes it would not be "desirable or appropriate to substitute government censorship for our system of private broadcasting, whatever its human failings and weaknesses."

THE SUBCOMMITTEE was told by Vincent T. Wasilewski, president of the National Association of Broadcasters, and Wilson C. Wearn, president of Multimedia Inc. and chairman of the NAB's Joint Radio and Television Board, that they will work to reduce TV violence to an acceptable level.

Both said that violence will not disappear from the TV screen because it is a part of life, and to remove it would warp that view.

Gerbner said all three networks increased televised violence in 1976 but stayed in the same order of rank as in 1975, with NBC the highest in violent content, ABC second and CBS third.

JOHN A. SCHNEIDER president of the CBS-Broadcast Group, presented a different picture than Gerbner's study.

"Our monitoring," he said, "clearly demonstrates a decline in the number of incidents of violence in CBS prime time, dramatic programming. For the last fall season —1975-76 — there was a 36 percent decline in the number of such incidents over the previous season.

"Our preliminary figures for this season show that we have maintained this same low level."

Robert T. Howard, president of NBC television network, said NBC expects to reduce the number of hard-action shows from its prime-time schedule and will continue to evaluate all programs.

Frederick S. Pierce, president of ABC television, outlined what his network is doing to eliminate violence, but said it will not disappear altogether. He cited the case of ABC's successful showing of "Roots" and said it would have been impossible to depict slavery without portrayals of violence.

T.V. Violence Spurs Fear, Gerbner Tells Congress

Special to the Daily Pennsylvanian

WASHINGTON–Television violence is at its highest level since 1967 and people who view much television drama display a more intense sense of "personal risk" than others who don't watch as much TV, Annenberg School of Communications Dean George Gerbner told a House subcommitte probing sex and violence in television here Wednesday.

Gerbner testified as the lead-off witness in a day-long hearing held by the House Subcommittee on Communications, chaired by Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Cal.). The subcommittee is exploring the impact of violence and sex on the social behavior of television viewers, with an eye toward possible changes in communications legislation or regulation.

The Annenberg study on which Gerbner reported was based on an examination of violent acts in dramatic programs on the three commercial networks during the fall of 1976. It was the latest in a series of similar studies conducted by Gerbner, Annenberg professor Larry Gross and other associates on the Annenberg faculty.

The study found that 90 percent of the programs sampled contained violent acts, up from 80 percent in a similar study in 1975. Murders in television drama declined slightly from the 1975 study, however Gerbner reported.

The portrayal of violence on television, Gerbner told the committee, creates an "iniquitous social hierarchy" in which white men are most often the perpetrators of violence, while children, women, lower-class persons and blacks are disproportionately represented among the victims of aggressive acts.

One hundred percent of the children's cartoons surveyed contained acts of violence, Gerbner said. He added this situation presents a particular cause for concern since children become "more imbued" with a view of reality created by television than do adults.

Questioned as to whether violence in cartoons had as serious an impact as violence in legitimate drama, Gerbner said Annenberg researchers were "satisfied that humor is a most effective way of conveying a message."

In late 1974, the television industry responded to studies by Gerbner and other evidence of the dangerous social impacts of television violence by establishing the Family Viewing Hour.

(Continued on page 7)

March 3, 1977

cooperative programs "are the best

the best of our knowledge what

Annenberg

(Continued from page 1)

Under this concept, the networks agreed to abide by a code established by the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), which dictated that only programs suitable for viewing by children would be shown between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M.

Last fall, U.S. District Court Judge Warren Ferguson in Los Angeles ruled that the establishment of the Family Viewing concept was unconstitutional.

Pressure exerted upon the networks and the National Association of Broadcasters by Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Richard Wiley, Ferguson ruled, constituted government participation in the regulation of program content in violation of the First Ammendment's guarantee of Freedom of the Press. The FCC is now appealing the decision.

Pressed by Rep. Louis Frey (R-Fla.) to take a position on the constitutionality of federal regulation of programming, Gerbner demurred, saying he was appearing before the committee "only as a researcher."

However, he said the data in the Annenberg study do not indicate that the Family Viewing Hour has had any particular remedial effects. Television has "a powerful formative effect," Gerbner said. "It cultivates a set of assumptions about the world."

Gerbner reported, however, that changes in programming policy do seem to be followed by changes in social behavior.

U.S. researcher says: Ottawa Citizen, March 3rd

TV violence 'rising sharply'

TELEVISION

WASHINGTON (AP) — Broadcast executives testified Wednesday that they are working hard to reduce violence depicted on television but a noted researcher on the subject said TV violence has increased sharply.

George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, said TV violence has increased "in all categories including 'family viewing' and children's program time on all three networks."

Gerbner was the leadoff witness in a hearing by the House of Representatives communications subcommittee to find out what can be done to curb TV violence. Industry officials were asked to express their views.

'Disturbing' news

Richard Wiley, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), said it is "disheartening and disturbing" to learn from Gerbner's newest annual report that TV violence is not decreasing despite steps the broadcasters have taken.

But Wiley said he still believes it would not be "desirable or appropriate to substitute government censorship for our system of private broadcasting, whatever its human failings and weaknesses."

The subcommittee was told by Vincent Wasilewski, president of the National Association of Broadcasters, and Wilson Wearn, president of Multimedia Inc. and chairman of the NAB's Joint Radio and Television Board, that they will work to reduce TV violence to an acceptable level.

Both of them said that violence will not disappear from the TV screen because it is a part of life and to remove it would warp that view.

Several of the witnesses—including Wiley and executives of NBC, CBS and ABC—said parents must have a role in monitoring what their children see and cannot delegate this reponsibility entirely to broadcasters.

Picture differs

Gerbner said all three networks increased TV violence in 1976 but stayed in the same order of rank as in 1975 with NBC the highest in violent content, ABC second and CBS third.

John Schneider, president of the CBS Broadcast Group, presented a different picture than Gerbner's study.

"Our monitoring," he said, "clearly demonstrates a decline in the number of incidents of violence in CBS prime time, dramatic programming. For the last fall season—1975-76—there was a 36-per-cent decline in the number of such incidents over the previous season.

"Our preliminary figures for this season show that we have maintained this same low level."

MUTUAL

MAR 3 1977

THE SUN
Baltimore, Md.
AM-187,500
S-350,000

TV's most violent year was '76, House panel told

By MURIEL DOBBIN
Washington Bureau of The Sun

Washington—More violence exploded on American television screens in 1976 than in any previous year, increasing the danger of warping the minds of young watchers, a communications expert told a congressional committee yesterday.

The testimony of Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, pinpointed a key concern in a House subcommittee's probe of the tide of sex and violence engulfing the nation's television viewers.

Executives of the three major networks, NBC, CBS and ABC, found themselves defending their programs against charges of teaching and glorifying violence, while a congressman proposed legislation aimed at reducing their monopoly of the airwaves.

"Instead of teaching youngsters to handle problem situations by using their intellect, television incessantly shows them how to punch, kick or shoot their way out," asserted Representative John M. Murphy (D., N.Y.), ranking majority member of the House communications subcommittee.

If the networks do not co-operate by toning down their "use of 'hype' in the frantic search for higher ratings," said Mr. Murphy, he would urge governmental action in the form of a bill promoting competition to remove the current stranglehold of the trio of television giants.

Richard Wiley, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, stressed his agreement that there was a problem, especially with children exposed to violent shows. But he warned that the committee was treading in an area where "government regulation is neither feasible, desirable, nor constitutionally appropriate."

Mr. Wiley termed "disturbing and disheartening" Dr. Gerbner's findings that television violence had increased sharply in all categories on all networks, with NBC leading the field, followed by ABC and CBS.

Other sounds of protest came from the American Medical Association, represented by Dr. Robert L. Stubblefield, a psychiatrist who said the accelerating violence was especially alarming since only three years ago, network executives had assured another congressional subcommittee that the situation would improve.

Richard M. Powell, chairman of the family viewing hour committee of the Writers' Guild of America, commented that the networks had "reformed more times than Huck Finn's father."

"Business is great—what's the problem?" was the network attitude, according to Mr. Powell, who accused television of "the great sin of triviality, of profitable mindlessness."

"Television has become, for better or worse, our culture. Its potential for good and for harm is immense," he warned. Mr. Powell predicted that violence on television would continue—"as long as we permit programing in the public interest to be entirely subordinated to the selling of soap."

On the other side of the fence, Vincent T. Wasilewski, president of the National Association of Broadcasters, backed by an array of television executives, promised that the ways of the networks were changing, and that violence would be "reduced, if not eliminated."