TV GUIDE

Sex and Violence:

HOLLYWOOD FIGHTS BACK

In an emotion-packed round-table discussion, some of TV's most successful producers explain why they fear 'a dangerous new climate of repression'

It may seem that by now all the evidence has been presented in the trial of television violence, and that the jury of well-informed citizens and lawmakers stands ready to pronounce the defendant innocent or guilty of contributing to the decay of society. After all, a raft of articles retailing the dangerous effects of TV violence has filled the pages of magazines and journals recently, and influential groups have widely publicized their stands against it. But many of those responsible for that very violence—the major Hollywood producers of TV shows—feel the case is far from closed. In fact, they feel so strongly that their side of the issue has not been fully considered that one of them, David Gerber, challenged TV GUIDE to do so.

We accepted. And so, at Gerber's instigation, four TV GUIDE editors met with five of the top television producers in a private dining room of a Hollywood restaurant and, lingering long after coffee, discussed the position taken by the television community. Taking part were: David Gerber, whose series include Police Story *and* Police Woman; *Frank Price, president of Universal Television, the studio that produces more TV programs than any other, including such crime shows as* Baretta *and* Kojak; *Aaron Spelling, co-president of Spelling-Goldberg Productions, noted for* Starsky & Hutch, Charlie's Angels, S.W.A.T. *and* The Rookies, *as well as* Family; *Grant Tinker, president of MTM,*

Reprinted from the August 27, 1977 issue of TV Guide magazine.

Five Hollywood producers face their TV GUIDE questioners across a table: (l.-r.) Aaron Spelling, David Wolper, Frank Price, Grant Tinker and David Gerber.

which in addition to such comedies as The Mary Tyler Moore Show, *produces made-for-TV movies and dramatic series; and David Wolper, executive producer of* Roots, Chico and the Man, *and many documentaries. Representing TV GUIDE were Merrill Panitt, editorial director; Roger Youman, executive editor; Neil Hickey, New York bureau chief; and Dwight Whitney, Hollywood bureau chief.*

Since our purpose was to encourage these major TV-industry figures to express their views fully and freely, TV GUIDE occasionally found itself playing the role of devil's advocate, asking provocative questions in order to draw the participants out. The main points made during the discussion follow.

TVG: Is there a name for your group?

GERBER: No, actually so far everything's been temporary. Originally the NAB [National Association of Broadcasters] Code Board decided to solicit our ideas about the pressure groups and TV violence. We were so interested in the subject matter that we kept meeting for rap sessions. Our thought was to contact influential citizen committees and pressure groups through the NAB when we were ready to bring our own story to these various groups. You notice that in Washington, in most cases the networks speak for us.

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TVG: Do they speak for you?

GERBER: They speak for the industry we're a part of, but we don't think they really represent us in total. We have not been invited to participate as much as we'd like. We went over this in our meetings—how to reach these concerned groups on our own. Individually, all of us here have met with groups around the country trying to get our message across.

TVG: Do you mean the AMA and the PTA?

GERBER: Some of us have met with various groups, including the PTA. Although we were acting as individuals, we represent a common worry about the pressure groups. At the moment we feel we have lost the violence battle. We feel the networks have thrown in the towel because of their own fears of FCC licensing authority, Congressional investigations, pressure groups and pressure from advertisers.

TVG: How have they thrown in the towel?

GERBER: By going to Washington and stating that television is better because they have gotten rid of so many action shows. The networks are acquiescent to these groups: they want to just keep their profits coming in.

TVG: Have the networks cut down on the number of action shows and also issued instructions for the action shows that remain to be less violent?

GERBER: I don't think they've issued instructions. What we do know is that police shows are off. Any realistic shows are off. Now they're looking for fantasy, escapism and good comedy. We could still do some honest comedies, but our worry is, now that we have lost the battle on violence, next will be sex. They're now looking to see how we're dealing with sex in comedies and mature family dramas.

TVG: You mean the pressure groups?

SPELLING: Yes. Our fear is, if they go after these things in series, they will then go after the miniseries. I think they've already killed the weekly series in terms of any kind of realistic drama. If they go after miniseries, then they go after long forms, and then they go after news. In fact, we were there at the PTA meeting when they worried about how to depict violence on the news. But the mass audience does not seem to be in concert with what the pressure groups claim.

TVG: The genesis of this era of television was the Family Viewing Time doctrine that came down from CBS, and was taken up quickly by the other two networks. What about Family Viewing Time—do you feel it infringes upon people's rights, and if so, whose?

TINKER: I think any general imposition of rules probably would abridge the rights of everyone—the people who make programs, as well as the people who watch programs.

TVG: We assume you don't disagree with the widely accepted idea that certain steps should be taken to protect children from being exposed to certain kinds of programs.

TINKER: I have no problem with that.

TVG: Family Viewing Time was imposed, theoretically, so that programs that might not be suitable for children could be shown in later time periods.

TINKER: Yes, but we all know that was hokey as hell, because a program that was right in New York at 9 P.M. Eastern Time was wrong in Chicago, where it was 8 P.M. Central Time. It was a totally artificial imposition of rules. What I look at as better rules are those that are hammered out on a case-by-case basis between people of good intent and producer and network working together, and I think that has worked fairly well over the years. There will be the occasional mistake. "Born Innocent," I guess, is the classic example. [The made-for-TV movie about life in a female juvenile-detention home contained a highly controversial, graphic rape scene—Ed.] But the fact that shows like "Born Innocent" are as rare as they are is the proof to me that the system that we had—give-and-take,

program-by-program review—really does work, in contrast to some law that everybody adopts.

TVG: Nevertheless, there are many who feel that Family Viewing Time defines for them what they will be presented with before a certain hour, and that is helpful in guarding . . .

TINKER: That's exactly the kind of McCarthyism that we deplore. Who says it's helpful? I'm not saying that. There's a knob on the set. Violence is there, it's on the 6 o'clock news. It's there at 4 in the afternoon if you look at reruns on the independent channels, so who is saying that it shouldn't be on from 8 to 9, when it's on at 4, it's on at 6.

TVG: There is a knob on the set, but a parent does not know necessarily before he gets into a program, what he's going to see.

TINKER: I don't want to take us off the hook entirely. You're absolutely right, and I don't believe that just anything goes. But I think that there are well-intentioned people at the networks and among the producers, and I think that our system of program-by-program review works better than some artificially imposed edict.

WOLPER: OK. Have your family hour from 8 to 9, let's assume that. But now they say we've got too much violence and sex from 9 to 11, too.

TVG: Well, why do you think this has happened? Don't you think that there is a substantially large segment of the population that *is* concerned about too much violence on television?

WOLPER: Or is it the effect of what people are *writing* about violence? Is it the total effect of violence on TV or is it the PTA and the AMA *saying* that people see so much violence that causes more violence in society?

TVG: You think people are reacting to what they are reading and hearing rather than to the programs themselves?

WOLPER: Absolutely. It is my opinion that toning down violence is making violence seem not as horrible as it really is. They are sanitizing violence. For example, in *Roots* I kept saying the slaves have to be hit with whips, because that's really what happened. And the more violence there is, and the more repulsive it is, the more these people will feel the horror of what it was really like. Now, under the new rules, I don't know if *Roots* could be made the same way today.

GRANT TINKER: "There are well-intentioned people at the networks and among the producers, and I think that our system of program-by-program review works better than some artificially imposed edict."

TVG: What rules?

WOLPER: Under the new attitudes and pressure, I'm not sure whether I will be able to have the same violence we had in *Roots* in my next series, a continuation of *Roots*.

TVG: When was the last time anybody here recalls hearing from a network that you should increase the action level of a series?

GERBER: The interpretation of action has always been the basic problem. I don't have a violent show in *Police*

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AARON SPELLING: "I have a terrible fear that the time will come when any of us who have ever been connected with a police show will be in front of a McCarthy committee."

Story. I have violent elements within that show, because the scripts are reality-based. Instead of calling them violent, we should call them realistic.

My interpretation of action is a good, fast, well-paced escapist kind of show that people enjoy and that does nothing detrimental or destructive to society. If the networks ask for action because it's a slow show, they're probably right. They're not saying to us, show the wounds, show breasts or have sustained brutality. That is *nonsense*.

SPELLING: You asked if the people were being inflamed by what they now read about violence. You at TV GUIDE have given them a lot to read about violence, and that's OK, but I think that when you begin to make us look like we're irresponsible and we don't care, that's inflammatory. One of these articles in three places only talks about the money that all of us gain. I think that what you've done is put on us the attitude of liking violence and this is misleading. Here's what bothers me. There is a hysteria going on in this country. A powerful magazine is throwing fuel on it—it's like giving alcohol to an alcoholic. We producers will take care of our own shop. But I think that to depict us personally as people who are not interested in anything except making money . . . I have a terrible fear that the time will come when any of us who have ever been connected with a police show will be in front of a McCarthy committee.

I tell you the industry is slowing down the violence to a degree that is dangerous. I think that we are going to be faced with plastic television that's going to breed a plastic society. We're going too far.

PRICE: I think the networks went too far by programming too many cop shows. They spread them 9 to 11, seven nights a week and that was dumb.

SPELLING: Right. When they really came down on us this year, you would have thought everybody at the networks was a knight in shining armor, saying take out all the violence. When I asked them to define violence, I asked if breaking a pencil were an act of violence. And they said yes! I get a Dear John letter and I take my girl friend's picture and I throw it on the floor. Is this an act of violence? Yes, that's destroying property. Gentlemen, we're going down the wrong path here. You know, we got our first letter about the violence on *Charlie's Angels*, *one* letter, and that was two weeks ago and it's all part of this whole syndrome.

GERBER: I believe that's true. But forgetting about violence, I also believe that police shows were about to reach their peak. Their popularity was down.

SPELLING: That's why we must be able to regulate our own industry. And our own industry, in a strange way, does regulate itself. In the '50s, the only thing we were writing was Westerns. There was such a plethora of Westerns that they went dead. In the same way, police shows had reached their peak, no doubt about it. Every

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new police show was really a new version of an old police show, and it was terrible. I think that the limit of police shows was reached with a show that I did, that I was not proud of, called *S.W.A.T.* After that—well, we couldn't go any further with them, and so they began to die rapidly. The good ones remained just like the good Westerns always remained. *The Virginian*, *Wagon Train* went on years after the others were off the air. You know, I think the same thing will happen—and was already happening, in fact—with police shows. But this situation we've got now is forcing the networks to throw out the baby with the bath water, to get rid of all police shows. And there's more to it than that. When you look at that schedule this year, fellas, you know that if we're not doing comedy then we've gotta do only series about people who have eight children. You know, the new one will be eight children living on the beach and then eight children living in a skiing area.

GERBER: Soap opera, too—soap opera in Hawaii, in Alaska, on an Army base, soap opera wherever. Or we have to come up with fantasies that are derivative of *Charlie's Angels*—a tongue-in-cheek, fun-crime kind of thing. Or perhaps one-hour comedies or science fiction.

The network people have been pushed so far back into the womb, we're now doing remakes of safe, tried-and-true formats. We are facing this very stultified atmosphere.

TVG: Because networks won't accept a new idea? They want everything to be a copy of something else?

GERBER: Yes. What do you think *Family* was? What do you think *Police Story* was? We have all tried new things and sometimes they work. The miniseries that Frank Price put on, *Captains and the Kings*, is a new thing. He gambled with *Testimony of Two Men* on the "fourth network." We've *all* tried new things.

TVG: Won't the networks accept them?

GERBER: No, at the moment the networks want a tried-and-true formula. Profits and business as usual. Do not rock the boat, they say, we don't want Congress investigating.

TVG: You mean violence and sex?

GERBER: Yes, rocking the boat means violence and sex, and that leads to violence and sex investigations, so you can't do reality drama.

PRICE: Actually, anything that anybody's protesting becomes controversial, and therefore the networks prefer to get rid of it.

SPELLING: Next will be no kids with green hair and no Catholics, no Jews—

WOLPER: When are they going to say you can't do *Roots*? That's what I think the question is.

SPELLING: This year you couldn't do *Roots* and you know it.

WOLPER: Who is going to make the rules of when you can have violence and when you can't? Who's gonna decide this—the PTA, the AMA, the network? Who's gonna say it's OK to have *Roots*, but not *Starsky & Hutch*, it's OK to have one of these, but not this—who's that gonna be?

TVG: Doesn't public opinion say that the violence in a show like *Roots*—which is not considered gratuitous—is acceptable, but we will no longer accept so many shows with people shooting and punching each other for no apparently constructive reason?

WOLPER: Well, it's nice now that *Roots* has been on and you know what *Roots* is. But at that time we had not been into the violence area with the PTA and the AMA and everybody else. I can tell you now that if I were doing *Roots* today, I could not do the same show I did a year and a half ago for network television.

GERBER: I'm doing a summer rerun gimmick—the best of *Police Story*, going back three, four years. We found that I had to cancel a few episodes that were OK before but aren't acceptable now. What are you gonna do? Who is gonna judge what shows we

can do and what shows we can't?

PRICE: Aaron, don't you shoot anyone, so David can shoot two people on *Police Story*.

SPELLING: And you keep saying that the people want this, but I have yet to see a real example of that mass of people writing in.

TVG: If it's not the people, who is it then? The pressure groups?

TINKER: Of course it's the pressure groups, because the people are the 61-per-cent share of audience that he's getting for *Starsky & Hutch*. Who can deny them that choice? This is the danger that I see, and I don't understand why you guys don't see the McCarthy analogy.

PRICE: You don't realize what has happened. Last year it was family hour. Now we're talking about 9-to-11 sex and violence. Next year they'll be saying they don't like fantasy because some report says it makes kids fantasize. And three years from now we'll be talking about something else. Step by step, the pressure groups are eroding television. And the networks don't give a damn because they're gonna sell the advertising time anyway.

TVG: The point is that the Family Viewing Time was brought about by an existing situation.

PRICE: I think most of us believe that the right way for television to operate is for the audience to be able to make its own choices. There's a heavy filtering process that goes on before those programs get on the air. But once they're on the air, if it's *Starsky & Hutch* that someone wants to watch, I frankly believe that person has the right to watch it, and that my job in supplying a program to another network is to try to come up with something that more people will want to watch than *Starsky & Hutch*. I think there is a free marketplace that potentially can operate. The problem, I think, came about when there were too many cop shows competing.

Now, I believe there's always room for a good cop show. I think *Starsky & Hutch* and *Police Story* have been good shows. I believe *Kojak* and *Baretta* have been good shows. We've got the Emmys to prove it. And I don't believe in running these shows through some censorship sieve so that they become pap.

DAVID WOLPER: "If I were doing *Roots* today, I could not do the same show I did a year and a half ago for network television."

Now, all of these shows are being hit with this violence issue. They're not even talking about gratuitous violence or excessive violence. I think if you study television week by week and look for gratuitous or excessive violence, you'll have a hard time finding it. It depends what your definition is. My definition depends on the show. I can see some violent act that I think is in perfectly good taste. The show that Grant referred to earlier, "Born Innocent," had a specific scene where I think terrible taste was used. But the alternative to having a mistake like that made once in a while is to get that sieve going so that you never try anything that you could be criticized for.

TVG: There are two facts, it seems to us, that account for everything. Many public surveys indicate a huge per

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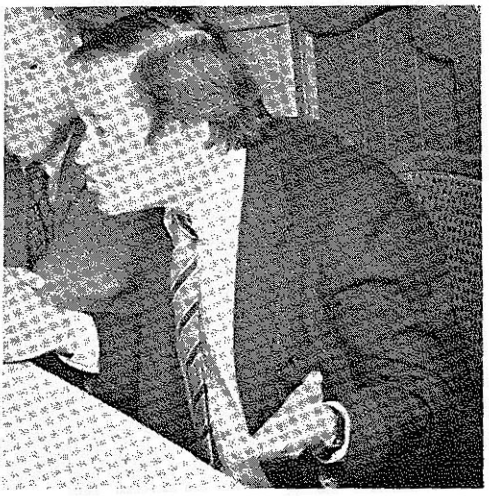


FRANK PRICE: "We're talking about a lot of very subjective judgments —judgments that show that *The Carol Burnett Show* has a higher violence rating than *Once an Eagle*, which covers the World Wars. Now that's ridiculous."

cent of the public is indeed concerned or outraged about televised violence. Second, every index says that violence has increased enormously in the past 10 years on television.

PRICE: I don't think either of those is a fact. I'm sure if you ask people in a general sense about violence on television, they'll be against it—except to watch. Now I would propose a simple answer to that. A more objective way of handling it would be to have a card in front of *Starsky & Hutch* or *Police Story* or *Baretta*, asking the viewer to write in and express his thoughts on that particular show. Remember, we're talking about shows that are very popular. I think sometimes opinion polls are very deceptive, because they really don't deal with the specifics, but ask general questions, like, "What do you think of violence?" Now, with regard to Gerbner [Dean George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, whose methods of counting TV violence and theories about its negative impact have been widely publicized—Ed.], we're dealing with a social scientist, and you cannot transfer the methods of the physical sciences into social science. We're talking about a lot of very subjective judgments—judgments that show that *The Carol Burnett Show* has a higher violence rating than *Once an Eagle*, which covers the World Wars. Now that's ridiculous.

TVG: As a social scientist, Gerbner's thesis is that one of the most effective ways to teach violence is with humor.

PRICE: Well, I disagree totally.

TVG: All the measurements we see report that televised violence is up enormously in the past five years.

WOLPER: Well, now let me tell you what else is up. I can list a lot of changes in 10 years. We're probably living in a more violent society. Somebody may say that the number of dope stories on TV is up in the last 10 years. Well, I guess 10 years ago there were fewer incidents to talk about.

PRICE: I have a great lab experiment I'd like to propose. During a good, long, hot summer, take a few of the major cities like New York or Detroit and eliminate every action program on the air. I wonder whether violence would go up in those communities. I'd like to hear from them—do they want *Starsky & Hutch* taken off the air?

SPELLING: The ratings answer that. It's been number five or six in the ratings. That means 18 million homes are looking at it.

TVG: We're getting away from something that we think is important: what's your position on the effects of violence on its viewers?

GERBER: We don't think television violence has any appreciable bad effect on the American public. But we're also asking who has the right to interpret violence and on what basis?

TVG: It's the responsibility of the networks to make such judgments. And those judgments get passed on to you.

GERBER: You're talking about an industry that is vulnerable to criticism. To this day two or four letters complaining about a show would disturb sponsors and even networks, even though maybe 30 million people are watching it. This system is based upon fear and the making of profits. These groups come along and exert pressures on the networks, who have affiliates with licenses that periodically come up for renewal. So as not to get themselves in trouble with Congressional investigations, they then accede to the pressure groups. They then force us to come up with the kind of programming that is against our very nature as responsible producers.

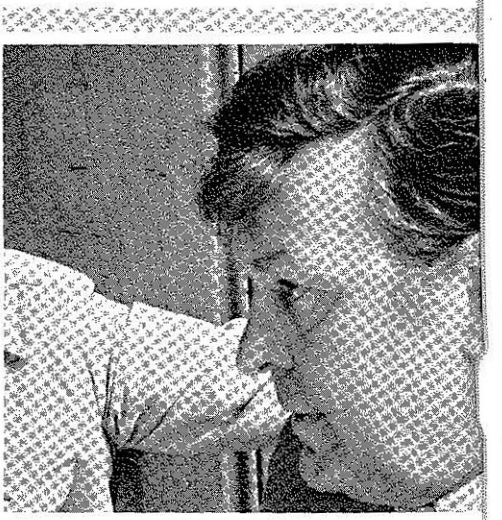
We're talking about creative integrity being stifled. Police shows are dying without the pressure groups. The Western died that way too. I'm suggesting that the cure is worse than the disease. So we're not just talking about violence and sex, we're talking about a climate of repression. It's already around us; it's already stifling us. Where does it go from there?

TVG: The pendulum has swung too far, but you created that problem.

TINKER: OK, that's exactly right. But Dave said it very well: the cure that is being suggested, as opposed to a natural evolutionary cure, is worse than the sickness. One of the things that hasn't been mentioned here tonight is that we've all got shows we're ashamed of, possibly because they were too violent, too permissive, possibly just because they stank creatively.

PRICE: That's what we should be attacked for.

TINKER: It's unfortunate that this violence uproar is one of those things that takes our eyes off the ball. We should be concentrating on making better shows. This kind of distraction is really injurious to the welfare of the medium. It's not constructive that all these groups are so preoccupied with an unnatural imposition of rules.



DAVID GERBER: "We're not just talking about violence and sex, we're talking about a climate of repression. It's already around us, it's already stifling us. Where does it go from there?"

TVG: Of course, one of their points is that television is a pervasive and powerful medium, and if it can sell toothpaste and cars, then by constant repetition of violence it can sell that too.

PRICE: You know that this kind of attack, however, has generally taken place against whatever the popular entertainment form of the time was. It was true with regard to the comic books. They were going to destroy the population. It goes back to the movies, which were under attack in the '20s. The dime novels of the 1890s were attacked because children were reading about Western outlaws, and so they would all turn into them. You go back to Euripides, who was driven out of Athens for corrupting the youth with his plays.

Somehow various well-meaning groups have a fear that the depiction of one

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thing or another is going to corrupt society. I happen to believe that the freer the means of expression and communication, the better off the society is. I believe, in general, in the good taste of the public. It knows to put aside those things that are worthless and to hold on to what's of value. The only way I know for those things to get freely into the marketplace is to have as few restrictions as possible.

GERBER: We have in television provocative and delicate subject matter —vasectomies, internal disease, how one lives with death and so forth. We want to continue doing them. I say television does have a lot of good going for it, despite the impurities, and we don't want to see that cut off.

TVG: We've heard you talk about your "rights as creative artists" and about the good you're attempting to do. But when it comes right down to it, isn't what you're trying to protect your ability to make money out of television?

PRICE: May I answer that very simply? All of us have been in television quite a while. We're professionals. We ultimately can make any kind of a show that we're allowed to make and that will be reasonably profitable. So I don't think we're defending violence on the basis of economic interests here. We all have the reputations, the backgrounds and the ability to sell programs to any of the three networks and to any independent station. Whether we do violent shows, comedy shows, quiz shows or anything else, we can all succeed. We're here fighting for a cause, not to make money.

I think the real question is: what is our basic intent? We are trying to do good shows. It is not a matter of injecting some violence to get higher ratings.

TVG: Has that ever happened?

PRICE: Not to my knowledge. I don't think it would work. I think if the subject matter requires an honest depiction of violence, that is what's done. If it doesn't require that, it's not done. I believe that's the way it should be. I think when you get too many artificial pressures in that mix, it becomes harder to do the good shows.

TVG: What would you advise the PTA to do?

PRICE: Not what they're doing. The PTA has discovered how you control television, that there are two sensitive points: the local station owner and the advertiser. If they don't like something on television, they write a letter to the local station owner that will go into his file for license renewal. They also send copies of that letter to the advertiser and to the FCC. They've realized that all those people are nervous. The station wants its license renewed, the advertiser just wants to sell his product. All of these PTA people are being trained in these techniques.

Now, I see something that is quite frightening, because the more of that pressure you have, the less freedom there will be in television. Ultimately, if you're afraid of offending anybody, you make something that pleases nobody. Naturally, the PTA is not just concerned with violence, they will be concerned with sex too. Whatever comes up, the letters will start pouring in. That will affect the network censors, then us and we will find ourselves trying to make shows under increasingly greater restrictions. Nobody will benefit from that.

GERBER: I'm not happy with this situation, but I am worried about a larger thing. I'm worried about all the energy put into the idea that television has such an impact on society, causing unrest that leads to violence. That is not the case. We have so many problems in our country today—the energy crisis, civil rights, homosexual problems and rights, the busing problem. I'd like to see that energy put into those problems. I'm afraid that by making telesion a scapegoat, we're missing the opportunity to get together and concentrate on the important things that affect all our lives.

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When these social scientists ask people if they like violence, do they really expect anybody to say yes, we love violence? And that's not the only weak spot in these social-science theories. Gerbner himself has said that we put on violent shows because they cost less. Do you know how much it costs us to put on any kind of action show, do you know about the doubles, the stuntmen, the smashing of cars, the shooting of guns? So this kind of inaccurate statement worries us. We are saying that television is doing a lot that is positive. But it's being used as a scapegoat by a lot of pressure groups who don't take into consideration the mass audience.

PRICE: The reason the antiviolence campaigns are having such an effect now is because the advertising agencies, sponsors and networks don't want to make waves. Now, why should General Motors back "Jesus of Nazareth" if it's going to create some waves? They're better off without it. The networks don't want waves made either. They don't need *Starsky & Hutch* on if it becomes controversial. They'll put on some variety show instead, and they'll still sell the advertising minutes. They'll do very well. The people who get hurt in this kind of thing, I believe, are the creators and the audience, because they don't get a choice in the matter.

TVG: What's the solution?

PRICE: I don't see an immediate solution. I'm looking toward the future here. I don't think anyone sitting at this table wants gratuitous violence on the air. I think that we do want a climate, though, where we can do shows we believe have quality. Lee Rich has *The Waltons*, and he also did "Helter Skelter." I thought they did a marvelous job with that. I can tell you this, he needn't bother proposing that show today. The mere title would frighten everyone in the business. I believe that is wrong.

TVG: Then what do you consider the ideal situation to be?

TINKER: I think the ideal situation is a natural mix dictated by audience reaction, responsible production and even distribution by the networks. And I think that also means responsibility on the part of critics.

TVG: Are you against the pressure groups, or the networks for giving in to the pressure groups?

PRICE: I think there's a whole climate we're talking about. The pressure groups, and also the social scientists, have certainly contributed to it. In spite of the fact they have been unable to prove any connection between TV violence and real violence, there's a tendency just to assume that there is such a connection, and therefore no child should view the thousands of murders a year that are on television.

TVG: Do you all agree with the Surgeon General's conclusion: "The overwhelming consensus [is] that televised violence does have an adverse effect on certain members of society . . . sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. These conclusions are based on solid scientific data and not on the opinion of one or another scientist"?

GERBER: That quote was backed by another one. It said that children who show aggressive tendencies can *possibly* be motivated by aggressive situations on TV, but if so, they already have a bent for it. Nobody wants to talk about that.

PRICE: Do you think the same statement could be made about literature?

TVG: Yes.

PRICE: Should we now have a Government censorship board for that?

TVG: Not necessarily. But certain steps should be taken by individual citizens. You and I as parents—don't we take certain remedial steps to guide our children? Television is such a limited thing. There are only three networks and they represent their opinions. You've got to give the public a chance to be heard.

PRICE: Who's going to decide what's violence and what's not?

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As far as violence goes, it's ridiculous to talk about TV. Violence exists when a society is corrosive, when there is no fulfillment in that society or no attention in that society to natural demands to live with dignity. What these pressure groups are saying is that we are corroding the youth of the Nation, the same Nation that rebelled against Vietnam, which was really born and spawned through violence. The PTA stand on TV violence is ludicrous.

I asked them where were you on the busing issue? Where are you in terms of protecting the teachers in the ghettos? What are you doing to help youngsters learn to read? And there are bigger issues. Where is the AMA on the Medicare scandal? Where are they on the real issue of people getting bled? Lower- and middle-income people can't afford to be sick. Where are they on great issues of this Nation? I am scared some of these groups use the TV violence issue as an excuse, subconsciously and consciously, for avoiding the great issues that face this country.

PRICE: Look through the history of popular entertainment and you'll see that the action forms have been very popular. People have always wanted something with some excitement and action to it. It's very difficult to tell stories like that without some legitimate violence in them. And I believe that people seek out exciting, popular entertainment for very good psychological reasons. By watching a *Police Story* you are involved in violence vicariously and perhaps experience some therapeutic reaction. I think that's a theory that some social scientists would support. We are jumping to the conclusion that the portrayal of violence is bad. I believe that interpretation will change.

WOLPER: Start with one group criticizing violence, and soon they're gonna be criticizing thing after thing, and in two years we're gonna be wondering why TV is full of nothing. The answer will be because two years ago we let a bunch of people who knew nothing get control of what we were doing.

TVG: But two years ago you had too much violence.

PRICE: I don't think it was too much violence.

TVG: Too many cop shows, then.

PRICE: OK, too many cop shows.

GERBER: But now we're concerned that we're being put into a corner, with no flexibility at all.

TVG: I repeat that you aren't considering the Surgeon General's report.

GERBER: We agree we have a problem, but we think things have gone too far. That's all we're saying.

PRICE: If we accept the premise of the Surgeon General's report, the logical conclusion is that we eliminate all depiction of violence.

TVG: No, just the unnecessary and repeated violence.

PRICE: How do you determine repeated violence?

GERBER: Two years from today you're gonna have no violence. Television is gonna be worse. It's gonna be a horror. But it's not going to change our financial status, or the networks', one penny. We're here because we're worried that the entertainment media are being too strongly affected by pressure groups. That's maddening.

WOLPER: You ask what can be done. Somebody should attack the PTA. Is it its job to monitor television with a bunch of inexperienced people?

TVG: It's anybody's job who wants to do it. It's a free country.

GERBER: It's obviously not a free country, because between eight and nine we can't do anything but family programs.

WOLPER: Let no one miss the point of all this. In case you didn't hear us, certain television programs that a year ago you thought were terrific can't be done today. Certain television shows that TV GUIDE said represented the best in television can't be done today. That is the point we want made. (END)

Gerbner plans to put more of TV on his couch

Violence indexer discloses plans to broaden his operations to provide complete information bank of medium trends and patterns

Dr. George Gerbner, who has become well known in the broadcast industry for his research on television violence, announced last week he plans to expand his analyses to take in other subjects such as TV's portrayal of business, medicine, politics, family life and aging.

Dr. Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, made the announcement in a speech prepared for the American Psychological Association's annual convention in San Francisco last Saturday. He and his associates, he said, will begin a three-fold expansion that includes (1) developing new monitoring techniques for news, commercials and other types of TV programs such as quiz shows and soap operas; (2) going international with his research, comparing television content and its effects across cultures, and (3) developing new TV profiles in areas such as medicine, business, the military, energy and transportation, politics and foreign cultures.

The aim is to create a resource center for anyone wanting data on TV trends and patterns. "It'll work like a public opinion polling agency," Dr. Gerbner said, adding that among the primary clients should be the networks. "What they [the networks] haven't realized is that our studies are the only ones that can answer unjustified criticism" of TV, he said in an interview last week. "They've been much too defensive."

To date, the networks have not put up money for any research, however. Other commercial users have, but Dr. Gerbner was reluctant to give details about them last week. He said he still receives funds from government sources, such as the National Institute of Mental Health, from which he expects to receive roughly $50,000 to continue his research on TV's effect on people's attitudes. In addition, he has a grant of $100,000 for the next three years to continue his TV violence profiles.

The information will come from material Dr. Gerbner said he already has in store: video tapes of more than 1,000 prime time and weekend programs collected from 10 previous annual samples for his violence profiles.

The Week in Brief

NBC-TV'S NEW FRONT LINE ☐ In search of added clout, Schlosser revamps the network's top ranks. Mulholland takes over as president, a new role is given to NBC Sports and Weinblatt and Timothy are moved up. **PAGE 16.**

COMPLEX DEAL ☐ In an involved transaction, Harte-Hanks acquires stations of Southern Broadcasting, spins off several to another firm which in turn spins some back to Harte-Hanks. **PAGE 19.**

SHOT AT SUPER STATIONS ☐ Are outlets such as WTCG(TV) Atlanta, which are carried far and wide by satellite and cable, in the public interest? MPAA thinks not and asks the FCC to look into this phenomenon. **PAGE 20.**

MONKEY WRENCH ☐ The WJLA-TV sale to Combined Communications looked clear, but community groups now say they aren't satisfied with the deal and have filed to block it. **PAGE 20.**

TV'S BIGGEST BY FAR ☐ The FCC's annual figures show that television in 1976 went over the billion-dollar mark in profits for the first time. Industry revenues amounted to $5.2 billion of which a little less than $4 billion was for expenses, leaving a pre-tax income total of $1.25 billion—60.3% more than in 1975. Network profits came to more than $295 million, up 41.8% from 1975. **PAGE 24.**

BALLYHOO ☐ The TV networks are setting the stage for the fall with a promotional barrage that has become more complicated each year. It means bigger budgets to cope with the changing order of the ratings and the new strategies in programing. **PAGE 37.**

SPECIALS AND MORE SPECIALS ☐ The networks' yen for diversity is reflected in the long list of fall events that will supplant regular series at frequent intervals. **PAGE 41.**

PLAY IT AGAIN, UNCLE SAM ☐ That payola case involving four Brunswick Record executives is ordered back to district court for retrial. **PAGE 42.**

GERBNER SPREADS WINGS ☐ The well-known TV violence indexer discloses plans to broaden his operation to provide a complete information bank on the medium's trends and patterns. **PAGE 43.**

PTA'S THINKING ☐ Association President Balsinger spells out plans for the campaign against TV violence, but points out that it should not involve federal censorship. **PAGE 44.**

AGREE, BUT... ☐ FCC Commissioner Quello and former colleage Hooks endorse the civil rights report charge that TV programing shows stereotypes, but they have their own ideas of what role the FCC should play in correcting matters. **PAGE 45.**

COMMON CAUSE CHIDES ☐ Lobby's survey claims the regulators give a disportionate amount of their time to visits by those regulated by the government. **PAGE 46.**

BACK TO GOVERNMENT ☐ Dr. Pierre Camu, president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, is selected as new chairman of the dominion's broadcast regulatory commission. **PAGE 47.**

PASSING MARKS ☐ A survey of broadcasters finds they generally feel President Carter has done a good job on communications matters, though many feel it's too early to tell. **PAGE 47.**

AT&T TARIFFS ☐ A fight looms on proposed increases in charges that would fall mostly on independents and part-time users. **PAGE 49.**

VTR FOR HOME ☐ An optomistic RCA unveils its SelectaVision which will retail with a $1,000 tag, $300 cheaper and two hours longer than competing models. **PAGE 50.**

COMPARATIVE ADS ☐ An NARB panel cites the value of such practices, but warns effectiveness hinges on honesty. **PAGE 52.**

THAT FTC CHALLENGE ☐ TVB's Rice cites advantages that could accrue to broadcasters if the government succeeds in forcing newspapers to eliminate volume discounts. **PAGE 52.**

A STEADY PRO ☐ Things have picked up domestically at Columbia Pictures Television. And no small amount of the credit goes to Norm Horowitz, senior vice president in charge of worldwide distribution, who calls his shots without hesitation and with confidence that stems from years of experience. **PAGE 73.**

Broadcasting *is published 51 Mondays a year (combined issue at yearend) by Broadcasting Publications Inc., 1735 DeSales Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036. Second-class postage paid at Washington. Single issue $1 except yearend issue $2.50. Subscriptions, U.S. and possessions: one year $30, two years $55, three years $75. Canada add $8 per year, all other countries add $8 per year, U.S. and possessions add $104 yearly for special delivery, $65 for first class. Subscriber's occupation required. Annually:* Broadcasting Yearbook *$30.* Cable Sourcebook *$20.*

American Film Sept 1977

The Masked Message

Karen Horowitz

Focus on Education

Syntactical. Phenomenological. Parasocial interaction.

The sounds of academe—in this case, emanating from the Conference on Culture and Communications held recently at Temple University in Philadelphia. But more than hard words emanated from the conference. What emerged in a number of papers presented was a disturbing view of what the media tells us without our knowing it: the masked message, the subliminal intrusion into our unconscious.

Take George Gerbner's talk, titled "Television's World View." He finds television a reactionary force, "a cultural arm" of the establishment that reinforces prevailing views. About women, for example. Not only do men outnumber women four to one in every type of television program except soap operas, but they are consistently presented as useful for a longer period of time than women; they even age more gracefully. Television women, when they cease to be objects of romance, seem to lose their worth. They turn benign or bitchy. And, the young and the old make up only fifteen percent of the television population.

Reality, of course, belies television. For example, there are a great many more women working than television shows would lead us to believe. In the face of reality, the medium acts as a resistor to changes that are under way in society.

Perhaps even more revealing are Gerbner's statistics on the kind of work people do in television series. Twenty percent, he found, work in law enforcement. That preponderance of television cops warns viewers that things are dangerous, that they need protection. It also encourages not only a sense of victimization but a resistance to change, a political and social inflexibility.

Gerbner, who is dean of the communications school at the University of Pennsylvania, argued that television wields such influence because people spend so much time watching it. Television has now become a cradle-to-grave media. Children watch it even before they learn to speak. The elderly turn to it to keep a connection to the culture. Gerbner calls television a home pulpit—entertaining and carrying messages at the same time. Moreover, the watching of television for most people takes on the aspects of a ritual, a pattern; people watch, not specific programs, but certain sections of the television day.

One of the speakers pointed out that Marxists believe that movies—in fact all the arts—reinforce the perspectives of the dominant class in nonsocialist societies. Gerbner would argue that television has the same effect. A genuine counterculture is hard put to take root in this country, Gerbner said, because television tends to co-opt it. The tactic is to pick out the most bizarre and offensive manifestation of the movement, to present it on the air, and as a result to discredit the movement itself. The movement becomes an eccentric life-style that no longer threatens anyone; it may then even provide a market for certain items, for example clothes.

The social influence of movies—specifically, "anticipatory socialization"—was the topic pursued by James Linton of the University of Windsor in Ontario. Linton said that most moviegoers are in the twelve-to-eighteen age-group, but most of the characters they watch on the screen are in the nineteen-to-forty-one age-group. The result is that they are influenced by the example of adult behavior they see, and the examples are of questionable worth. From the movies, the young receive certain expectations about growing up that are questionable, but little incentive to develop imaginative, alternative behavior. The movies, too, were found to have four times as many male characters as female characters.

The masked message of the two media drew wide attention at the conference, but more traditional areas were also explored in talks. Judith Meyer, from the University of Illinois, stressed the historical importance of myths and the difficulty of finding contemporary parallels of "collective identification." One such parallel, she suggested, is the shared response to certain cult films, and focused on *The Night of the Living Dead*. The film, Meyer said, is about the maintenance of the boundaries of personal space, the salvation of real life, and the meaning of family and social roles. For the audience, the zombies become analogous to strangers we meet in the street—hostile and death-like. *The Night of the Living Dead*, Meyer said, demonstrates that no degree of love or kinship can ever fully close the distance between individuals; as demonstrated by the hero, autonomy can only be won by determined self-reliance and altruistic pragmatism.

One speaker argued that the ideology of the Western has been restructured over the years. Kenneth Hope said that the Western has moved from the expression of an optimistic faith in growth and the fertility of the land and the family to an ironic and pessimistic view about the nature of the American experience. The modern Western is far more concerned about economic growth than familial growth.

Perhaps the most original and creative research topic came from Michael Rivlin, an anthropologist with a special interest in television and film, from Louisiana State University. His paper was called, "How To Behave When You're Alone: Television's Portrayal of Solitary Behavior." How *does* television portray silence, privacy, secrecy, solitude? Not well. For one thing, solitary behavior is rarely shown on television, Rivlin says. When it is, it's frequently preceded by "a distinct and highlighted enactment of successful social interaction and frequently followed by more of the same."

Rivlin suggests that in television narrative, these solitary times are infused with a "vague, gothic sense of ambiguity, mistrust, guilt, and deviance...that solitary thought becomes synonomous with the initiation of evil."

During the solitary moments, the technical elements of the show are changed. Tension-filled, discordant, mysterious music is played to fill in the absence of dialogue; the camera is frequently handheld, producing jerky or erratic movements (as opposed to television's usually

Continued on page 79

TV Violence: The Public Strikes Back

By Mark Perlberg

"This year, after 25 years of wall-to-wall violence, change is apparently on the way...."

In Chicago in 1976, a boy in his early teens was arrested after attempting to extort $50,000 from each of two banks in the city. He sent letters to the banks, claiming that he would blow them sky-high if he did not receive the money. He told police he attempted the extortion "because I saw it done on TV and it always works."

In San Francisco in 1974, a 9-year-old girl was sexually assaulted by a gang of older girls on the beach. One of the assailants later said she got the idea for the crime from watching a TV film in which the same ghastly crime was enacted in a girls' reformatory. (The girl's family brought suit against the television network, but the suit was tossed summarily out of court by the judge on First Amendment grounds. The family is now suing in Appellate Court for a jury trial.)

In Los Angeles in 1976, two teenage boys were jailed after they held up a bank and kept 25 people hostage for seven hours. They said they had modeled their crime after one they had seen on a TV police show.

While no one knows just how often scenes of TV violence are acted out by disturbed youths on the streets of our cities and suburbs—and a *direct* connection is difficult to prove—a vast amount of scientific evidence demonstrates that viewing violence on television affects children—and adults—in highly negative ways. Yet after years of mounting evidence and Congressional hearings, TV violence seemingly has continued to increase.

In 1976 "television violence increased sharply in all categories, including 'family viewing' and children's program time on all three networks," George Gerbner, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, told a Senate subcommittee on TV violence.

NBC had the highest violence rating, Gerbner reported, followed by ABC, then CBS.

But this year, after 25 years of wall-to-wall violence, change may be on the way. "TV Runs Scared in War on Violence," crowed a perhaps-over-optimistic headline in the March 1, 1977, *Chicago-Sun-Times*. Could it be that the public has finally had enough?

According to a Gallup Poll published last February, 67 per cent of all parents answered "yes" when asked if they thought a connection existed between the rate of juvenile crime and violence on television. Another 29 per cent answered "no." Only 4 per cent had "no opinion."

But if television programmers change their ways in the coming seasons, you can bet they won't do so merely because of an inchoate mass of public opinion. They will do so because national organizations with enormous clout have said, "Enough already." The current lineup against video violence seems too impressive to ignore.

The 6.5-million-member National Parent-Teacher's Association, which has been holding hearings around the country decrying violence on TV, announced April 15 that it was putting the networks "on probation" until the end of the year. If the violence quotient does not decline by then, it will consider boycotting the violent programs and products advertised on them, petition the FCC to deny license renewal to stations that air the most violent shows, and file lawsuits to halt TV violence.

The National Council of Churches and the Southern Baptist Convention joined the crusade, too. But of all the groups to join the fight against television violence, it appears that the American Medical Association, which took off its surgical gloves and entered the fray in June 1976, has carried the most clout.

Among the AMA's first actions was to donate $25,000 to the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, a consumer watchdog organization, so the NCCB could make a study of which programs are the most violent. The list was published last December, indicting 1976's "most violent" programs. (See page 24.)

The networks did not take kindly to the campaign against violence. NBC called the NCCB's rating a "body count" and said the survey ignored the "qualitative information about violent incidents—their context or significance—which is necessary for the assessment of the psychological impact on the viewers."

In February, Dr. Richard E. Palmer, President of the AMA, sent a letter to 10 large U.S. corporations asking them to stop sponsoring television shows that contain large dosages of violence. One of the corporations, Sears Roebuck & Co., agreed to do so soon after.

"TV violence is a mental health problem and an environmental issue," said Dr. Palmer. "TV has been quick to raise questions of responsibility with industries that pollute the air. In my opinion, television, through its access to airwaves, may be creating a more serious problem."

The force that moved the AMA to act was an article published in its own *Journal of the American Medical Association* in December 1975. In its quiet way, the article was a bombshell, reviewing as it

Illustration by Gary Kelley, Hellman Design Associates


G. KELLEY

The "most violent" television programs of 1976, according to the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting:

1. *Quest* (NBC)
2. *Starsky & Hutch* (ABC)
3. *Baretta* (ABC)
4. *Ba Ba Black Sheep* (NBC)
5. *Hawaii Five-O* (CBS)
6. *Six Million Dollar Man* (ABC)
7. *Kojak* (CBS)
8. *Police Story* (NBC)
9. *Delvecchio* (CBS)
10. *Serpico* (NBC)
11. *Most Wanted* (ABC)
12. *Charlie's Angels* (ABC)

did the mass of information that has been published in scholarly journals on TV violence over the years. Its author, Dr. Michael Rothenberg, of the departments of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, scored the medical profession for not taking a stand on a problem that he believes affects the mental health of the nation. Dr. Rothenberg listed these facts:

• According to Nielsen Index figures, the average American child sees 15,000 hours of television by the time he leaves high school, compared with the 11,000 hours he spends in the classroom.

• During this time, he will have witnessed "some 18,000 murders and countless highly detailed incidents of robbery, arson, bombing, forgery, smuggling, beating and torture—averaging approximately one per minute in the standard television cartoon for children under 10."

• Scenes of violence occur on children's television six more times per hour, on the average, than on adult TV.

At this point, two important questions arise: (1) Since matters of taste are subjective, who decides what constitutes a violent act on TV? (2) How do we know that violence viewing is harmful to children?

From Dr. Gerbner comes this definition of an act of violence—"a show of physical force that compels a victim to act against his will on pain of injury or death, or an act that kills or injures." Whether you agree or disagree with violence "counts," such as those used by the NCCB, there's not much room for ambiguity here.

Each year for the past decade, Dr. Gerbner has monitored a representative week of TV programming in prime time and on Saturday morning, when the kids are home from school and ensconced on the living room couch with a bowl of sugar-coated cereal while Daddy and Mommy are getting some extra sleep. Dr. Gerbner's staff makes detailed observation of the number of acts of violence in each program and prepares a Violence Index that graphs the violence for each type of program.

Even after 10 years of Presidential commissions, more than eight of 10 network programs portray acts of violence as defined above, and the same goes for nine out of 10 Saturday morning cartoons, Dr. Gerbner noted in an article, "Measuring the Climate of Fear," published in *American Medical News* last December.

But how do we know that viewing violence on television produces harmful effects in children? Many studies agree on this point. For example:

• Professor Albert Bandura of Stanford University, working with children aged 3 to 5, showed that after even brief exposure to scenes of violence on a simulated TV program, 88 per cent of the children acted violently in ways that imitated what they saw on the screen, in spite of the fact that crayons, trucks, tea sets and other toys typical of peaceful pursuits were available to play with.

• Professor David J. Hicks of California State University, Chico, California, found that after viewing a single simulated TV program, kids learned aggressive forms of behavior that they could still reproduce when tested six months later.

• Pre-school children at the University of North Carolina's Child Development Center were paired off on the basis of the amount of television they watched at home. One member of the pair was shown a single aggressive program from Saturday morning television, and the other was shown neutral TV fare. This was repeated on 11 different occasions. The results: in every case, the child who had observed violent TV shows became more aggressive than his playmate. Again, there was clear-cut definition of what constituted a violent act: kicking, hitting, pushing, choking, squeezing or holding down another child, or throwing an object at least one foot.

Yet, more subtle and perhaps more long-lasting effects come from viewing violence on television, to hamper the activities of adults as well as children.

Along with his Violence Index, Dr. Gerbner has constructed a Violence Profile that throws into bold relief two other important conclusions about television violence. He finds that children, low-income people, older women, and foreigners and blacks of both sexes are more likely to be victims rather than perpetrators of television violence. This, he notes, "tends to confirm conventional notions of power and vulnerability in U.S. society."

Gerbner also found that heavy viewers (more than four hours a day) tend to be more fearful and mistrustful of the outside world than are light viewers (less than two hours daily). When asked questions on current social issues, the heavy viewers tend to supply answers that mirror the violent world of television.

"The potential incitement to mayhem among a minority of viewers is bad enough," says Gerbner, "but the cultivation of fear and rigidity among the many is scarcely less damaging in its long-range effects." And he adds: "Television generates fear of victimization as well as the inclination by some to take advantage of the fears of others. Children growing up with television learn its lessons and rehearse its roles."

How have the networks responded to this fusillade of criticism, and what's in store for this TV season? Spokesmen for all three networks state that in upcoming programming there will be a shift away from "hard-action" police shows, but officials from ABC and CBS note that TV viewers are getting bored with them anyway. Time and fashions change: the sun has set on *Gunsmoke* and *Bonanza*, and so it may be that the screech of tires, the slamming of police car doors, the sound of cops pounding down the street, will echo less often in your living room.

A spokesman for ABC says it will emphasize comedy, like *Eight Is Enough*, and drama, like

West Side Medical. But the network's vice-president in charge of broadcast standards, Rick Gitter, argues "it is wrong to single out television violence. This circumvents exploration of what may be the real causes of violence in society, such as unemployment, lack of adequate housing. . . ."

At CBS, an official states that his network "has been reducing the violence quotient for the past four years in response to public opinion." CBS will not be dropping *Kojak* or *Hawaii Five-O*, but the plot lines of these programs "will be a little more imaginative." The spokesman adds that "action-adventure shows will be sharply reduced, as will police-type shows. Most of the new shows being considered are the fun-and-games kind of thing."

Meanwhile, Robert T. Howard, president of NBC-TV, which ranked highest in the NCCB violence rating, earnestly promised change.

"NBC, viewing television as a whole, believes that the proliferation of program types whose plot lines heavily involve violence has become excessive," said Howard. "It is taking positive and practical steps to reduce the number of those programs on the NBC television network."

The learning process works both ways. If the networks really mean business about reducing violence on TV, they could have a very positive effect on young viewers. For while we have been focusing on the harmful effects of TV viewing, it is just as possible for television to use its enormous power for good.

One man who has studied the negative effects that TV can have on young viewers, as well as the potentially positive, is psychologist Robert E. Liebert of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. Liebert is the author of *The Early Window: Effects of Television on Children and Youth*, and of studies of TV violence done for the National Institutes of Mental Health.

In an attempt to show how television can be used for beneficial results, he had a film prepared for children who are afraid to visit the dentist. The film's purpose was to lessen their fears.

In the film, a 4-year-old girl gradually loses her fear of the dentist as she watches an "old-timer" of 8 climb up into the chair and have his teeth cleaned with no ill-effects. At the end of the visit, both kids are presented with big red lollipops.

Dr. Liebert and his researchers showed the film to several groups of children who were afraid of the dentist, and he matched these with kids who had similar fears, but who had not seen the film (or one like it made by the American Dental Association).

It turned out that children who had seen the film — including a group of retarded and emotionally disturbed kids—were much more willing to visit the dentist the second time than were those who hadn't seen the film.

Is anybody paying attention out there in Televisionland? □

Mark Perlberg is a Chicago freelancer currently working on a series for Better Homes and Gardens.

(Continued from page 6)

The Consumers' Observation Post

MOTORISTS THROUGH GEORGIA are advised to pick their service stations with care. The American Automobile Association has warned that travelers on Georgia's Interstate I-75 highway would do well to purchase gasoline only, and not to allow the attendants to check under the hood or examine the tires. Some motorists have reported they have been advised that parts like fan belts, shock absorbers, and even tires are bad when they were actually in good condition or had been covertly damaged by the station employee inspecting them. The Georgia Office of Consumer Affairs has learned that dealers licensed by nine major oil companies have been cited in complaints and the companies in question are taking steps to shut down the offending stations.

TELEVISION PROGRAMS show a decided under-representation of the family except in comedies. According to a ten-year study by Dean George Gerber of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, men outnumber women four to one in TV programs, only 22 percent are portrayed as married, and 17 percent as fathers.

MACHINES are coming to be regarded as more dependable and accurate than human beings. Yet skilled technicians are needed for proper maintenance. The services, however, are costly. In a study by the University of Illinois initiated by Professor John C. Chato, co-chairman of the Bioengineering Faculty, an answer to the problem has been evolved. In conjunction with another group a Biomedical Engineering Systems Team (BEST) has been organized with engineers and technicians to provide hospitals with technical services including periodic inspection of equipment such as intensive care and coronary care units. BEST likewise developed a preventive maintenance schedule for use by hospital personnel. BEST has also added to its services the evaluation of its clients' planned purchase of equipment, much like CR's services in evaluating products for ultimate consumers. Bioengineering students gain practical experience working under the supervision of an experienced technician in developing procedures for evaluating equipment and in preventive maintenance programs.

THE FAMILY HOME that has a warm decor makes its inhabitants feel warmer. That was the conclusion to studies by Dr. Frederick H. Rohles, Jr. and Ward V. Wells of Kansas State University. The investigators made a series of observations on a group of college students, 12 men and 12 women, in an attractively furnished room with a pleasing decor and in a barren spartanly furnished room, both of which were maintained at various identical temperatures. By a series of observations and calculations, the researchers found that the adding of embellishments was equivalent to raising the temperature some 2 1/2 degrees Fahrenheit. For the experiment all students wore identical clothing.

COIN COLLECTORS TAKE NOTICE! It is reported by the Wall Street Journal that the Carter administration has endorsed two proposals for changes in the nation's coinage—eliminating the half dollar and reducing the size of the dollar. It is even hinted that the penny may be discontinued because by 1982 it will cost more than one cent to make.

THE SHORTAGE OF HOME-HEATING FUELS and the high cost of heating the average house has spurred a campaign for insulation, sparked by the federal government. The stated goal is the insulation of 90% of all U.S. homes by 1985. The expected demand for the operation is conducive to the entry into the field of many fly-by-night and get-rich-quick operators. A fairly up-to-date approach to the problem may be found in a consumer's guide prepared by the National Bureau of Standards entitled "Making the Most of Your Energy Dollars in Home Heating and Cooling." It is available at 70 cents from the Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Networks fight violence charges with 'pro-social' and 'literature' arguments

"'Hamlet,' considered by many the finest play in the English language, contains a poisoning, a stabbing, a suicide, two executions, and a fatal duel."

Frederick S. Pierce,
President, ABC Television

Under pressure from Congress, the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, the Parent-Teachers Assn., and the American Medical Association over the issue of excessive TV violence, the networks are trying to fashion their responses.

One approach will be the violence-in-literature argument advanced by ABC's Pierce last March before the House subcommittee on communications. Variations on this theme were presented to *American Medical News* during interviews with top network officials.

Another response is that the networks cannot fathom the "general damnation" being rained down against them. "Give us some specifics to work with," they say. TV violence is a complex issue, they contend.

Dennis Brack/AMN

A third trend, the officials say, is that this fall's program lineup will have substantially less violence than in previous years and that the action-heavy police shows are losing favor.

The most imaginative theory is that of ABC, which argues that violence must be understood in context and that the "quality" of violence can, in effect, be portrayed so as to have "pro-social" effects. ABC has even unveiled an experimental "Incident Analysis and Classification Form" that purports to be a "working tool . . . so that violence is understood according to the context in which it is used and is perceived in terms of what the viewer brings to the screen instead of merely being counted."

ABC'S MAIN EXAMPLE is the phenomenally successful serialization of "Roots," of which the network says, "Though 130 million people saw 'Roots,' few complained to ABC about the portrayals of violence therein; and, certainly, it would have been impossible to depict the conditions of slavery honestly without such portrayals."

Key words in this fall's TV lineup, as described by the networks, are "lighthearted comedy," "soft action-adventure," "contemporary family drama," and, even, "cerebral adventure shows." Officials seem to have a tendency to refer to the other networks' offerings when citing examples.

Whether there will be more or less violence on television remains to be seen.

"We said we would substantially reduce our action-oriented programs this year and we followed through on that commitment, some time previous to last May's slotting of the new shows," said Robert D. Kasmire, vice president for corporate affairs at NBC.

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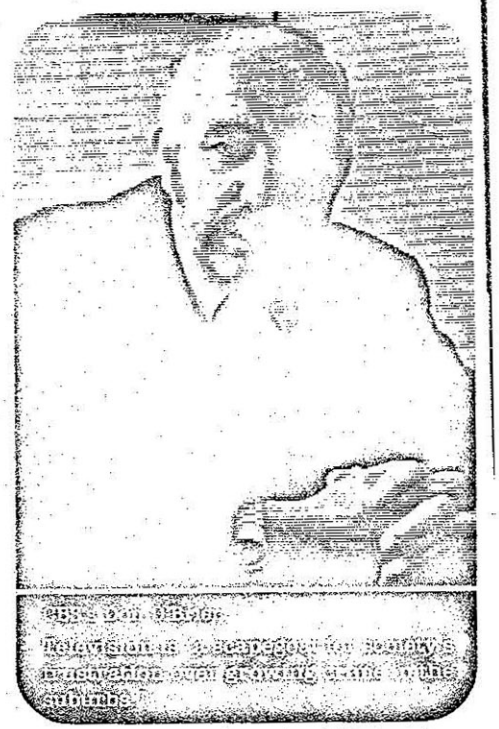

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THE MADE-FOR-TV movie to which Kasmire refers is the subject of a lawsuit in which a nine-year-old girl and her mother have charged NBC and the owners of a San Francisco TV station with negligence and intentional wrongful conduct in airing the show.

(In the opening scene of the show—broadcast at 8 p.m. on a Sunday night, Sept. 10, 1974—actress Linda Blair is raped with a mop handle by four other girls in a long and graphic scene. Three days later, on Sept. 13, three girls and a boy, all between the ages of 11 and 15, attacked and raped the nine-year-old girl in a similar way. All four of the young defendants admitted to police, and were prepared to testify in court, that they had seen "Born Innocent" on TV and had been influenced by the show.

(The girl and her mother sued NBC, but the trial judge ruled that the law granted absolute immunity to prosecution under the First Amendment to the Constitution.

(The case is now being appealed, and the California Medical Assn. filed a "friend of the court" brief on behalf of the little girl.)

Kasmire concluded that, "We are talking about degree. We are all aware of the violence issue and we are feeling our way through it."

The NBC fall schedule appears relatively mild—if one just looks at the regularly scheduled series. What Kasmire didn't mention is the network's so-called "event telecasts," more than 100 prime-time hours of event programming to be interlaced with the series.

FOR STARTERS, THE movies roster, as described in an NBC news release, features a nine-hour "Godfather Saga," comprised of "The Godfather, Part II," interwoven in sequential order with the best-selling original, "plus new footage not previously released which will be shown for the first time anywhere."

Novels to be dramatized as part of the "events" roster include *Aspen,* the story of the "internationally famous ski resort where the jet-setters gather for fun, love, and, often, the unexpected—including murder; *79 Park Avenue,* the Harold Robbins' novel about "two high school sweethearts who grow away from each other only to meet years later when he is a prominent New York district attorney and she is a glamorous call girl he is prosecuting in an effort to reach the crime chieftans who have set up a major operation at 79 Park Avenue;" *Centennial,* the James Michener novel about the American West and its people—"all of whom are caught up in the dramatic events and violent conflicts that shaped the destiny of the last American frontier;" and *Studs Lonigan,* the account by James T. Farrell of a "young man who drifts unwittingly into grim circumstances."

The NBC made-for-TV "world premiere" movies include Frank Sinatra in "Contract on Cherry Street," about a "New York City police inspector who takes an unorthodox approach to solving the problems of organized crime when all other efforts seem to fail;" and "Kill Me If You Can," a drama about Caryl Chessman, the California "red light bandit" who spent 12 years on Death Row before being executed for his crimes.

"ASPEN" AND "79 Park Avenue" are each six hours long, "Centennial" 12 hours, and "Studs Lonigan" eight. The made-for-TV movies take two hours each.

Advised that some of the "event" shows seemed to offer the potential of gratuitous violence, Kasmire replied: "Judge us by the shows and not the press releases."

The people at CBS call TV violence an "outdated issue." The real issue, said Van Gordon Sauter, CBS vice president for program practices, is the "economic censorship" being imposed on the networks.

"It's fine for the AMA," Sauter said, "to sit out there in Chicago and strike this PR posture about there's too much violence on TV, but that's not enough. The AMA says there's too much violence. Well, how much is acceptable, what kind, and in what circumstances?

"We need to resolve these questions jointly. We hear Dr. Gerbner talk about his violence index and we have no idea how he reaches his conclusions. The AMA seems to be more interested in running with this PR device than concerned with resolving the issue. To my knowledge, the AMA has not talked to any network and it seems to me that if the AMA is interested in doing an impartial survey, it might want to talk to us."

SAUTER SAID THAT violence at CBS was reduced 36% in 1976 from the previous year and that this year's programming will be about the same as the 1976 schedule. He said that the network has dropped two action-adventure shows ("Hunter" and "Nashville 99") and that of the four remaining ("Barnaby Jones," "Hawaii Five-O," "Kojak," and "Switch"), both "Barnaby Jones" and "Switch" are "light on the action and not generally perceived as police shows."

Please turn to next page

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Dr. Gerbner turns around most of the networks' criticism of his research and flings it back at them:

Restrictions on violence will fetter the creative community.

"Utter nonsense," says Dr. Gerbner. "We always hear about the freedom of the creative community to speak its mind. Well, there's a freedom of expression for researchers, too. Far too often, academic research is kept just that, academic. If our research has an effect on public policy, that's all to the good.

"We don't want to censor the creative people. On the contrary, we want to liberate them from the iron hand of the handful of network executives who make all programming decisions. Until now, those execs have only had to worry about one thing: the CPM (cost-per-thousand viewers of each commercial minute). How many eyeballs, or, actually, thousands of eyeballs can each program attract and thus charge for commercials. They've never had to think in terms of human consequences. If our research opens up the decision-making process and makes it more democratic, so be it. It might even allow the creative people to pursue some truly creative ends."

Life and literature are rife with violence.

"When we talk about TV violence," Dr. Gerbner said, "we're not talking about violence in plays such as 'Hamlet' or shows like 'Roots.' Shakespeare was a master and knew how to diversify violence within a narrative. For the networks to equate their offerings with Shakespeare is nonsense.

"When we talk about violence on TV, we're talking about a cheap, industrial ingredient that the Hollywood assembly line (otherwise known as the 'creative community') throws in at the rate of 10 times per television hour. That's what people like Van Gordon Sauter, program practices chief for CBS-TV) do all day: review scripts and decide exactly how much of this cheap ingredient they will allow in the final product. This ingredient of gratuitous violence is ritualistically used in assembly-line fashion. It has nothing to do with Shakespeare, which the networks may run once every five years or so—if that often."

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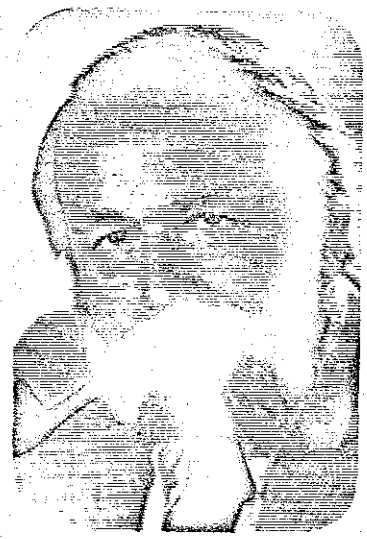
TV networks combat violence charges with 'pro-social' claims



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"The fact is," Sauter continued, "the police genre is losing its appeal and the police shows, like the westerns and lawyers before them, are losing favor. The creative energy of the species has been sapped—with repetitive patterns of behavior and interchangeable plots commonplace—and there is more concern about police violence."

But, Sauter said, "The action-adventure show is a very legitimate dramatic form and it will always have a place on television. Television has nothing to do with violence. Television does not lead people. Is the AMA saying, take 'Starsky & Hutch' (an ABC show) off the air? If so, is the AMA ready to deal with the 30 million viewers who want to see 'Starsky & Hutch'?"

SAUTER'S ASSISTANT at CBS, Don O'Brien, a vice president for program practices of New York productions, thinks television is "a scapegoat for society's frustrations over growing crime rates in the suburbs."

O'Brien said, "People react to what they're seeing in their own communities, and the suburban crime rate is up. The average citizen is appalled by accounts of juvenile killers (subject of a recent *Time* cover story) and he wonders what's happening. Television has become the scapegoat."

Screenwriter states his case against censorship —page 12

The CBS official said the current media focus on crime is not causing the trouble, "any more than the crime in the 1930s was caused by all those movies about the underworld starring George Raft and Jimmy Cagney and Mickey Rooney. There was a whole era of gangster movies. At least on TV, the good guys always win."

Some of the censorship is so stiff, O'Brien said, that "we could have a tough time putting Snow White on the screen."

TO O'BRIEN THE issue is one of "shared responsibility," with civic groups such as the PTA and the AMA having a key role. The parent has to exercise some responsibility, O'Brien said ("you can always change channels or turn off the set if you don't want your children to watch certain shows").

The CBS official recalls a talk he had with a PTA official in Iowa. "He told me he just loved John Wayne movies," O'Brien said, "but he just didn't think of violence in a John Wayne movie as being violent. That's the problem we face in dealing with this issue."

ABC has, perhaps, taken the most scholarly view of the subject. The ABC Incident Analysis and Classification Form breaks down "contextual classification factors" that are designed "to aid in evaluating the appropriateness of the portrayal of violence, rather than a mere counting by the numbers."

Alfred R. Schneider, ABC vice president, said the ABC system was designed as a counterpoint to the Gerbner violence index.

At the ABC affiliates meeting last May in Los Angeles, Schneider introduced the new form, saying:

"THE MOST significant contribution which distinguishes this form from simple tabulation systems is to be found in its contextual classification function. Here we identify and analyze a clarifier of each incident, in contrast to a mere mechanical count of all violence which fails to distinguish Serious-Intentional-Realistic (S-I-R) from those which are presented in a context of humor, accident, fantasy, friendly play, or willing agreement.

"Also classified and distinguished from such incidents are pro-social interventions or restraints; violent incidents portrayed within a clear major anti-violent theme; and incidents for which human consequences are meaningfully portrayed."

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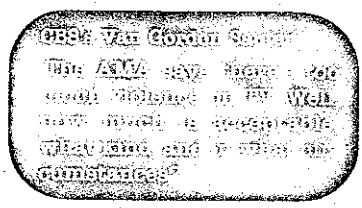

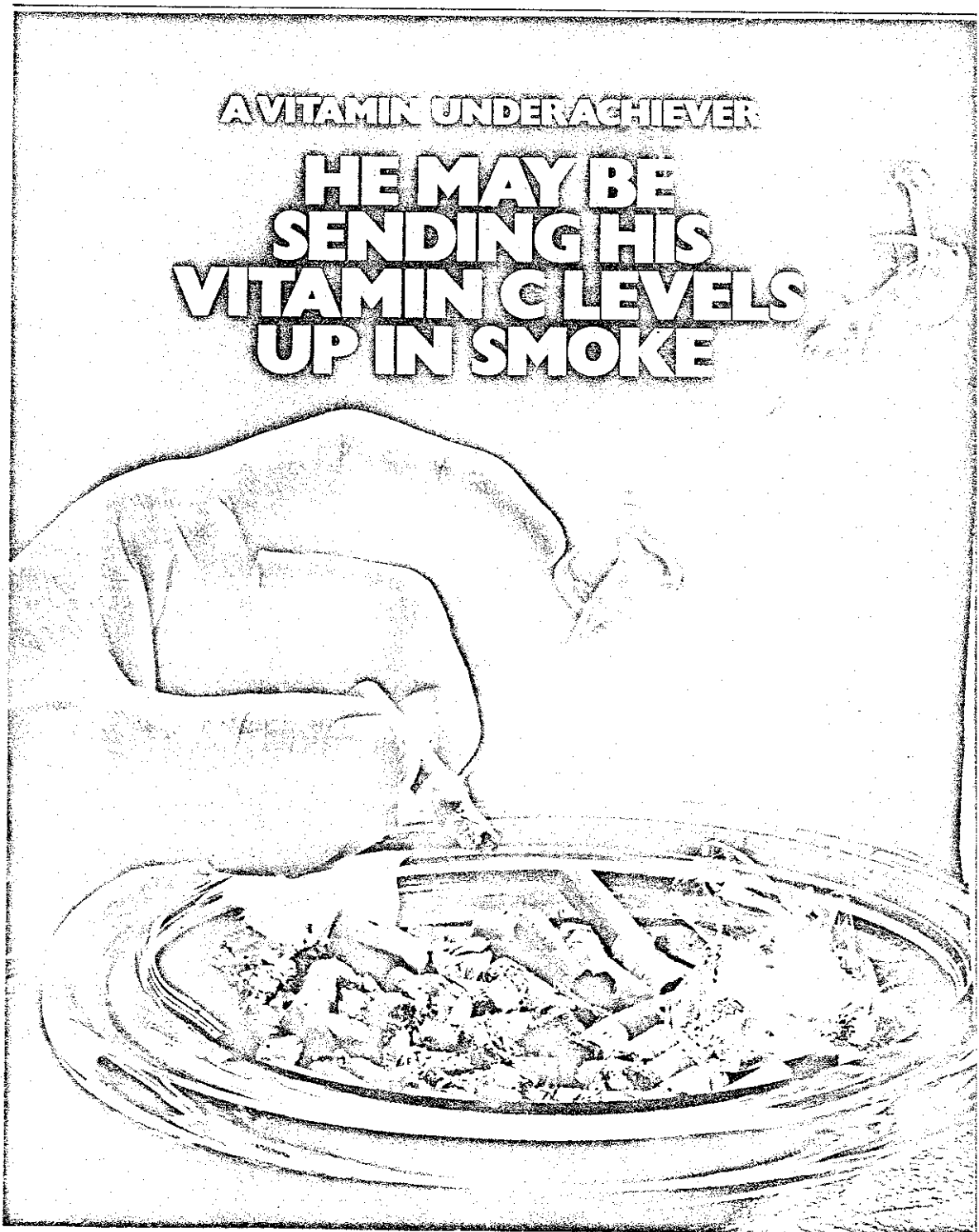

Dr. Gerbner warns TV execs: take our advice

Continued from page 9

The Gerbner research, including comedic and accidental violence, and undifferentiated violence counts, is faulty.

"The networks are engaging in wishful thinking," Dr. Gerbner said, "in trying to substitute their self-serving definitions of violence for objective research."

Humor can be a great means of getting across a lesson, Dr. Gerbner said, and comedic violence can have a distorting effect on viewers, particularly children. As for accidents, he notes, "These scripts are not written by God."

The overall patterns of victimization in both comedic and accidental violence is such "to reflect the existing social order and to support those who profit from the prejudice of the existing social order," he said.

"On TV," he noted, "old, poor black women are cast for violent parts only to be killed. They can have no other role."

Dr. Gerbner stressed that he did not seek out the role as the conscience of the TV industry. "Our program of assessing cultural indicators," he said, "is not based around violence. The violence study is only a part—and not the major part—of our program. We also study trends in family life, and health. But in our monitoring of violence trends, we happened to pick up on the excessive amounts of it on TV."

THE ISSUE CAN no longer be avoided, Dr. Gerbner concluded.

"If the networks can agree on a system of rating shows—such as the Nielsen ratings, phony as they may be—then it can also work with others—government, citizen groups—to agree on common touchstones to rate programs in term of consequences other than profit."

There are two major forces at play, the journalism dean said. "There is a legitimate concern about distorted portrayals of sex and violence on TV and there is a growing question about who should control such program decisions."

NOTING THAT there are some pressures for American television to be regulated as a public utility, as it is in most other countries, Dr. Gerbner said:

"If our work, and the crystallizing activities of such groups as the AMA, PTA, and NCCB, can loosen up the democratic process, make it more democratic, wrest it from the hands of the network VPs, that's all for the good.

"In the long run, it will also be best for TV."

—Dennis Breo

Violence . . .

Continued from facing page

In other words, under the ABC scenario, many violent shows can be justified as being "pro-social," because they presumably show violence for the sake of preventing violence.

One (admittedly simple) example of pro-social intervention or restraint explained to the affiliates by Schneider noted:

"In Situation A, a man rushes up to another and thrusts him in front of an oncoming vehicle. In Situation B, a man rushes up and thrusts him away from the path of the oncoming vehicle."

SITUATION B, Schneider stressed, is pro-social, a distinction he claims the Gerbner violence index would not make.

ABC's medical consultant, Melvin Heller, MD, director of the division of forensic psychiatry at the Temple U. Medical School, Philadelphia, told the House subcommittee on communications, "In the careful assessment of hundreds of violent offenders, all of whom grew up with a working television set in their homes, we have never found one person whose criminal career was caused by television viewing."

The psychiatrist said that his five years of research corroborated the words of Walter Menninger, MD, "who stated—and I hope people were listening—at recent hearings in Kansas City, that, 'It is a mistake to scapegoat the black box and disregard the most significant influence on children, the real people in their lives . . . It is the adult models living with children who determine their violent or non-violent behavior far more than Kojak.' "

DR. HELLER added, however, "This is not to excuse television, for while television may not make a murderer, thief, or bully out of a non-murderer, non-thief, or non-bully, it has in far too many cases demonstrated in replicable detail better ways for the murderer, thief, or bully to pursue their ends."

Contending that "Dr. Gerbner's data is being misused," ABC's Schneider called for cooperative efforts by groups such as the AMA and the PTA to fashion a meaningful index of contextual violence.

"There is no H_2O formula for appropriate TV violence," Schneider said. "We're dealing with a very complex thing, with emotional, verbal, physical, and psychological factors—all captured on a piece of film. There is no way you can read a script and know how the action will be captured on the film, the nuances. We're trying."

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Networks fight violence charges with 'pro-social' and 'literature' arguments

"'Hamlet,' considered by many the finest play in the English language, contains a poisoning, a stabbing, a suicide, two executions, and a fatal duel."

Frederick S. Pierce,
President, ABC Television

Under pressure from Congress, the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, the Parent-Teachers Assn., and the American Medical Association over the issue of excessive TV violence, the networks are trying to fashion their responses.

One approach will be the violence-in-literature argument advanced by ABC's Pierce last March before the House subcommittee on communications. Variations on this theme were presented to *American Medical News* during interviews with top network officials.

Another response is that the networks cannot fathom the "general damnation" being rained down against them. "Give us some specifics to work with," they say. TV violence is a complex issue, they contend.

Dennis Brack/AMN

A third trend, the officials say, is that this fall's program lineup will have substantially less violence than in previous years and that the action-heavy police shows are losing favor.

The most imaginative theory is that of ABC, which argues that violence must be understood in context and that the "quality" of violence can, in effect, be portrayed so as to have "pro-social" effects. ABC has even unveiled an experimental "Incident Analysis and Classification Form" that purports to be a "working tool . . . so that violence is understood according to the context in which it is used and is perceived in terms of what the viewer brings to the screen instead of merely being counted."

ABC'S MAIN EXAMPLE is the phenomenally successful serialization of "Roots," of which the network says, "Though 130 million people saw 'Roots,' few complained to ABC about the portrayals of violence therein; and, certainly, it would have been impossible to depict the conditions of slavery honestly without such portrayals."

Key words in this fall's TV lineup, as described by the networks, are "lighthearted comedy," "soft action-adventure," "contemporary family drama," and, even, "cerebral adventure shows." Officials seem to have a tendency to refer to the other networks' offerings when citing examples.

Whether there will be more or less violence on television remains to be seen.

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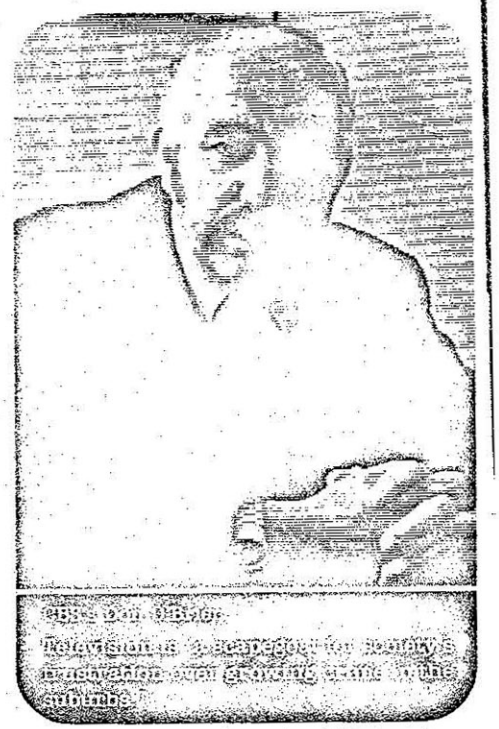

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Kasmire added that he deplores criticism of violence when the criticism obscures the message of a show. "One example," he said, "is the three-hour movie, 'Born Free,' which dramatized the disastrous effect upon a young child of being committed to a juvenile detention home. The film included a rape-by-mop-handle sequence. Although I would not necessarily defend that sequence, it is unfortunate to focus only on the violence and to ignore the important issue raised about failures in our court system."

THE MADE-FOR-TV movie to which Kasmire refers is the subject of a lawsuit in which a nine-year-old girl and her mother have charged NBC and the owners of a San Francisco TV station with negligence and intentional wrongful conduct in airing the show.

(In the opening scene of the show—broadcast at 8 p.m. on a Sunday night, Sept. 10, 1974—actress Linda Blair is raped with a mop handle by four other girls in a long and graphic scene. Three days later, on Sept. 13, three girls and a boy, all between the ages of 11 and 15, attacked and raped the nine-year-old girl in a similar way. All four of the young defendants admitted to police, and were prepared to testify in court, that they had seen "Born Innocent" on TV and had been influenced by the show.

(The girl and her mother sued NBC, but the trial judge ruled that the law granted absolute immunity to prosecution under the First Amendment to the Constitution.

(The case is now being appealed, and the California Medical Assn. filed a "friend of the court" brief on behalf of the little girl.)

Kasmire concluded that, "We are talking about degree. We are all aware of the violence issue and we are feeling our way through it."

The NBC fall schedule appears relatively mild—if one just looks at the regularly scheduled series. What Kasmire didn't mention is the network's so-called "event telecasts," more than 100 prime-time hours of event programming to be interlaced with the series.

FOR STARTERS, THE movies roster, as described in an NBC news release, features a nine-hour "Godfather Saga," comprised of "The Godfather, Part II," interwoven in sequential order with the best-selling original, "plus new footage not previously released which will be shown for the first time anywhere."

Novels to be dramatized as part of the "events" roster include *Aspen,* the story of the "internationally famous ski resort where the jet-setters gather for fun, love, and, often, the unexpected—including murder; *79 Park Avenue,* the Harold Robbins' novel about "two high school sweethearts who grow away from each other only to meet years later when he is a prominent New York district attorney and she is a glamorous call girl he is prosecuting in an effort to reach the crime chieftans who have set up a major operation at 79 Park Avenue;" *Centennial,* the James Michener novel about the American West and its people—"all of whom are caught up in the dramatic events and violent conflicts that shaped the destiny of the last American frontier;" and *Studs Lonigan,* the account by James T. Farrell of a "young man who drifts unwittingly into grim circumstances."

The NBC made-for-TV "world premiere" movies include Frank Sinatra in "Contract on Cherry Street," about a "New York City police inspector who takes an unorthodox approach to solving the problems of organized crime when all other efforts seem to fail;" and "Kill Me If You Can," a drama about Caryl Chessman, the California "red light bandit" who spent 12 years on Death Row before being executed for his crimes.

"ASPEN" AND "79 Park Avenue" are each six hours long, "Centennial" 12 hours, and "Studs Lonigan" eight. The made-for-TV movies take two hours each.

Advised that some of the "event" shows seemed to offer the potential of gratuitous violence, Kasmire replied: "Judge us by the shows and not the press releases."

The people at CBS call TV violence an "outdated issue." The real issue, said Van Gordon Sauter, CBS vice president for program practices, is the "economic censorship" being imposed on the networks.

"It's fine for the AMA," Sauter said, "to sit out there in Chicago and strike this PR posture about there's too much violence on TV, but that's not enough. The AMA says there's too much violence. Well, how much is acceptable, what kind, and in what circumstances?

"We need to resolve these questions jointly. We hear Dr. Gerbner talk about his violence index and we have no idea how he reaches his conclusions. The AMA seems to be more interested in running with this PR device than concerned with resolving the issue. To my knowledge, the AMA has not talked to any network and it seems to me that if the AMA is interested in doing an impartial survey, it might want to talk to us."

SAUTER SAID THAT violence at CBS was reduced 36% in 1976 from the previous year and that this year's programming will be about the same as the 1976 schedule. He said that the network has dropped two action-adventure shows ("Hunter" and "Nashville 99") and that of the four remaining ("Barnaby Jones," "Hawaii Five-O," "Kojak," and "Switch"), both "Barnaby Jones" and "Switch" are "light on the action and not generally perceived as police shows."

Please turn to next page

'When we talk about violence on TV, we're talking about a cheap, industrial ingredient that the Hollywood assembly line throws in at the rate of 10 times per television hour. It has nothing to do with Shakespeare.'

Dr. Gerbner turns around most of the networks' criticism of his research and flings it back at them:

Restrictions on violence will fetter the creative community.

"Utter nonsense," says Dr. Gerbner. "We always hear about the freedom of the creative community to speak its mind. Well, there's a freedom of expression for researchers, too. Far too often, academic research is kept just that, academic. If our research has an effect on public policy, that's all to the good.

"We don't want to censor the creative people. On the contrary, we want to liberate them from the iron hand of the handful of network executives who make all programming decisions. Until now, those execs have only had to worry about one thing: the CPM (cost-per-thousand viewers of each commercial minute). How many eyeballs, or, actually, thousands of eyeballs can each program attract and thus charge for commercials. They've never had to think in terms of human consequences. If our research opens up the decision-making process and makes it more democratic, so be it. It might even allow the creative people to pursue some truly creative ends."

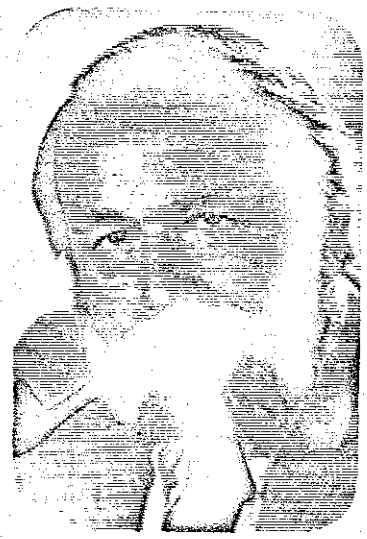
Life and literature are rife with violence.

"When we talk about TV violence," Dr. Gerbner said, "we're not talking about violence in plays such as 'Hamlet' or shows like 'Roots.' Shakespeare was a master and knew how to diversify violence within a narrative. For the networks to equate their offerings with Shakespeare is nonsense.

"When we talk about violence on TV, we're talking about a cheap, industrial ingredient that the Hollywood assembly line (otherwise known as the 'creative community') throws in at the rate of 10 times per television hour. That's what people like Van Gordon Sauter, program practices chief for CBS-TV) do all day: review scripts and decide exactly how much of this cheap ingredient they will allow in the final product. This ingredient of gratuitous violence is ritualistically used in assembly-line fashion. It has nothing to do with Shakespeare, which the networks may run once every five years or so—if that often."

Please turn to page 11

TV networks combat violence charges with 'pro-social' claims



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"The fact is," Sauter continued, "the police genre is losing its appeal and the police shows, like the westerns and lawyers before them, are losing favor. The creative energy of the species has been sapped—with repetitive patterns of behavior and interchangeable plots commonplace—and there is more concern about police violence."

But, Sauter said, "The action-adventure show is a very legitimate dramatic form and it will always have a place on television. Television has nothing to do with violence. Television does not lead people. Is the AMA saying, take 'Starsky & Hutch' (an ABC show) off the air? If so, is the AMA ready to deal with the 30 million viewers who want to see 'Starsky & Hutch'?"

SAUTER'S ASSISTANT at CBS, Don O'Brien, a vice president for program practices of New York productions, thinks television is "a scapegoat for society's frustrations over growing crime rates in the suburbs."

O'Brien said, "People react to what they're seeing in their own communities, and the suburban crime rate is up. The average citizen is appalled by accounts of juvenile killers (subject of a recent *Time* cover story) and he wonders what's happening. Television has become the scapegoat."

Screenwriter states his case against censorship —page 12

The CBS official said the current media focus on crime is not causing the trouble, "any more than the crime in the 1930s was caused by all those movies about the underworld starring George Raft and Jimmy Cagney and Mickey Rooney. There was a whole era of gangster movies. At least on TV, the good guys always win."

Some of the censorship is so stiff, O'Brien said, that "we could have a tough time putting Snow White on the screen."

TO O'BRIEN THE issue is one of "shared responsibility," with civic groups such as the PTA and the AMA having a key role. The parent has to exercise some responsibility, O'Brien said ("you can always change channels or turn off the set if you don't want your children to watch certain shows").

The CBS official recalls a talk he had with a PTA official in Iowa. "He told me he just loved John Wayne movies," O'Brien said, "but he just didn't think of violence in a John Wayne movie as being violent. That's the problem we face in dealing with this issue."

ABC has, perhaps, taken the most scholarly view of the subject. The ABC Incident Analysis and Classification Form breaks down "contextual classification factors" that are designed "to aid in evaluating the appropriateness of the portrayal of violence, rather than a mere counting by the numbers."

Alfred R. Schneider, ABC vice president, said the ABC system was designed as a counterpoint to the Gerbner violence index.

At the ABC affiliates meeting last May in Los Angeles, Schneider introduced the new form, saying:

"THE MOST significant contribution which distinguishes this form from simple tabulation systems is to be found in its contextual classification function. Here we identify and analyze a clarifier of each incident, in contrast to a mere mechanical count of all violence which fails to distinguish Serious-Intentional-Realistic (S-I-R) from those which are presented in a context of humor, accident, fantasy, friendly play, or willing agreement.

"Also classified and distinguished from such incidents are pro-social interventions or restraints; violent incidents portrayed within a clear major anti-violent theme; and incidents for which human consequences are meaningfully portrayed."

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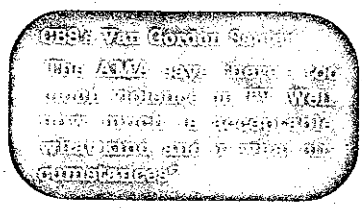

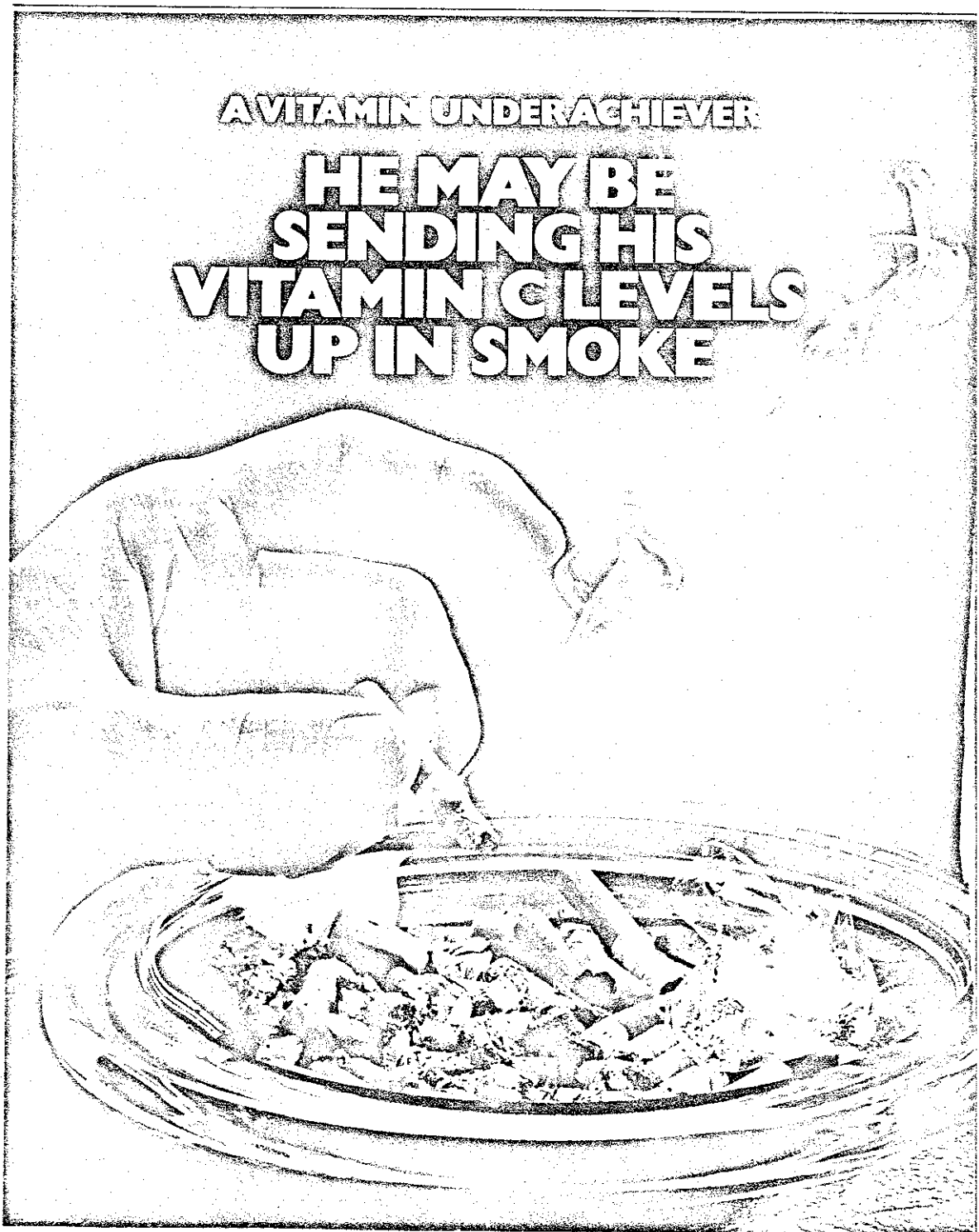

Dr. Gerbner warns TV execs: take our advice

Continued from page 9

The Gerbner research, including comedic and accidental violence, and undifferentiated violence counts, is faulty.

"The networks are engaging in wishful thinking," Dr. Gerbner said, "in trying to substitute their self-serving definitions of violence for objective research."

Humor can be a great means of getting across a lesson, Dr. Gerbner said, and comedic violence can have a distorting effect on viewers, particularly children. As for accidents, he notes, "These scripts are not written by God."

The overall patterns of victimization in both comedic and accidental violence is such "to reflect the existing social order and to support those who profit from the prejudice of the existing social order," he said.

"On TV," he noted, "old, poor black women are cast for violent parts only to be killed. They can have no other role."

Dr. Gerbner stressed that he did not seek out the role as the conscience of the TV industry. "Our program of assessing cultural indicators," he said, "is not based around violence. The violence study is only a part—and not the major part—of our program. We also study trends in family life, and health. But in our monitoring of violence trends, we happened to pick up on the excessive amounts of it on TV."

THE ISSUE CAN no longer be avoided, Dr. Gerbner concluded.

"If the networks can agree on a system of rating shows—such as the Nielsen ratings, phony as they may be—then it can also work with others—government, citizen groups—to agree on common touchstones to rate programs in term of consequences other than profit."

There are two major forces at play, the journalism dean said. "There is a legitimate concern about distorted portrayals of sex and violence on TV and there is a growing question about who should control such program decisions."

NOTING THAT there are some pressures for American television to be regulated as a public utility, as it is in most other countries, Dr. Gerbner said:

"If our work, and the crystallizing activities of such groups as the AMA, PTA, and NCCB, can loosen up the democratic process, make it more democratic, wrest it from the hands of the network VPs, that's all for the good.

"In the long run, it will also be best for TV."

—Dennis Breo

Violence . . .

Continued from facing page

In other words, under the ABC scenario, many violent shows can be justified as being "pro-social," because they presumably show violence for the sake of preventing violence.

One (admittedly simple) example of pro-social intervention or restraint explained to the affiliates by Schneider noted:

"In Situation A, a man rushes up to another and thrusts him in front of an oncoming vehicle. In Situation B, a man rushes up and thrusts him away from the path of the oncoming vehicle."

SITUATION B, Schneider stressed, is pro-social, a distinction he claims the Gerbner violence index would not make.

ABC's medical consultant, Melvin Heller, MD, director of the division of forensic psychiatry at the Temple U. Medical School, Philadelphia, told the House subcommittee on communications, "In the careful assessment of hundreds of violent offenders, all of whom grew up with a working television set in their homes, we have never found one person whose criminal career was caused by television viewing."

The psychiatrist said that his five years of research corroborated the words of Walter Menninger, MD, "who stated—and I hope people were listening—at recent hearings in Kansas City, that, 'It is a mistake to scapegoat the black box and disregard the most significant influence on children, the real people in their lives . . . It is the adult models living with children who determine their violent or non-violent behavior far more than Kojak.' "

DR. HELLER added, however, "This is not to excuse television, for while television may not make a murderer, thief, or bully out of a non-murderer, non-thief, or non-bully, it has in far too many cases demonstrated in replicable detail better ways for the murderer, thief, or bully to pursue their ends."

Contending that "Dr. Gerbner's data is being misused," ABC's Schneider called for cooperative efforts by groups such as the AMA and the PTA to fashion a meaningful index of contextual violence.

"There is no H_2O formula for appropriate TV violence," Schneider said. "We're dealing with a very complex thing, with emotional, verbal, physical, and psychological factors—all captured on a piece of film. There is no way you can read a script and know how the action will be captured on the film, the nuances. We're trying."

—Dennis Breo

Bill - For Your Info.!
Best- Stan

EDITORIAL

The TV Violence Profiles spewing from the University of Pennsylvania are too broad.

Violence is relative. Formulae and statistics do not apply.

We are being attacked by media illiterates.

– TWM

from Bill with Love

Fine Tuning T.V.'s Message

By Steve Fried

1. Can most people be trusted?
   —Yes
   —Can't be too careful
2. What are your chances, during a given week, of being involved in some kind of violence?
   —about 1 in 100
   —About 1 in 10
3. What percent of all crimes are violent crimes like rape, murder and assault?
   —Fifteen Percent
   —Twenty five percent
4. What percent of all males who have jobs work in law enforcement and crime detection?
   —1 percent
   —5 percent

These are a few of the many questions which George Gerbner PhD, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications and spokesman for the staff of the Cultural Indicators Program uses to discover how television and the world it creates has affected you. According to the group's statistics, if you are a heavy television watcher you are more likely to have a different, more threatened perception of life; you will give what Gerbner calls a "television answer" to these questions, indicating that you have been indoctrinated into the "mean world" of television.

The Cultural Indicators Program, a research program funded by the AMA, the Mental Health Association and other concerns to find exactly how television affects American life, is a manifestation of Gerbner's general theories of communications as well as his more specific ones.

THE PROGRAM has received great national attention recently, with Gerbner presenting his findings to Congress in its recent investigation into TV violence and battling with the networks over their programming's violent and sexual content. The research process is complex. Gerbner's research assistants carefully view one full week of TV programming (that's 24 hours a day) and then code their observations using a complicated analysis which breaks down character roles and actions into a large group of variables. These are divided by race, age, sex, employment, violence involved, and so on. The variables are then combined, each with an artificial value assigned by Gerbner, to make the "Violence Index," Gerbner's rating system.

"Television is like a religion. You watch television as you might attend church, except that most people watch television more religiously."

The tube, Gerbner feels, is not simply a medium or a mode of entertainment. Rather, "television is like a religion. You watch television as you might attend church, except that most people watch television more religiously.

TO UNDERSTAND why Gerbner and his group are so concerned about what's shown on television, one must first understand what they feel television is. "Every society, "Gerbner explains, "has an enculturation or socializing factor which introduces people into the society. Enculturation comes through stories, mythology, religion, education...each has a lesson to be learned. These stories fit one into the societal structure. Today the leading socializing agency is television."

In earlier societies, enculturation was made available through books, and later by film, both of which allowed selectivity leading to cultural differentiation.

"TV IS DIFFERENT, however," Gerbner asserts, "because it doesn't require you to leave the home, and hence you consume it non-selectively. People don't watch by the program, they watch by the clock. TV watching fits into a style of life, and whatever is on is watched. The only selection is a marginal one between networks, who program similar things back to back. All the programming is designed with the same pattern and therefore it doesn't matter what program you watch, you get the same message."

And this is some people's only source of "cultural lessons." "TV reaches people," Gerbner claims, "who don't read anything. By the time they reach school, children will have spent more hours with the television than they would spend in college classrooms. Old people and most institutionalized populations are almost totally dependent on television for 'human' contact and engagement in the larger world."

And what is this world? The message American TV portrays is the "mean world" and the structure into which people are enculturated is a hierarchial one. Power is what's important. And the major way in which this is taught is through violence.

"SYMBOLIC AND REAL violence," Gerbner feels," is essentially an association of power whose purpose is ultimately to generate enough fear so

Carol Garfein

that those who have a greater sense of risk and vulnerability in life will be more easily controlled and more afraid.

"It's like a scary story. If a parent tells one, he can manipulate enough fear and awe to set himself up as the authority."

The tales which we are told on TV, compared to real life, are indeed scary stories. While in the real world far less than one violent crime occurs per 100 people; on television, Gerbner's statistics show, 64.4% of major TV characters are involved in violence. Whereas in the U.S. 10% of all crimes are violent, in television 77% of all major characters committing crimes (as criminals) also commit violence. And when 1% of all males in the U.S. are employed in law enforcement, 12% of TV males are. No wonder you're scared. That's why you gave the "television answer" to 'trust people?'--'can't be too careful.'

TV DISTORTS other "facts" in its lessons besides crime and violence. It also distorts power relationships between people. "It is not a true world," Gerbner insists," but an extension of the standardized images which we have been taught since childhood. The audience for which the message is intended is the great majority of middle-class citizens for whom "America is a democracy, for whom our economy is free, and for whom God is alive, white and male."

In television, sexual stereotypes are perpetuated by repetition of power roles between different groups. Men on television outnumber women three to one. The women in TV represent mostly "romantic or family interest, close human contact, love. Males can act in nearly any role, but rare is the female part that does not involve at least the suggestion of sex." Other stereotypes, like age, race, or occupation are also used to display the power lesson.

BUT VIOLENCE plays the key role in the lesson. "It is the simplest, most dramatic means available," Gerbner claims, "to demonstrate the rules of the game of power. Encounters with physical violence in real life are rare, more sickening than thrilling. But television uses symbolic violence, which typically does the job of real violence more cheaply and, of course, entertainingly."

How much violence is there really? According to Gerbner, 8 out of every 10 programs contain some violence, or about 10 violent acts per programming hour. An act of violence, in the study's definition, is "a scene of violence confined to the same agents," that is, if someone new enters a fight, it is considered a new act.

...In the real world, far less than one violent crime occurs per 100 people. On television...64.4% of major characters are involved in violence.

One of the major points of controversy over the "Violence profile" as Gerbner's research is known, is its definition of violence. It includes all comedic violence and cartoon violence, which some network execs feel is unfair. Gerbner explains, "you think of violence as only teaching serious somber lessons about aggression. Humor is the prime vehicle of aggression. Most humor is aggressive---prejudicial. Most studies show that humor is a way of communicating the unacceptable, and it is effective. It's like sugar-coating a pill--a sugar-coated pill is not ineffective, on the contrary it is much more effective." Cartoons are this sugar-coated pill.

GERBNER IS NOT saying that there's no room for violence in an enculturation system like TV. When he complains about violence, he's "talking about a cheap industrial ingredient that the Hollywood assembly line throws in at a rate of 10 per hour. It has nothing to do with Shakespeare...Violence isn't anti-social. But as an ingredient added in terms of cost per thousand, which governs all of television, it *becomes* anti-social."

Gerbner and his group are telling us that TV is distorting the viewing public's sense of reality. It is making us vulnerable and scared. And he has statistics to prove it. People who are heavy TV viewers respond much more often with the TV answer to sample questions than a light viewer.

GERBNER RELATED an anecdote: "In a real life courtroom, the counsel for the defense leapt to his feet, objecting, 'Your honor, the Prosecutor is badgering the witness!' The judge replied that he too had seen that objection raised on the Perry Mason show but, unfortunately, it was not included in the California code."

Television shouldn't teach such distorted messages as these. "TV should not hurt people," says Gerbner, "it should help people." The way to do this is to change television programming so that it will teach realistic lessons about life. There is only one way to do that. "If the financial base can be broadened," Gerbner explains," if resource allocation can devote more money to the creative end of it, I think that within the framework of television, which is not terribly innovative anyway, the program fare can be enriched and diversified. To have the mainstream of an entire culture predicated on nothing but sales, existing on nothing but advertising budgets must be seen as sheer insanity."

IS THERE ANY choice but changing television? Can anything be done by, perhaps, a parent to stop the process Gerbner has identified? "There is no way," Gerbner asserts, "for parents to regain control of the television set. They've lost it. No mother or father can compete anymore. Television has won. It is the most important thing in America."

Television and the Real World

What does television teach about the world? True, there are news programs and rare documentaries that give insights into world affairs to people who might otherwise remain totally ignorant of them. But what kind of information is provided by the day-to-day, prime time adventure shows? For several years George Gerbner and associates at the Annenberg School of Communications have been asking this question and devising scientific methods of finding the answer.

Gerbner's latest approach was published in his much publicized "TV Violence Profile Number 8." The measurement found the 1976-77 TV season to be the most violent since the profile was begun in 1967. The profile was a major factor in the networks' subsequent decision to limit the amount of violence in the 1977-78 season. Whether violence has been reduced for this new season remains to be measured.

But the one part of the Gerber study that received least media attention seems even more significant than the violence measurement itself. Through carefully constructed research methods the study set out to measure the world view of heavy TV viewers as compared to that of persons who watch far less television. Four questions were asked (see chart on this page) and respondents could select an answer that was close to correct in the real world or an answer that was closer to correct according to the world of prime time TV.

The study found "a significant tendency for heavy viewers to overestimate the prevalence of violence, compared to that exhibited by light viewers." The study controlled variables, and found that the effects of heavy televiewing could not be accounted for by major demographic variables of age, sex, education or even — in the case of a sample of children in New Jersey — I.Q. In other words, television viewing is significantly associated with giving television answers to the questions. According to Gerbner, "The effects are consistent and robust across a range of undoubtedly powerful control comparisons."

The chart and the findings of the study should make an excellent class discussion. The discussion could begin by giving students the four questions shown along with a blank space to indicate how many hours per week they watch television. An in-class comparison between heavy and light viewers could be made in search of any possible correlation. The methodology would hardly be scientific, but the experiment would still be provocative and informative.

Question ("TV Answer" Underlined)	Data Source: "Real World"	Data Source: "World of television"
1. During any given week, what are your chances of being involved in some kind of violence? About one in ten? About 1 in 100?	.41 violent crimes per 100 people (1973 Police data)	64.4% of characters are involved in violence (Cultural Indicators data, 1976-76)
2. What percent of all males who have jobs work in law enforcement and crime detection? One percent? Five percent?	1% (1970 U.S. Census)	12% of all TV male characters (Cultural Indicators data, 1969-76)
3. What percent of all crimes are violent crimes like murders, rape, robbery and aggravated assault? Fifteen percent? Twenty-five percent?	10% (Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1974)	77% of all TV major characters who commit crimes (as criminials) also commit violence (Cultural Indicators data, 1969-76)
4. Does most fatal violence occur between strangers or between relatives or aquaintances?	16% of homicides occur between strangers, 64% occur between family members or friends (National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969)	58% of homicides are committed by strangers (Cultural Indicators data, 1967-76)

For those interested in the details of the study, complete with statistics, a copy of "TV Violence Profile Number 8" can be obtained for $12.50 from Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104. Make checks payable to the "Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania."

The Newcasters by Ron Powers (St. Martin's Press, 1977, 243 pages, hardcover, $8.95 from bookstores). "The biggest heist of the 1970s never made it on the six o'clock news. The biggest heist of the 1970's **was** the six o'clock news." Thus begins Ron Power's biting account of the fall of television news from the heights of public service to the depths of entertainment. When television stations discovered that the news department could actually make money, journalism at local stations took a distant second place to show biz.

Local television news (Powers does not include network news in his criticism) is now judged by the number of viewers in the desirable 18-49 age group that it attracts. Newscasters are chosen not by their credentials as journalists or their intimate knowledge of the area but by a strange amalgam of personality, looks, and charisma.

News directors do not ask the traditional journalistic questions designed to reveal the whole truth; instead they ask, "What do people want?" According to Powers, they are more interested in "What pleased them most? Amused them? Gratified them, charmed them, or provided them with the sort of vicarious cheap thrills that kept them mesmerized during prime-time entertainment?" Stay away from news that bores; stress personalities, human interest, and celebrities; keep stories uncomplicated and superficial; show pictures.

The ultimate incarnation of news as entertainment is Happy Talk news. The Eyewitness Team wears matching blazers, performs on an expensive-looking set, jokes, and makes generally

Videosphere

inane conversation, and reports on stories that are news only to those who might confuse **People** magazine with the **New York Times.**

The local stations bear the burden of Powers' stings, but the direction of the news has been controlled by a small group of news consultants. Powers interviews and examines the tactics of consultants such as Frank N. Magic and Associates, and McHugh & Hoffman. He blames the consultants for creating an aura of scientific research that convinces local station managers to change news into cybernetic entertainment.

The Newscasters is most biting and most useful to media teachers, when analyzing a local newscast in minute-by-minute detail. Powers shows how Happy Talk news gives the illusion of being informative without really presenting news. His analysis of a single newscast is so strong that we will either reprint or summarize it in the next issue of **Media Mix.**

The Newscasters has its share of weak chapters, the equivalent of a TV newscast's soft news. The interviews with Walter Cronkite, Geraldo Rivera, and Barbara Walters add little to the already fine criticism of TV news. The first dozen chapters of this book should be required reading for media teachers until Happy Talk is replaced by news.

Roper Study Shows Small Growth in TV

Every two years the Roper organization conducts a poll for the Television Information Office asking people what they think about television. The 1976 results, released recently, show that 70 percent of those polled claimed television is doing an "excellent or good job"; this compares to 71 percent in 1974. Also, 64 percent of the respondents still rank TV as the source of most of their news, compared to 65 percent in 1974.

When asked, "On an average day, about how many hours do you personally spend watching TV?" the median (note: median; not average) hours reported by total sample were: 1961 – 2:17, 1964 – 2:38, 1968 – 2:47, 1972 –2:50, 1976 – 2:53.

A copy of the complete study can be obtained for 50¢ from Television Information Office, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10022. Ask for "Changing Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media, 1959-1976."

Television Violence

Television violence is a crucial area of research for students of mass media, American problems, social studies, or mass culture. **Television Violence** is a 62-frame, color, sound filmstrip with worksheets that encourages students to examine themselves and ask: "What is violence on television doing to me?"

"How do the ten-thousand-plus murders I've seen on TV make me a different person?"

The filmstrip points out that societies have always been exposed to

violence, but never in history has so much violence been so important a part of daily entertainment. Using the experiments of Albert Bandura as a starting point, the filmstrip argues that children do, in certain situations, imitate violent behavior seen on television. The filmstrip also explores the influence of TV violence on adult behavior within the family and the social implications of violent programming.

When mass media treats the problem of television violence the question is, "How much violence is too much?" But little has been said about the way in which violence is presented on television and its lessons beyond imitation. The filmstrip examines the messages of TV violence as well as its social effects. It also deals with the violent elements in some comedy, news, and sports presentations.

Television Violence argues that attempts to clean up or sanitize violence may actually be doing more harm than good.

One worksheet (supplied in spirit master form) enables students to study how violence is used on crime and action programs and what its use teaches about life. Students can also use the worksheet to determine if the networks really have reduced the amount of televiolence for the 1977-78 season.

A second worksheet invites parents to participate in a sharing of viewpoints and asks if they can see any influence from television on the behavior of their own children.

An extensive teaching guide lists discussion and research topics, and includes an annotated bibliography of books, magazines, films, and filmstrips on television.

Television Violence, filmstrip with spirit masters, cassette narration, $19.50 from Learning Seed Company, 145 Brentwood, Palatine, Illinois 60067.

Spots: The Popular Art of American Television Commercials by Bruce Kurtz (111 pages, paperback $9.95 plus 75¢ handling, from Arts Communications, 14 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003. A 50-minute videotape of the spots treated in the book is also available for $250 plus $5 handling). **Spots** examines television commercials from the viewpoint of visual imagery in the context of aesthetics. Through four fascinating interviews with TV spot-makers and close analysis of dozens of commercials, Kurtz explores the methods of visual persuasion and the commercials as pop culture and art.

Elbert Budin, whom Kurtz calls "the world's pre-eminent cinematographer of food," explains how he makes walnuts, oranges, and beer appear sensual, almost erotic delights. In making "soup drop" for Nabisco Saltine Crackers, Boudin used about 10,000 feet of film shot at 2000 frames per second to show a cracker land in a bowl of soup so the viewer can appreciate the "beautiful crown as the cracker lands."

Mike Cuesta is a director known for his sensitive character development within the highly limited time of a commercial. Kurtz explains some of Cuesta's aesthetic considerations in an ad for Insurance Company of North America depicting the San Francisco earthquake: "Cuesta's references to familiar great films evoke memories which lead to a vivid accounting of dramatic events, powerfully evoked in 60 seconds. Those references begin in 'San Francisco' with black-and-white film styles current at the time of the San

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to the Brink's truck that stops at the University hospital.

Those precautions turned out to be more than were needed, and most of the offices have returned to their customary places. A few employees have reported being intimidated or harassed as they tried to get to work, and a gallon of yellow paint was splashed on the front of the Franklin Building—"part of the price of labor disputes," comments Robinson—but the pickets have been more ruffian toward truckers trying to cross their lines. Union burlies eye every unmarked or rented truck carefully and quickly bolster the few housekeeper pickets when a trucker seems intent on entering the University. (The housekeepers themselves have apparently been told not to jeopardize their standing by jostling anyone but to let the union do it.) On September 6, United States District Judge Herbert Fogel issued a consent decree, which prohibits Local 115 from threatening or interfering with anyone doing business with the University.

There have been "a few tensions," Morris acknowledges, "but the big thing is to get across that there's a strike on campus—a primary, legal, lawful strike." (The University maintains that since the employees have been laid off, technically there is no strike. Nevertheless, some suppliers have honored the picket lines.)

Until the start of school, the union spent much of its effort writing letters—to the Trustees, Philadelphia City Council, state legislators, and local unions whose employers service the University. Just before the semester began, Morris said he would seek the weight of student and faculty opinion to put pressure on President Martin Meyerson to rehire the workers, but neither the faculty nor the students seem that sympathetic.

The former workers have a strong emotional plea—that they have given the University long years of service (33 of them have worked at Penn for more than 20 years, 7 among them for over 30 years). The University has offered a severance package which includes supplements to unemployment compensation to bring the workers' weekly income up to 90 per cent of their most recent take-home pay, until January 1; retirement benefits for 29 of the employees near retirement age; continued coverage of workers' children covered by the Faculty-Staff Scholarship Plan until the children graduate; and help in finding other jobs. But the housekeepers feel that it doesn't mitigate either the insult to their allegiance to Penn or the hardship, given their simple skills, in finding adequately paying jobs.

Robinson acknowledges that the University may not appear kind in the swiftness with which it dismissed the housekeepers, "but it's in the interest of both sides to terminate quickly," he says.

Verbal assaults traded over television violence

Since off-screen verbal assaults don't count as acts of television violence, you won't find a report of the latest fracas between the Cultural Indicators Project, headed by Dr. George Gerbner, dean of Penn's Annenberg School of Communications, and the television networks. Nonetheless, according to Gerbner, "the fight is in full swing."

Following the House Subcommittee on Communications' spring hearing on television violence, which centered on the results of the project, John A. Schneider, president of C.B.S., wrote to Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin, chairman of the subcommittee, about what he called "four basic—and fatal—flaws" in Gerbner's study of violence.

He objected to the internal composition of the Violence Index (the chart which ranks the networks according to the amount of violence they televise, including a comparison by year); the interpretations those involved in the study made from the index; the use of only one week of programs to make the study; and the inclusion of "comedic violence and acts of nature" (in its own counts of what it calls dramatic violence, C.B.S. excludes actions which appear in those contexts). He also sent an analysis of the Violence Profile by C.B.S.'s research department, which contained a rejection of Gerbner's Victimization Ratio, a "calculus of life's chances for different groups of people in the world of television drama."

Gerbner, writing to Van Deerlin in reply, called Schneider's denials "confusion and wishful thinking." The networks have long deplored the kind of "simplistic count" which Schneider seems to be advocating, he wrote. He reasserted the validity of his methodology and included his own analysis of the C.B.S. analysis of his work.

Schneider and Gerbner are at loggerheads, both somewhat righteous about what they perceive as the limitations of the other, both with a good deal of self-respect at stake. Gerbner seems to have the upper hand, partly because of an apparent independence from preconceptions, partly because Schneider is forced to deny what many viewers intuitively feel about the programs they watch.

For instance, Gerbner's statistics show that, in absolute numbers and proportionately, women commit less violence than men and are less often victims. According to C.B.S., that is precisely what viewers are likely to perceive. According to Gerbner, that simple counting does not reflect the fears and anxieties women experience when they translate the televised world into their real world.

To portray those feelings statistically, Gerbner constructed the Victimization Ratio, in which the frequency that a specified group is a victim of violence is compared to the frequency that the group commits violence. The ratio tends to be higher for the elderly than for women, higher for women than for men. The result, he concludes, is that those with higher ratios have more fear of the real world, for they see themselves portrayed as lacking power in the televised world.

The Violence Index has become another major battleground, possibly because it is the most readily accessible table in the profile. The C.B.S. report accused it of being "an arbitrarily weighted set of arbitrarily chosen measures of aspects of violence on television, whose meaning is totally unclear."

An index, a statistician told us, is intended to measure something that doesn't have a natural scale; it makes quantitative and objective those things which otherwise can only be described, such as satisfaction or preference (it is used widely in market research). An index, she said, aims to decrease the variability of responses of two people examining the same thing and marking their reactions independently. It ought to help make predictions. It is not faultless.

In accordance with index theory, Gerbner weights his findings in order to get what he feels is an accurate representation of television violence. Most people feel that some kinds of violence are more violent than other kinds and ought to be weighted differently. In the Violence Index, murder is counted as two acts of violence; principal characters are weighted more heavily than secondary characters. Our statistician consultant says that those choices are arguable (which is not the same thing as calling them arbitrary).

"It's not that we're so right, but that he's so wrong," says Gene P. Mater, vice president and assistant to the president of C.B.S. Mater goes on to accuse Gerbner of "leaving out variables he doesn't care about," of weighting items arbitrarily ("I use the word advisedly," he says), of going beyond objectivity with such phrases as "C.B.S. . . . lifted its two-season lid on 'family viewing time' violence," and of taking causes for effects. "There's no substantiation that television makes people fearful. In large cities, perhaps fearful people don't go out at night, but sit home and watch television. George hasn't allowed for that," Mater says. "It's long been known that television reinforces preconceived ideas, rather than changing them a hell of a lot."

Mater, in what might be called good-humored weariness, looks on the subject of violence as the focus of this year's attack on television, like attacks on commercials in years past. "If not Gerbner," he says, "someone else would be setting himself up as the guru of violence." He is also annoyed at individuals and groups

continued

(he mentions specifically the American Medical Association and the Parent-Teacher Association) who follow Gerbner's implications by reading summaries or other accounts of it without investigating the merits of the research.

Meanwhile, Gerbner will examine the similarity between television news and television drama, but he will be doing it without Federal funds from the National Institute of Mental Health, which up to now has granted $400,000 to his project. The N.I.M.H. recently rejected his application for renewed funding because, it claimed, monitoring television is a service and not basic research (it renewed a grant for part of the project—a study of the effects of television on children—until the end of March, 1978).

The project will continue with grants from the A.M.A., says Gerbner. It will also become more diversified, studying commercials as well as news; looking at such additional areas as health, foreign affairs, and the family; and taking on specialized studies. "The act of the N.I.M.H. was helpful in crystallizing our plans," Gerbner claims.

Is a U.S. military union an idea whose time has come?

Suppose they gave a war and nobody came—because everyone was on strike.

Not likely, says Dr. Ezra S. Krendel, professor of political science. Still, he feels that unions are likely to begin recruiting in the armed forces and suggests that the ranking officers stop running away from the issue.

In *Unionizing the Armed Forces,* which he edited with Dr. Bernard Samoff, adjunct professor of marketing, and which was published last summer by the University of Pennsylvania Press, Krendel points out that there is ample precedent for unionization. Collective bargaining units exist in the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Austria. "In fact," he notes, "the oldest labor union in Norway, founded in 1835, is a union of naval officers."

Nor is unionization totally foreign to the United States military. According to Krendel, the Air National Guard, which makes up "almost three-fourths of the interceptor force currently available to protect the United States against air attack," has a number of full-time civilian technicians, who serve in dual civilian and military roles. As of January 1, 1976, 72 per cent of the technicians, who constitute the "stable core" of the Guard, were represented by unions.

Nonetheless, unionization is being resisted. The Defense Manpower Commission report of April, 1976, called the status of the Guard technicians "disturbing" and recommended gradually replacing them "with full-time active duty Guardsmen and reservists."

"I think unionization and the operation of the military forces are totally incompatible," said General George S. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before the House Armed Services Committee while testifying on the fiscal year 1977 Defense budget. He also criticized the service journals (*Air Force Times, Army Times,* and *Navy Times*) for helping to "create the atmosphere in part that makes people ready for this unionization."

He was joined in his opposition by various organizations; Krendel lists 24 of them, including the American Legion. In general, they are concerned, as the American Legion stated in a resolution at its 1975 national convention, with how unionization will affect "the well established and effective traditions of the military chain of command and military discipline." Krendel writes that the protesting organizations themselves have "attributes of unions in lobbying for enlistment benefits and retirement benefits" and that their protestations carry "the strong smell of sour grapes."

There are at present 15 to 20 bills relating to unionization of the armed forces in the House of Representatives and the Senate, most of them alike in prohibiting a base commander from negotiating with a union. But Congress is not moving them through the legislative process because, according to Krendel, "it is afraid of seeming anti-union." Meanwhile, the American Federation of Federal Employees passed a national resolution to begin recruiting from the uniformed services, but is now polling its locals to confirm the vote. The locals are split, says Krendel. Some of them want the national organization to spend the money on the locals; some fear being dominated by the military, which, in some areas, would be the numerically largest component.

JOAN RUGGLES

Ezra Krendel: *ample precedent*

An anti-military-union bill would force a constitutional issue, Krendel speculates. The Supreme Court has already upheld the right of public employees to join unions on First Amendment grounds. On the other hand, in a 1974 decision, the Court reiterated its long-standing recognition "that the military is, by necessity, a specialized society [and has] developed laws and traditions of its own during its long history." The Court also stated that "the fundamental necessity for obedience, and the consequent necessity for imposition of discipline, may render permissible within the military that which would be constitutionally impermissible outside it." However, Krendel writes, "whether it could be shown that a military union would cause such a deterioration in discipline is, of course, an entirely separate issue."

Krendel traces the beginnings of recent interest in unionization not to a few activist organizations which tried to politicize the Army in the Vietnam days, but to the Advisory Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force, appointed by President Nixon in 1969 and chaired by Thomas S. Gates, Jr., *'28 C, '56 Hon.* That commission, 6 of whose 14 members "had careers which emphasized either finance or economics," wrote a report suggesting that volunteers would join an army whose pay and benefits were good. Unwittingly, Krendel says, the Gates Commission overrode the traditionally "romantic" appeal of the armed forces, which had long tapped less measurable qualities, like a sense of duty, self-esteem, a desire to excel and to seek adventure.

Instead, Krendel continues, the Commission defined the military as an "occupation"—one in which the marketplace prevails and determines what one's skills are worth. "The occupational model implies first priority inheres in self-interest—rather than in the task itself, or in the employing organization," and it is exemplified by the trade union. The occupational model precludes both the "professional" model, which places emphasis on "professional skills, career achievement, and intrinsic satisfaction with one's work," and the "calling," which "takes the form of 'one on one' recourse to superiors or a trust in the paternalism of the organization."

The Gates Commission, Krendel concludes, reflected the national values of its time, just as the Dutch Republic of the 16th century reflected the mercantile values of "middle-class Dutch Calvinists" when it created the first modern, paid

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 12, 1977
New York, NY, Volume II, No. 285
©1977 News World Communications, Inc.
Phone 532-8300 Classified 594-0390 Circulation 532-8300

The News World

New York FINAL 10¢

The growing campaign to make TV violence self-destruct

By Robert Morton
NEWS WORLD STAFF

As his verdict was announced in a Miami courtroom last Thursday night, young Ronny Zamora stared impassively at the floor and the color drained from his face. He had been convicted of first-degree murder and robbery and his defense that "television addiction" made him kill his elderly next-door neighbor had been brushed aside.

Defense attorney Ellis Rubin was especially disappointed at the decision because the testimony of his star witness—who was waiting to describe the effects of TV violence on young people—had been overruled by the judge. Using ironic terms, Rubin called that action "a death blow" to his case.

Also upset were the special interest groups who for the last two years have been waging a war of words and threatened boycotts against the major networks about televised violence.

Declared Nicholas Johnson, former outspoken FCC commissioner and now chairman of the National Citizens' committee for Broadcasting (NCCB), "Ronny Zamora and television both stand guilty as charged. Zamora has been found guilty of a senseless murder; television is guilty of something worse. Zamora didn't profit from his crime. Television does."

For large numbers of New Yorkers, particularly the young, television truly serves as a window on the world. To the lonely it can be a friend; for the impressionable, a teacher. What about TV violence—how important a role does it play in shaping American life?

Today THE NEWS WORLD begins a special five-part series about the intense, often emotional debate on this question. The first article examines the events that led up to young Ronny Zamora's plea of innocent due to "television intoxication."

Numbers of consumer groups like Johnson's are pressuring the television networks to increase the diversity of their programming and greatly reduce the blood and guts. They argue that TV violence has a detrimental effect on children and leads to criminal behavior. The networks contend that these charges have never been proven, that most people like to see dramatic conflict on the tube and should be allowed to watch it.

Although the furor over television violence dates back to the release of the Surgeon General's Report on the issue in 1972, it reached a crescendo this year. In fact the emotions generated during the debate have occasionally seemed to approach the dramatic level of human combat of the more controversial network offerings.

On the attack are normally sedate groups such as the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) that are alarmed at what seem to be signs of a deteriorating society: child abuse, battered wives and steadily increasing rates for other violent crimes. They view the incredible number of anti-social acts (one study reported 42 per average hour) portrayed on television as the culprit.

Calling "bloody murder"

On the defensive are the beleagured networks and other professional television groups. They are calling "bloody murder" at what they perceive as a McCarthy-like assault on their First Amendment rights. Furthermore, they vehemently deny the claims of increased television violence in the 1975-76 season which precipitated this year's PTA-AMA offensive, and disagree with studies which supposedly link TV violence and aggressive behavior.

The history of the conflict dates back to 1968 when President Johnson appointed a commission headed by Milton Eisenhower to study violence five days after the assassination of Robert Kennedy.

Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications in Philadelphia, was asked to survey the violence on television for the 1967-68 season. Gerbner has made himself a thorn in the side of the television industry ever since by publishing his annual television violence index.

Those ratings, which are based on one week's programs per season, have generally declined in the years following 1967, the year before the killings of Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. In 1972, the Nixon-commissioned Surgeon General's report on "The Impact of Television Violence" resulted in even fewer violent incidents on TV and more serious attention from the networks to the issue.

The 1975-76 season was one the television industry would like to forget. The networks were admittedly overstocked with "action shows" (police-detective and adventure drama), and the Gerbner Violence Index was 204, higher than the figure for 1967 (199), even though all of the networks claimed a decrease. This report added fuel to a campaign already begun in 1975.

The PTA had issued a resolution that year calling for programing reform, and the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency had prepared a representation about TV violence for their clients throughout the country.

Most significantly, perhaps, Nicholas Johnson had assumed the leadership of the NCCB, infused it with his zeal for advocacy, and initiated studies which monitored the advertising sponsors of violent programs. Johnson has a down-home touch that makes him personably persuasive. Journalists like him because his quotes can add zip to otherwise lifeless news articles.

For example, when he was speaking about how networks should implement policy, he said, "I mean these folks can't just tell the public to go to hell. They've

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The growing campaign to make TV violence self-destruct

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got to do something to show a real response. Not just a superficial public relations gloss."

The PTA strikes

In 1976 Carol Kimmel, the national president of PTA, decided to mobilize her organization for action. After appointing a commission, she held a series of seminars in each of the PTA's eight national regions. Parents and teachers testified with complaints and horror stories.

In November of the same year, the AMA got into the act by issuing a $25,000 grant to the NCCB. And President Richard Palmer spoke publicly on TV violence, referring to it as an environmental hazard and claiming that programing consisted "largely of violent content."

In reaction, Frederick Pierce, President of ABC Television, sent Palmer a burning reply which was made public before it even reached its destination, according to an AMA source. The letter said, in part,

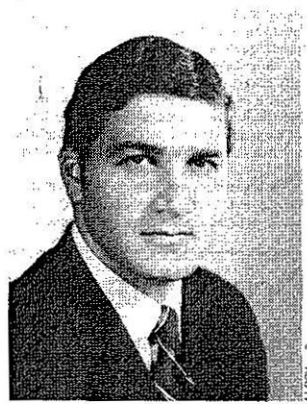
"These are serious charges that are untrue, unwarranted and unrepresentative of the high standards for which your organization stands . . . You have taken it upon yourself and the AMA to write a number of major American corporations suggesting they review their advertising policies . . . [for] commercials contained in television programs . . . labeled by the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting as 'violent.' . . . Your letter can be interpreted as an implied call for program censorship."

This year, the pressure has continued to mount against the television industry. The AMA made grants of $25,000 and $32,000 respectively to the NCCB and George Gerbner's research group. In March, Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin's (D-Calif.) Subcommittee on Communications held hearings with testimony from 17 witnesses, including network presidents, George Gerbner and representatives of major corporations. Such big corporations as General Motors, Union Oil, Sears Roebuck and Schlitz Brewing Co. announced their refusal to advertize on violent TV programs.

Joining the bandwagon

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ jointly jumped on the bandwagon July 4 when it unanimously adopted a resolution that claimed "the predominant concepts expounded by television are poles apart from the Christian understanding of the human potential and God's purpose for what has been created." Furthermore, the resolution continued, "television has a preoccupation with gratuitous violence and exploitative use of sex."

If that wasn't enough, Ronny Zamora went on trial in late September and during the same month two other incidents further aroused what has now been estimated as 250 active broadcast reform groups in the United States. A 14-year-old Ohio boy, according to police, accidentally shot and killed his brother while acting out a scene from the film "Dirty Harry" the day after it was shown on television. In Indiana the trial began for four men who last February discussed a TV movie about Charles Manson and later killed four other men in a mobile home. The campaign has taken its toll—the networks have noticeably softened their programing this season. But just in case, the PTA, the AMA, the NCCB and of course George Gerbner are monitoring the airwaves for violence. The PTA has scheduled televison for six-month "probation," while the monitoring is in progress.



Carol Kimmel, immediate past president of the national PTA, mounted a campaign against TV violence in 1976 that brought the mighty networks to their knees. Frederick S. Pierce, President of ABC Television, is fighting what he considers "implied censorship"

"The National PTA is giving the networks notice that it means business when it concerns TV violence!" a press release declared. Sandra Fink, a spokeswoman for the PTA said the organization's 6.5 million members "will check to see if violence has decreased and will write letters to their local stations based on the results."

An AMA spokesman noted in pleased tones that his organization's monitoring effort overlaps with the PTA's. They are "getting into local programing while we are doing the same thing we did last year which is monitoring prime time," he said. Are the networks and other related industry groups taking all of this sitting down? Definitely not.

TV fights back

Executives and producers have spoken out vigorously, and their PR departments eagerly supply packets containing photocopies of every document or article that supports their cause. They have even established social research departments of their own to combat what they consider one-sided efforts on the part of the advocacy research groups.

In testimony before the Subcommittee on Communications, ABC President Frederick Pierce pointed out that drama involving conflict was nothing new. " 'Hamlet,' considered by many the finest play in the English language, contains a poisoning, a stabbing, a suicide, two executions and a fatal duel," he said. Furthermore, he stated, "though 130 million people saw Roots, few complained to ABC about the portrayals therein; and certainly, it would have been impossible to depict the conditions of slavery honestly without such portrayals."

The head censor of CBS, Van Gordon Sauter, charged the PTA with adopting an elitist viewpoint on the issue. They think "that even though the American people enjoy action-adventure stories, they are somehow unsuitable," he said. "But I think the action-adventure show is a legitimate genre that people enjoy and expect and have a right to see."

The battle over television violence involves a number of complex issues and is being waged on many levels. The essential problems is demonstrating that a causal relationship does or does not exist between television viewing and violent behavior. As we shall see the conduct of these studies involve varying degrees of effort in using the scientific approach. And the style of reporting the results range from objective to rhetorical.

Tomorrow: Social scientists wage a kind of "guerrilla warfare" over TV violence to the delight of the press

Sociologists wage guerrilla war with TV violence statistics

What do black people and white people, the rich and the poor, all have in common? For one thing, almost everyone watches television. Some people spend most of their waking, non-working hours in front of the tube.

Does television make you more aggressive? Today THE NEWS WORLD presents the second part of a five-part series on the issue. In this article, the focus is on the researchers commissioned by both the networks and their opponents to convince the public that their side is right.

By Robert Morton
NEWS WORLD STAFF

It was the 5 p.m. rush hour, and the cabby glared sullenly at the red light. Behind him, he could feel his passenger's growing impatience—at him in particular and the traffic in general.

The pedestrian's signal changed to "Don't Walk," but as usual, the foot traffic kept flowing, blocking the free space in the way of the car's progress. When the light finally changed to green, there was still one young man left in the street. He may have been 20.

Starting to cross, he hesitated; stepped quickly forward, then stopped. His grinning eyes challenged the car. With a low growl, the cabby hit the gas, and the kid moved at the same instant. There was no turning back for either.

Who was to blame? It doesn't matter—psychologists would say they were both exhibiting aggressive behavior. And according to a growing chorus of voices, violence on television may have directly or indirectly influenced their actions.

From this example, that notion seems a bit far-fetched. And in last week's trial of 15-year-old Ronny Zamora in Florida, the jury gave no serious thought to his defense that he murdered an elderly woman while robbing her because he had watched too many violent TV programs.

Undaunted by the decision, Zamora will appeal and his defense attorney, Ellis Rubin, has pledged to conduct a nationwide campaign against television violence.

The crusades and rhetoric are fine, but in the twentieth century, logic and proof are somewhat more necessary for an argument to be convincing. And that is where the social scientists enter the picture.

Psychologists and sociologists have come into prominence in the twentieth century because of the increasing demand to explain and to remedy human behavior. However the laws which govern behavior are very difficult to pin down, and the scientific methods employed by chemists and physicists often don't apply. Man's free will regularly seems to interfere with his predictability.

So social scientists are faced with the difficult task of proving hypotheses that defy proof. They typically must delve into gray areas which lie between hard facts and thin air, experience and morality.

But on every front of the TV violence war, pages filled with statistics are being thrust in opponents' faces to prove various conflicting points of view. There are hundreds of studies that add weight to the quite different contentions that TV violence: stimulates aggressive behavior; acts as a catharsis to reduce aggressiveness; results in real-life imitations of violent acts for those predisposed towards them; and has no significant effect whatsoever on behavior.

Interestingly, a number of the social scientists are openly taking sides on the issue, lining up with either the anti-TV violence forces or the television industry. The national Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) and the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting

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Sociologists wage guerrilla war with TV violence statistics

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(NCCB) have called for extensive programming reform in terms of gratuitous displays of violence on television. They are monitoring this season's network offerings and are threatening boycotts on products of advertisers who sponsor violent programs. ABC, NBC and CBS are mounting their own extensive lobbying and public relations offensives denouncing what they say are implied calls for censorship from their opponents.

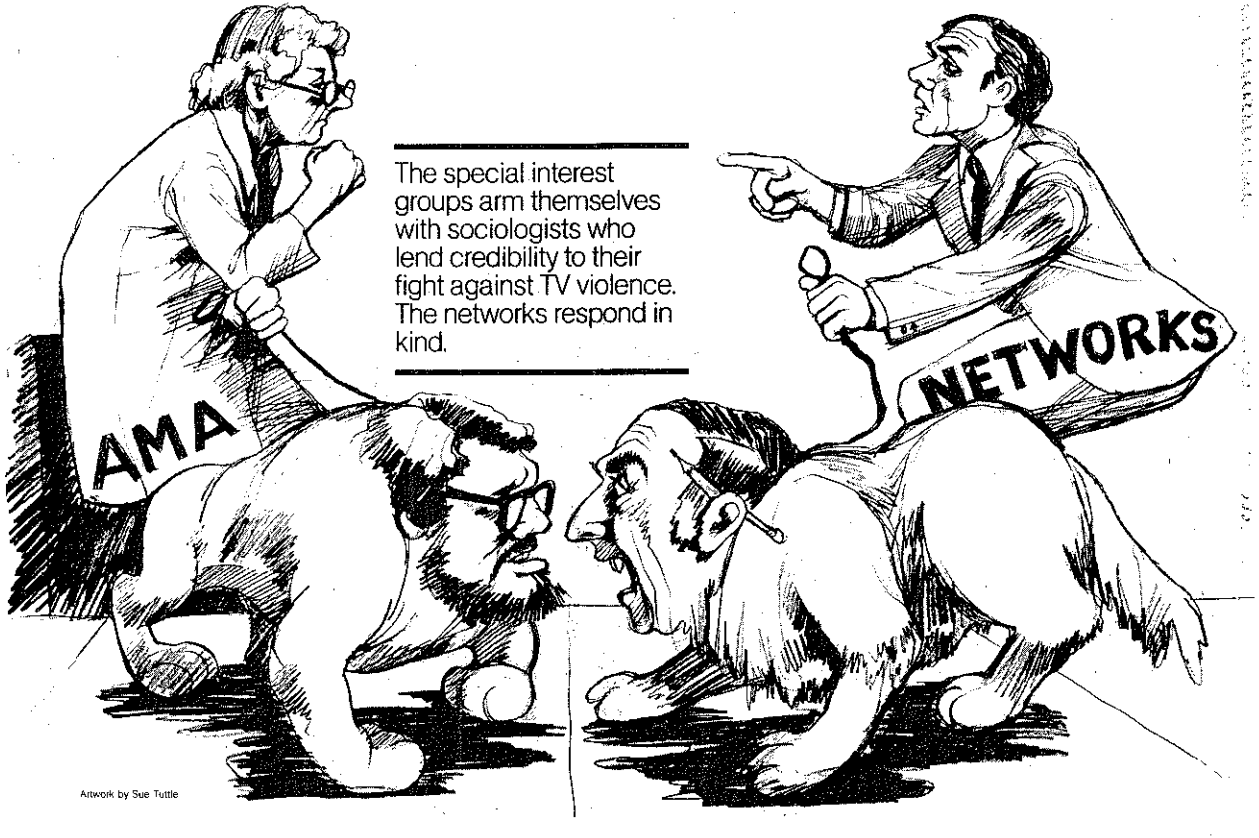
While one might think that in the interest of apparent objectivity and credibility, social scientists who study the issue would attempt to keep secret their personal views on the controversy, that in fact has not consistently been the case. Advocacy is still in these days, and some inquiry into the effects of TV violence on children and other human beings. On the one hand are the pure scientists who remain within their roles as researchers, experimenters, and writers of articles in scholarly journals read only by others of similar qualifications, occupation and endurance. On another level are social scientists who wage guerrilla warfare on behalf of their convictions and/or the organizations that are providing the research funds.

Writing in the July 11 issue of New York Magazine, Anthony Haden-Guest credited Dr. George Gerbner with being "The Man Who's Killing TV Violence," in his article by that title. Gerbner, who is the dean of the Annenberg School of Communication in Philadelphia, has been analyzing TV violence for the last 10 years with his associate, Dr. Larry Gross, and he has not exactly sat on his findings.

Ironically, he has waged war against the TV industry most effectively through frequent appearances on television talk shows. Also he testified in March this year before a congressional subcommittee on Communications. As a result, says Haden-Guest, such shows as "The Streets of San Francisco" and "Hunter" are off the air, and "Starsky and Hutch" is toned down.

In actuality, Gerbner's primary research effort, the "Violence Index," does not deal with the central issue of how TV violence affects behavior. Instead, it measures a more comprehensible concept—the level of violence on prime time,

On one level of the inquiry into TV violence are social scientists who wage 'guerrilla warfare' on behalf of their convictions and/or the organizations that are providing the research funds.



The special interest groups arm themselves with sociologists who lend credibility to their fight against TV violence. The networks respond in kind.

Artwork by Sue Tuttle

of the most passionately indignant battlers for truth are the supposedly disinterested profs.

And what's more, money is involved. All the special interests involved have issued grants for research on the social effects of television violence. Five years ago, ABC network made awards totaling $1 million for studies by Melvin S. Heller, M.D., the late Samuel Polsky, Ph.D. of Temple University and Seymour Lieberman, Ph.D. Now they are soliciting applications for further grants from universities around the country. The AMA has made grants totaling at least $57,000 in the last year.

Supposedly the people who receive these funds are looking for definitive conclusions no matter how they might affect the interests of their benefactors. But somehow the results of these projects, at least those that are made public, have a way of endorsing the positions of the interests that endowed them.

The wages of scholarship

So we are talking about two levels of late night, and weekend daytime shows. Last season's rating (204) was the highest since the studies began and helped stimulate the present controversy.

The method consists of taping a typical week's programming and analyzing it according to a number of factors. The score is figured by adding the percentage of programs that have violence in them, plus two times the number of violent actions per programs, plus two times the number of violent actions per hour, plus the percentage of the characters who are involved in violence, plus the percentage of the characters involved in killing. A violent act is defined as "the overt expression of physical force compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed."

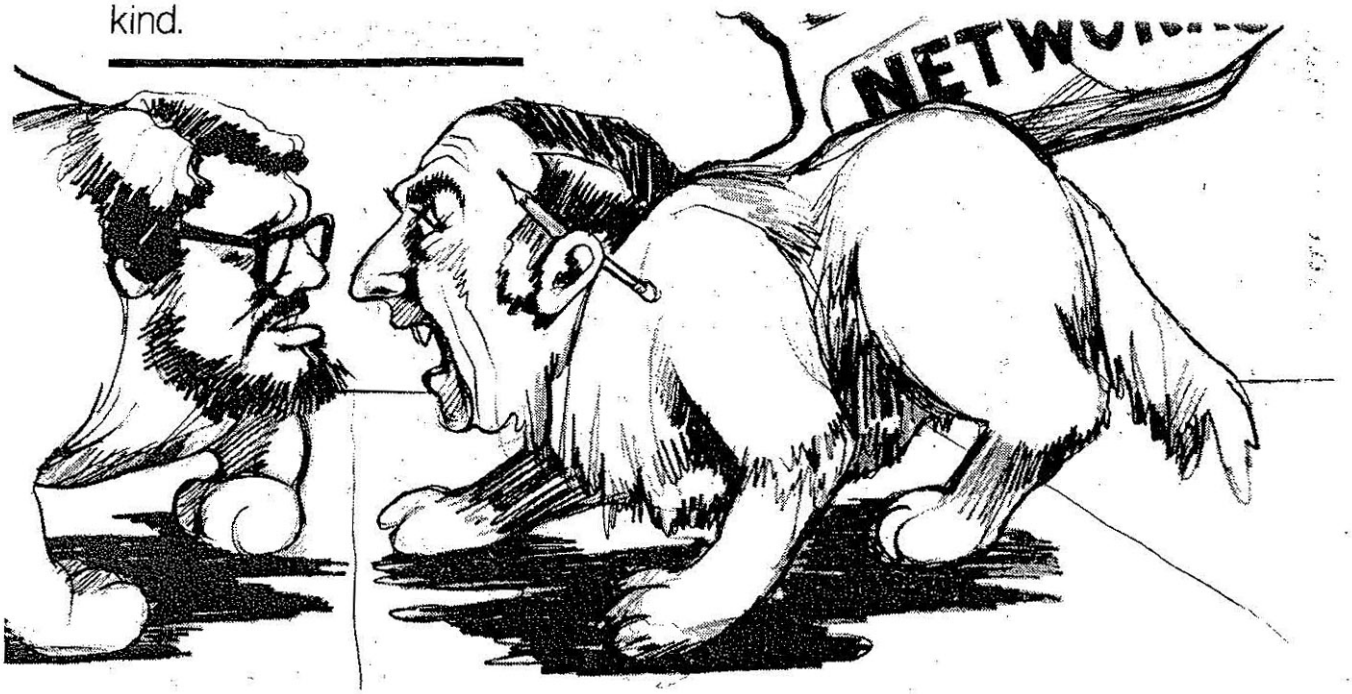
CBS does its own study

Sound complicated? Well, the networks, who incidentally have their own respective departments for research of television's social effects, apparently have a much simpler method of figuring the level of violence on TV. The CBS definition of violent actions, which Gerbner thinks too narrow, excludes natural disasters, accidents and comic violence. Because CBS conducts its studies over 13-week period, the network executives consider their results to be more reliable than those obtained from Gerbner's lone sample week. There is no such thing as a typical week of television anyway, the networks protest.

Of course the differing methods yield contrasting results. So the CBS Social Research Department said violence in their programs declined 36 per cent in the 1975-76 period, while Gerbner's Violence Index showed a 30 point increase to 181 for the same period. (ABC increased 20 points to 207, and NBC increased 23 points to 224, according to Gerbner.)

When the smoke had cleared following the debate over these conflicting studies before the House Subcommittee on Communications last spring, the CBS Economics and Research Department issued a final evaluation of the Violence Index claiming that it lacked "scientific justification" and was "statistically faulty." The

kind.



report also decried "Gerbner's unfortunate descent to ad hominem arguments" when he wrote the Subcommittee that CBS denials of his figures served as a corporate defense mechanism" in the form of "self-serving claims and public relations gestures."

But all this brouhaha about the violence level on television left unanswered the basic issue—does or does not TV violence have a negative effect on people's behavior, especially children? Nicholas Johnson, chairman of NCCB believes that question already has been answered. "I think there really is no longer any doubt as to the validity of scientific concern about the effect of television violence," he said.

The divergent evidence

The Surgeon General's Report in 1972 has been used to support both sides of the controversy. Dr. Robert Liebert, who participated in making the report, was quoted by a spokeswoman of the PTA as summarizing the studies in the following way:

"The quibbling is unwarranted on the basis of many lines of converging evidence involving more than 50 studies . . . The weight of the evidence is clear: the demonstrated teaching and instigating effects of aggressive TV on youth are sufficient to warrant immediate remedial action."

But the television industry likes to quote excerpts from the actual Surgeon General's Report such as the following: "First there is evidence that any sequence by which viewing television violence causes aggressive behavior is most likely applicable only to some children who are predisposed in that direction."

The findings of ABC researchers, Drs. Heller and Polsky were quite definite. "Exposure to aggressive television did not lead to heightened aggressive behavior," they reported. Although television did have an effect on the aggressiveness of fantasies, it did not noticeably alter the behavior of even "emotionally susceptible" children. They did grant that while television did not appear to cause violent or criminal action, there were "indications" that the "style or technique of crimes" could be affected.

Clearly the hundreds of studies have yielded divergent conclusions. And the confusion has been heightened when the ones who are sponsoring or performing the studies have a moral and/or financial interest in the outcome. There is extensive research being done at universities arount the country, unheard of in the news media, that apparently is backed by no special interests. These studies will be reported in the final article of this series next Tuesday.

One beneficiary of the TV violence controversy is the press. While there exists an unwritten rule that newspapers don't print critical articles about each other, television is definitely open game. Part of the reason is that television is overtaking newspapers in the competition for the public's attention. According to a survey by the National Merchants Association, 64 per cent of the retailers surveyed increased their television advertising budgets between 1975 and 1976. Therefore some editors are enjoying the discomfiture of the major networks even though they have been accused on the same ground in previous times.

The heavy emphasis on television itself has obscured other relevant factors. For example, Dr. Walter Menninger, clinical director of Topeka State Hospital, thinks it misleading "to scapegoat the 'black box' and disregard the most significant influence on children, the real people in their lives. It is the adult models living with children who determine their ultimate violent or non-violent behavior far more than Kojak," he said.

Sandy Fink, a spokesman for the national PTA in Chicago, acknowledged that her organization, in addition to monitoring the networks is developing a guide for parents in explaining television action to their children.

Tomorrow: Due to the traditional interpretation of the First Amendment, networks programers and station managers have always regulated themselves with no outside interference. Now they are saying the economic pressure placed on them by the PTA, AMA and others, is 'dangerous.'