

January 16, 1985

Gene P. Mater, Vice President
Administration and Policy
CBC Worldwide Enterprises
CBS/Broadcast Group
CBS Inc., 51 West 52 Street
New York, NY 10019

Dear Jean:

Thank you for your letter of January 18 and congratulations to your "new life." I have read about it and hope you will be happy for I know you will be very busy with your new responsibilities.

We are pleased that John Eger has accepted our invitation to contribute to the Journal of Communication, and look forward to receiving his article.

I see that in the last analysis you could not resist the temptation to comment on television and violence, so neither can I. We never said that television has made viewers fearful; our (and many other researchers') data show that regular viewing contributes to viewers' conceptions of reality, including that of the hazards of life. So regardless of the absolute level of fear in any group, the difference between light viewers and heavy viewers in that group is significant. Among white New Yorkers, for example, where the general level of fear is high, the heavy viewers (controlling for all demographics) is still higher.

I am enclosing a recent statement of our position in which you may be interested. I think it is a fair, full, and well supported position. See especially figure 2 (at the end) that shows how our index of insecurity rises with viewing in nearly every group of white viewers. It also shows that among non-whites, where insecurity is much higher, television viewing seems to have the opposite effect. That means that even the "mean world" of television seems safer than their world! That is what we called "mainstreaming," explained in this article. It is too bad that most network people only read news reports of our studies but not the studies themselves.

At any rate, it was nice to hear from you and if you have any comments on our article, please let me know.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

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Gene P. Mater, Vice President
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Dear George;

January 8, 1985

In celebration of my new life, I am not writing about the influence of television, about violence, about any related subject.

Instead, I am responding to your recent letter to John M. Eger, Senior Vice President, Worldwide Enterprises, inviting him to contribute an article to the Journal of Communication. John is traveling at this time, but he asked me to inform you that he is pleased to accept your invitation to write an article for the spring issue, as outlined in your letter.

Cordially,



Dr. George Gerbner
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cc Mr. John M. Eger

Koch Urges Better Security for Apartment Houses

By JOYCE PURNICK

Mayor Koch proposed yesterday that many older, smaller apartment buildings be required to have intercoms and locked front doors, making the buildings more secure. He said he would increase the number of city housing inspectors to make sure all security measures were enforced.

In a day of announcements focused on crime, the Mayor also repeated his support for several measures he has recommended without success before, saying he hoped to use the recent shootings of four youths on an IRT subway train as a catalyst for improving the criminal-justice system.

'Clarion of Alarm'

"We want to sound the clarion of alarm and focus all of the energy, attention, anger and frustration into getting changes," the Mayor said. He was alluding to the subway case and Bernhard Hugo Goetz, the 37-year-old New Yorker who has become a hero to many people in and out of the city since telling the police that he shot the four youths after they harassed him and asked him for money.

At one news conference, and then at a second, Mr. Koch made these proposals:

¶Requiring the installation of intercom systems and locked front doors in buildings with eight apartments or more.

¶Adding 50 housing inspectors to the current force of 450, at a cost of \$2.2 million.

¶Hiring 3,000 police officers in the next two years, instead of in three years, as he proposed earlier.

¶Establishing special transit sections in all criminal courts, as he has proposed in the past.

The housing proposal resulted from a study by the staff of Manhattan Borough President Andrew J. Stein that found a third of the 400 apartment buildings they studied in Manhattan had security violations of some kind.

The Mayor is asking the City Council to require the intercoms and the locked entry doors in all buildings with eight or more apartments. The city now requires locked entry doors in all apartment buildings built after 1968, and intercom systems in all buildings with eight or more units built after 1968.

Mr. Koch said he would seek Council

and Board of Estimate approval to spend \$3 million to make those security improvements in city-owned buildings and \$2.2 million to hire the 50 inspectors.

The Mayor said his housing-security proposals were not related to the recent murder of a drama student, Caroline Isenberg, on the Upper West Side.

A few minutes later, turning to the criminal-justice system, Mr. Koch called on the State Legislature to give law-enforcement authorities access to the records of juvenile offenders — records now sealed by law.

He also asked the Legislature to give criminal-justice authorities the right to detain without bail some adults ac-

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cused of crimes.

Mr. Koch has recommended the latter measure, known as preventive detention, without success since his first term as Mayor, and he is likely to encounter opposition in Albany again.

Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink of Brooklyn said yesterday that he and his colleagues would consider all measures proposed by the Mayor, but he added that he has never supported preventive detention.

Charles Dumas, a spokesman for Senate Republicans, said only that Mr. Koch's proposals would be examined by the appropriate committee.

Thomas B. Stoddard, legislative director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, called Mr. Koch's recommendations "little more than a recapitulation of the Mayor's tired proposals of the past." He said that while some of the proposals were good and some were bad, "the only thing that makes them timely now is Bernhard Goetz."

Mr. Koch initially denounced the Goetz incident as vigilantism. In a news release yesterday, he called it "one of those rare occurrences in municipal life that illuminate like a flare the fundamental conditions of daily passage throughout the city."

"It has writ, in very large letters of the tabloids and the commentary, the drama of institutional failure and individual frustration."

In recommending 10 initiatives to fight crime, the Mayor asked for a 30-day study of the ramifications of merging the city, transit and housing police forces — an issue that has been studied many times in the past — and asked for

a review of city courthouses, with an eye on long-term capital improvements.

He also asked the Legislature to provide money for 20 additional criminal court judgeships, which it has refused to do in the past, and asked the new Chief Judge of the State Court of Appeals, Sol Wachtler, to institute a new calendar system that would require judges to follow their cases from start to finish.

Mr. Koch acknowledged that most of his criminal-justice proposals had failed to win support in the past, but said he hoped that today's climate, created by the Goetz case, would turn failure into success. He declined to predict which measures might win approval.

What Law Requires For Tenant Security

The city now requires landlords to install various protective devices in apartments, including peepholes, locks and chain guards on doors and mirrors in self-service elevators.

Buildings constructed after Jan. 1, 1968, must have locked entry doors, and those with eight or more units also need intercom systems. The law requires both measures in apartments built before 1968 if requested in writing by a majority of tenants.

Mayor Koch also proposes these requirements in buildings with eight units or more even if they were constructed before 1968.

February 8, 1985

Gene P. Mater, Vice President
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Dear Gene:

Thank you for your letter of January 29 and a re-statement of your position. I am amused how those who seem to have a vested interest in not accepting certain facts can also misconstrue the issue involved. We have never contended that heavy viewing results in high level of fear; we observed the correlations between the two. The cause-and-effect "dis-agreement" has always been a red herring. In cultural matters the supply determines the demand. People growing up in a certain culture, with a certain level of television violence, etc., are dependent both on that diet and the views of the world it tends to cultivate. The systematic co-occurrence of the two, related to styles of life in which both television and real-live risk play important roles, is the basic finding.

If two New Yorkers live in the same block, are exposed to the same real-world hazards, and are the same income, educational, and social level, but one watches more television than the other, the heavy viewer will have an exaggerated sense of risk. This has been confirmed in many independent studies in many parts of the country and the world. Causation is an irrelevant argument. When you are looking at a three-legged stool, it is irrelevant to claim that any one leg "causes" the stool to stand up. It is the correlation among all the factors that is necessary to maintain a syndrome. If any one is missing, the syndrome (or stool) collapses. So it is futile for the Rifle Association, for example, to claim that people, not guns kill other people. If the other side of the equation (guns) is not present, the correlation cannot exist. That is why the cause-and-effect argument is a red herring.

Anyway, this is an intellectual argument which by no means limits me from sending best personal regards. I am also passing on your regards to Larry Gross.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

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Gene P. Mater, Vice President
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Dear George;

January 29, 1985

Thank you for your January 16 letter and for the paper re-stating your position. As mentioned in my January 8 letter, the discussions about the influence of television are no longer in my portfolio. However, I apparently brought this on myself by including an item from the Times with a note. Therefore, let me offer the following brief comments about that aspect of our exchange.

You argue that "Among white New Yorkers, where the general level of fear is high, the heavy viewers...is still higher." In essence, you have contended that the high level of viewing results in a high general level of fear, because television misrepresents society. And I would argue with equal conviction that because those New Yorkers have a well-founded fear of crime in the city, they stay home and watch more television than residents of safer communities. I work but do not live in New York, George; damned if I would walk these mean streets at night. Indeed, if I lived here, I, too, probably would watch more television than I do in the relative safety of Morristown, N.J. We have a fundamental cause-and-effect disagreement.

I have read through your paper titled Living With Television: The Dynamics of the Cultivation Process. As one who had difficulty accepting your basic approaches to the issues of television and society, I must say that this latest document has not altered my opinion. Nonetheless, I am sharing your paper with my friends in social research who will read it with a more scientific approach than I can offer.

Please give my regards to Larry Gross.

Cordially,



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