

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. list	re: Manifest (1 page)	00/00/0000	b(7)(C), b(7)(E), b(7)(F), b(6)
002. list	re: Personally Identifiable Information (5 pages)	07/29/1996	b(6)
003. list	re: Personally Identifiable Information (5 pages)	07/29/1996	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12081

FOLDER TITLE:

HRC - Media Conference 7/29/96

2017-1164-S

rc2661

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

The University of Kansas
Department of Human Development and Family Life
4001 Dole Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045
(913) 864-4840 Fax # (913) 864-5202

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

DATE: July 26, 1996
FROM: Altha Huston
ACCOUNT TO BE BILLED: Marble

Number of pages (including this sheet): _____

TO: Melanne Verveer
LOCATION: Washington DC
FAX #: (202) 456-6244
REGARDING: for Mrs. Clinton re
Children + TV Conference

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message is intended only for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. It may contain information that is confidential and should be treated accordingly.

No. of Times Sent: _____ No. of Pages Sent: _____ BY _____

NOTE: If any of these fax copies are illegible, or if you do not receive the same number of pages as stated above, please contact us immediately at:
(913) 864-4840

Effects of Early Childhood Media Use on Adolescent Achievement

A report by the staffs of the "Recontact" Project:

At the University of Massachusetts, Amherst:

Daniel R. Anderson, Ph.D.

Patricia A. Collins, Ph.D.

Kelly L. Schmitt, M.S.

At the University of Kansas, Lawrence:

Aletha C. Huston, Ph.D.

John C. Wright, Ph.D.

Elizabeth McElroy, M.A.

Deborah L. Linebarger, M.S.Ed.

The authors acknowledge the generous support of the Markle Foundation of New York City, and its President, Lloyd N. Morrisett. We are especially grateful to the more than 570 young people and their families in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Topeka, Kansas, who participated in this research both as preschool children, and much later as adolescents.

Executive Summary

Two groups of preschoolers were observed in separate studies during the early 1980s -- one in Massachusetts and one in Kansas. In 1994, when they were 15 to 18 years old, these young people were interviewed, and their high school transcripts were obtained. One major purpose was to determine whether early viewing of educational television programs predicted later academic achievement.

The results support the hypothesis that curriculum-based child informative programs contribute to children's educational development. We call this the Early Learning model of TV effects. With statistical controls for parents' education, viewing of child informative programs during preschool was positively related to high school academic achievement, academic self concept, and the value the participants placed on academic attainment.

The results contradict the popular notion that preschool exposure to rapidly paced programming (especially *Sesame Street*) leads to reduced attention span and consequently to poor academic achievement, and disinterest in such activities as book reading. *Sesame Street* viewing was positively associated with academic achievement and book reading.

The findings also contradict the hypothesis that attractively produced children's educational television leads to an inattention to language and hence to poor language skills. *Sesame Street* viewing was positively related to preschool vocabulary and to a high school grades in English.

Viewing educational television in preschool appears to contribute to children's academic performance many years later. It is obvious that the content learned at age 5 cannot influence high school performance directly. Instead, a rich diet of educational television may help children to enter school with the academic skills required for the tasks they encounter, increasing the likelihood of early success. They may also have higher expectations for themselves and make a correspondingly greater investment of time and effort toward mastery of the knowledge and skills taught in school. Teachers may view such children as good students and offer them

challenging and stimulating activities. This early positive experience in school may set a child on a trajectory of success, self-confidence, and positive reputation among teachers that has long-term consequences for later academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1980s we conducted two major investigations of preschool television viewing. One investigation was led by Professors John Wright and Aletha Huston of the University of Kansas, and the other by Professor Daniel Anderson of the University of Massachusetts (Anderson, Field, Collins, Lorch & Nathan, 1985; Huston, Wright, Rice, Kerkman, & St. Peters, 1990). In 1994 we collaborated to locate and interview the adolescents whom we had studied in those investigations. One major purpose was to determine the relationships between preschool educational TV viewing and adolescent academic achievement.

Background

The potential of television for positive effects on the growth and development of children has been debated for almost 50 years. Evidence for effects of positive programming, however, has been limited primarily to laboratory investigations of immediate impact, or to field studies that estimate impact over a few years' duration at most. These studies provide persuasive evidence that carefully crafted educational programs for young children can teach academic skills and positive social behavior (see Comstock & Paik, 1991 for a review). What has been missing are demonstrations of the impact of positive programming over much longer periods of time.

A summative evaluation of *Sesame Street's* first two years (Bogatz & Ball, 1971) reported that viewers showed greater gains than non-viewers on a number of basic academic skills (e.g. letter and number knowledge, classification skills). A follow-up report also noted that at least at the beginning of formal schooling, viewers were rated higher by their teachers on an index of school readiness (Bogatz & Ball, 1972).

In the Kansas preschool study (one of the studies in this follow-up), children who viewed *Sesame Street* often when they were 3 years old showed greater gains in vocabulary by age 5 than did less frequent viewers (Rice, et al., 1990). More recently, the television viewing, cognitive and social development of preschool children from lower income homes was extensively studied for a period of three years. Even after controlling for initial language skill and home background characteristics, children who viewed more educational programming

between ages 2 and 4 scored higher than infrequent viewers on standardized tests of math skill, vocabulary, letter and word recognition, and school readiness (Wright & Huston, 1995).

In sum, the research to date suggests that viewing child-informative programming during the preschool years has benefits for academically relevant skills and school readiness. Although school readiness has undeniable importance for its own sake, the value of educational viewing would be even greater if these early gains were maintained throughout the elementary and secondary school years. By what processes could such an optimistic chain of causality occur?

One model, the "Early Learning Model," predicts that the cognitive and attitudinal benefits of viewing educational programming as a preschooler lead to success when the child enters school. Children who begin school with basic preacademic skills (e.g., knowing the alphabet, how to write their names, how to count) are apt to succeed in the tasks presented, and are likely to be viewed by teachers as competent students. These initial advantages snowball into a cycle of high expectations for oneself. Early success and teachers' positive perceptions lead children to develop positive attitudes about school, high levels of motivation, and high levels of achievement. These build upon themselves over time, and are reflected in academic achievement and achievement motivation in the high school years. Because low-income families have children at risk for entering school with few preacademic skills more often than high-income families, and because teachers sometimes hold negative stereotypes about the ability of low-income students, the advantages conferred by educational viewing may be especially important for children from low income families.

Not all child development specialists and educators agree that educational television will have positive effects on children's academic skills. Jane Healy (1990) argued that television, in general, and *Sesame Street*, in particular, retards children's language development and reduces reading ability. Because television is so visually attractive, she claims, it teaches an inattention to spoken language which, in turn, slows language acquisition and ultimately reading achievement.

Jerome Singer (1980) proposed that viewing such rapidly paced programming as *Sesame Street* leads to a reduced attention span. Short content units, frequent cuts, and frequent

movement induce the orienting reflex and block reflective and sustained thought. These combine to reduce a child's ability to inhibit movement and sustain a line of thinking. Ultimately, of course, such a shortened "attention span" should have negative consequences for cognitive development and academic achievement.

Singer proposed that *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* would not have these negative consequences due to the series' relatively long content units and slow pacing of formal features (with little movement).

The Recontact Study

The adolescents interviewed were participants in one of two investigations of preschool children in the early 1980s. The Massachusetts research group intensively studied children near their fifth birthday and included concurrent videotape measures of home TV viewing behavior. The Kansas research group provided the first longitudinal investigation of detailed patterns of TV viewing in the age range 3 to 7 years. Because the two research groups were in communication at the time the studies were designed, many of the measures used in the original studies were identical or quite similar.

Both groups collected week-long viewing diaries on two occasions within 6 months of the children's fifth birthdays. Those diaries were validated by the concurrent video observations (Anderson et al., 1985; Anderson & Field, 1991). The measures of TV viewing during the preschool years are among the most accurate and extensive of any field studies of TV impact. Because the names of all programs viewed were recorded, exposure to particular categories of television programs was calculated as well as total viewing.

Children in both samples were given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) during preschool. It is a standardized instrument measuring receptive vocabulary and predicts the development of communication skills (Dunn, 1981).

The Massachusetts sample was given a measure of task persistence, the Banta Replacement Puzzle (Banta, 1970), which consists of a deceptively difficult jigsaw puzzle. An

average length of sustained persistence was used in the analyses. The Massachusetts sample was also rated by parents on a scale of temperament developed by Thomas et al. (1963). The activity subscale was analyzed in some analyses reported here. This subscale assesses behaviors analogous to attention deficit with hyperactivity.

Adolescent Survey

Preschool viewing diaries were available for 655 children. Of these, 570 or 87.0% were interviewed by telephone. Thirty-five refused an interview and 50 could not be located or had unlisted telephone numbers. The average age was 17.46, and ranged from 15.02 to 19.34 years. The individuals interviewed did not differ from those not interviewed on most demographic characteristics, but the adolescents not interviewed were slightly more likely to have had no father living at home in preschool (making them difficult to trace using the mother's and child's last known surname).

A brief parent interview was followed by a 30-40-minute interview with the adolescent participant. They were asked about:

Media Use

- Television Viewing -- Total weekly television viewing time and viewing of different categories of programs.
- Reading -- Time spent reading books, newspapers, magazines, comic books.

Academic Motivation

- Academic self-concept -- Perceived ability and expectancy of success in English, math, and science.
- Attainment value -- Perceived value or utility of English, math, and science courses.

Academic Achievement

- Reported Grades — Students' reports of their typical high school grades in English, math, and science
- Transcript Grades — For 491 adolescents, an official copy of their high school transcript, sent directly by the school. For the 79 participants whose transcripts were not available, estimation procedures based on those with complete information were used to adjust self-reported grades for inflated reporting.

RESULTS

Each of the three identified models predicting effects of early educational television exposure was tested. In each case, preschool viewing of child informative television programming was tested as a predictor of high school achievement. Differences in parent education and children's early intellectual ability that might affect both viewing and achievement were statistically controlled. This procedure permits disconfirmation of a model if the results contradict it. Alternatively, the results may fail to support a model without actually contradicting it, an outcome that weakens confidence in the model without disconfirming it. If the results are consistent with the predictions of a model, that can be considered "support," but the model cannot be considered "proven". The relations dictated by a model might be equally well accounted for by alternative explanations or by factors in the child's environment that were not measured.

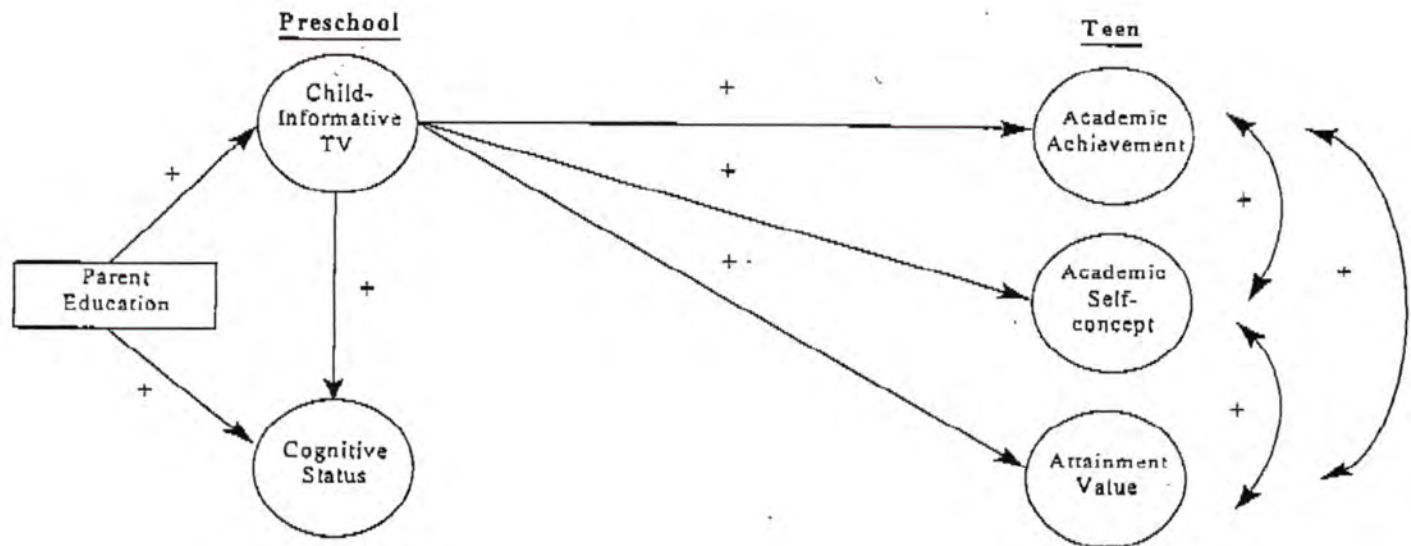
Early Learning Model Is Supported

The Early Learning Model is outlined in Figure 1. The results supported the model as indicated by the directional arrows and check marks.

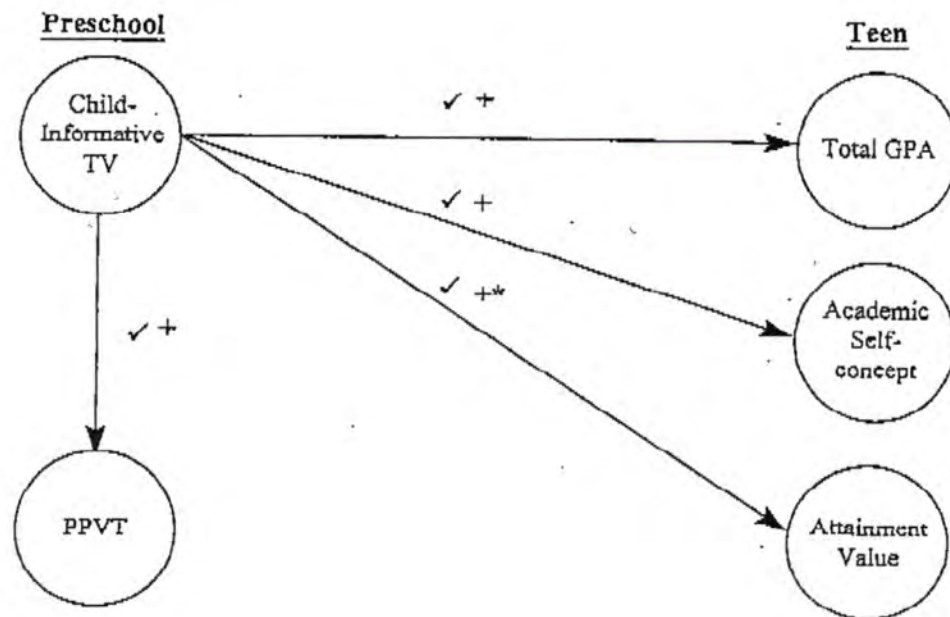
Children's Informative Programs

Exposure to child informative programs predicted *vocabulary* scores at age 5. Frequent viewers had better vocabulary scores than infrequent viewers.

Early Learning Theoretical Model



Early Learning Results



*Limited to boys

Figure 1

Exposure to child informative programming at age 5 predicted average *high school grades* in English, math, and science. Children who watched child informative programs frequently in preschool had higher grades than infrequent viewers. Viewing predicted achievement better for boys than for girls.

Sesame Street

Of all the time children watched child informative programs, over half was devoted to *Sesame Street*. *Sesame Street* also has more emphasis on school readiness skills than many educational programs. Analyses of exposure to *Sesame Street* provided clear support for the early learning model. Preschool viewing predicted high school grades equally well for both boys and girls.

Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood

Although children watched *Mr. Rogers* less frequently than *Sesame Street*, exposure to *Mr. Rogers* predicted high school grades for boys. Exposure was unrelated to grades for girls.

How Large Are the Differences?

One method of understanding how large the differences in grades are is to examine the increase in grade point average for every hour per week of preschool viewing. Grade point average was computed on a 4-point scale with 4=A, 3=B, 2=C, 1=D, 0=F. For every hour per week of viewing child informative programs at age 5, grade point average for English, math, and science in high school increased by .03. For every hour per week of *Sesame Street* viewing, high school grade point average increased by .052. A child who watched *Sesame Street* for five hours a week (one hour each week day) at age 5 performed in high school, on average, about 1/4 of a grade level higher than a child who never viewed.

Academic Motivation

Child informative viewing predicted *academic self concept* in high school. Adolescents who had been frequent viewers made higher estimates of their ability and expected higher levels of success in English, math, and science than those who had been infrequent viewers.

Preschool informative viewing predicted the *value* attached to English, math, and science courses for boys. Boys who had been frequent viewers in preschool valued achievement more than infrequent viewers did.

Language Deficit Hypothesis Is Contradicted

Contrary to the language deficit model, preschool viewing of *Sesame Street* was positively related to preschool vocabulary.

Contrary to the language deficit model, preschool viewing of *Sesame Street* was positively related to high school English grades.

Attention Span Model Is Not Supported

The positive relation of *Sesame Street* viewing to high school grades and academic motivation contradicts the model suggesting that programming with short segments and rapid pace leads to reduced attention span.

According to the attention span model, viewing *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* may increase persistence and reduce physical activity level, leading eventually to good school performance. As noted, boys who were frequent viewers of *Mr. Rogers* had better high school grades than infrequent viewers. Some additional measures collected in the Massachusetts preschool study allowed us to establish that the difference in high school grades did not seem to be due to effects of the program on preschool task persistence or activity level.

CONCLUSION

These analyses support the Early Learning Model. The findings are consistent with the hypothesis that curriculum-based television viewed by preschoolers has a long term positive impact on academic achievement. High school grades and academic motivation were measurably higher in those participants who viewed relatively more child informative programming, particularly *Sesame Street*, as preschoolers.

The positive relations of early viewing to achievement and motivation were especially strong for boys. The fact that boys are more often alienated from school and have more frequent academic problems than girls suggests that early experience which keeps them involved, motivated, and eager to learn is especially valuable.

While alternative explanations for these long term relationships may exist, they are not attributable to higher ability among children who were frequent users of educational television, nor to better education among parents of frequent viewers. Both variables were controlled in the analyses, and neither could account for the observed relations.

The findings contradict the assertions that educational television in general and *Sesame Street* in particular impede academic performance either through interference with language development or by reducing children's attention spans.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

High-quality, curriculum-based educational television can make a significant contribution to children's early school readiness and to their long-term school performance and motivation. Television has the advantage of reaching many children long before they reach formal schooling at a very low-cost, relative to other forms of early education. *Sesame Street*, for example, costs about \$6 per regular viewer per year. Educational television should not be considered an alternative to other forms of early education, but a part of the educational offerings to young

children. In a time when school failure is of national concern, investment in quality educational programming could provide important benefits.

Young children spend 20-30 hours in front of the television set as early as age 2. Some of that time could be used to teach rather than merely to entertain.

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WHSO FINAL LAYOUT

a/o 7/28/96: A. Stock, T. LaBrecque

CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

Monday, July 29, 1996

East Room

Guest Arrival: 9:00a.m.

POTUS/VPOTUS/FLOTUS/MEG: 9:30a.m.

Pool Press

U shaped table with approx. 60 participants

Staff seating for 12

8:30a.m. Gates Open. All staff in place. Set up complete in East Room.

9:00a.m. Conference participants arrive at the East Appointments Gate.
List contact: Kim Widdess, Cheri Carter

Participants proceed to the Grand Foyer where they are greeted by Ann Stock and Alexis Herman. Coffee and juice will be available for guests.

9:10a.m. Once all guests have arrived, John Emerson will give an overview of the agenda.

SET UP NOTES: WHCA: Standing mic in Grand Foyer, USHERS: Table in book sellers, Coat rack in China Room, Table with coffee juice in Grand Foyer.

9:00 - **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON and**
9:30a.m. **MRS. GORE** arrive in the Map Room for event briefing.
contact: Greg Simon, John Emerson, Skyla Harris, Melanne Verveer

9:30a.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON and**
MRS. GORE proceed to the Blue Room for a receiving line with participants.
(WH photo)

RECEIVING LINE SET UP: All 4 Principals, Announce, Receiving line will flow from Red Room/ Blue Room/ Green Room into the East Room where participants are to be seated by Robyn Dickey & Cheri Carter.

EAST ROOM SET UP: U shaped table w/ POTUS and VPOTUS seated at head of table (south side of East Room), FLOTUS seated on west side of East Room, MEG seated on east side of East Room. 60 participants seated at table, support staff seated by name around room, 10 chairs set up east and west side of press area, 4 press risers set at north end of East Room, Press cut away in SE corner of room.

WHCA: Toast Lectern to be set behind the center of the head table for initial standing remarks by VPOTUS & POTUS (then to be removed), Table mics in front of POTUS, VPOTUS, FLOTUS, MEG; flat mics spread around table. Audio feed in the Blue Room.

USHERS: White table cloth w/ blue skirting, WH pads/pencils on table, small desk clock. Water on table. **CALLIG:** Tent cards w/ first and last names and names of organizations (Robyn).

TABLE SEATING: Table seating chart to be provided by Cheri Carter
STAFF SEATING: Names to be provided by E. Lieberman; seated by name
PRESS NOTE: Pool will be pre-positioned in East Room when participants enter

9:45a.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON and MRS. GORE** are announced into the East Room from the Blue Room and proceed to the head table. (south side of East Room)

THE PRESIDENT steps to the toast lectern to make remarks.
(all 4 remain standing)

Following, **THE PRESIDENT's** remarks, all four principals take their seats.

SET UP NOTES: WHCA; Toast lectern to be removed, table mic in place. USHERS: A small clock to be placed on the head table for the President and the Vice President to watch. J. Emerson and G. Simon will also monitor time.

10:00a.m. PROGRAM BEGINS

THE PRESIDENT introduces **MRS. CLINTON**.

MRS. CLINTON makes remarks and opens the first discussion.

THE PRESIDENT ends discussion and introduces **MRS. GORE**.

MRS. GORE makes remarks and opens second discussion.

THE PRESIDENT ends discussion and introduces **THE VICE PRESIDENT**.

THE VICE PRESIDENT makes remarks and opens third discussion.

THE PRESIDENT ends discussion and makes closing remarks.

Contact: Greg Simon, John Emerson, Skyla Harris, Melanne Verveer

12:00p.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON and MRS. GORE** depart.

Program participants depart the East Gate.

NOTE: *Access to the Residence will be limited to those on staff manifest.
UD Officers and a staff person will be posted at the East and West Colonnades.*

Friday, July 26, 1996

TO: **THE PRESIDENT
THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE FIRST LADY
MRS. GORE**

WHAT: **CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION**

WHEN: Monday, July 29, 1996

WHERE: East Room/Business Attire/Pool Press
60 participants (approx.)

FROM: Ann Stock

9:00a.m. Conference participants arrive at the East Gate and proceed to the Grand Foyer for coffee and juice.

Once all participants have arrived, John Emerson will give the participants an overview of the conference's agenda.

9:00a.m. - **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON** and
9:30a.m. **MRS. GORE** arrive in the Map Room for event briefing.

9:30a.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON**
and **MRS. GORE** proceed to the Blue Room for a receiving line with
participants. (WH photo)

9:45a.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON** and
MRS. GORE are announced into the East Room from the Blue Room
and proceed to the head table. (south side of East Room)

THE PRESIDENT steps to the toast lectern to make remarks.
(all four remain standing)

Following, **THE PRESIDENT's** remarks, all four principals take their
seats.

10:00a.m.

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MRS. CLINTON makes remarks and opens the first discussion.

THE PRESIDENT ends discussion and introduces **MRS. GORE**.

MRS. GORE makes remarks and opens second discussion.

THE PRESIDENT ends discussion and introduces **THE VICE PRESIDENT**.

THE VICE PRESIDENT makes remarks and opens third discussion.

THE PRESIDENT ends discussion and makes closing remarks.

12:00p.m.

THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, MRS. CLINTON
and **MRS. GORE** depart.

Program participants depart the East Gate.



Peggy Charren
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Phone/Fax 617-876-6620

*file
Charren's
TV*

LUNCHEON ADDRESS

BY

PEGGY CHARREN

FOUNDER, ACTION FOR CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 17, 1996

LUNCHEON ADDRESS

BY

PEGGY CHARREN

FOUNDER, ACTION FOR CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JUNE 17, 1996

TODAY IS MY 45TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY --- AND I WANT TO THANK THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION FOR A NIFTY GIFT ! AS YOU ALL KNOW, ON FRIDAY, THE FCC FINALLY AGREED TO ISSUE A PROCESSING GUIDELINE, WITH A THREE-HOUR-A-WEEK MINIMUM OF EDUCATIONAL TV PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES ON EVERY STATION.

ON BEHALF OF AMERICA'S FAMILIES, I WANT TO THANK ESPECIALLY PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON AND HILLARY, VICE-PRESIDENT AL GORE AND TIPPER, FCC CHAIRMAN REED HUNDT AND COMMISSIONER SUSAN NESS, AND CONGRESSMAN ED MARKEY. WITHOUT THE COMMITMENT OF THESE KIDS' TV SUPERHEROES, THE DEBATE OVER WHETHER OR NOT TO ENSURE TV SERVICE TO CHILDREN MIGHT HAVE LASTED WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.

I REMEMBER WHAT TV WAS LIKE 45 YEARS AGO, WHEN I MARRIED MY WONDERFUL STANLEY. ONLY 2 % OF AMERICAN HOMES HAD A TV SET. THERE WERE ONLY 100 TV STATIONS, AND TO WATCH TELEVISION, MOST PEOPLE WENT TO BARS OR DEPARTMENT STORES.

I WORKED IN TV IN THOSE DAYS... AT WPIX, THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT TV STATION. I CALLED SHOTS IN THE CONTROL ROOM --- EVERYONE DID --- , I RAN TALENT SHOWS AT MIDNIGHT, AND APPEARED ON THE NEWS EVERY FRIDAY THE 13TH, CARRYING BLACK CATS UNDER LADDERS. IN 1951, CHILDREN'S TV WAS NOT A BIG ISSUE, WITH ME OR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

BY THE LATE 60S, HOWEVER, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CONGRESS WERE CALLING FOR AN END TO SEX AND VIOLENCE, AND ACT BEGAN IN MY LIVING ROOM. FROM THE BEGINNING, ACT'S GOAL WAS NOT TO GET RID OF WHAT WAS GHASTLY, BUT TO CREATE A MARKET FOR WHAT WAS MISSING FROM SERVICE TO CHILDREN IN AN INDUSTRY LICENSED TO SERVE THE PUBLIC.

NOW THE QUESTION IS: WHAT'S MISSING? IN 1969, "TV GUIDE" ASKED SOME SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, PSYCHOLOGISTS AND EDUCATORS WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION. "THE ULTIMATE ACCOMPLISHMENT," ACCORDING TO TV GUIDE'S SAMPLING OF EXPERTS, " IS TO CATCH THE CHILD'S IMAGINATION BY SHOWING HIM THE WORLD, WHAT ITS POSSIBILITIES ARE, HOW PEOPLE GET ALONG IN IT, HOW THEY INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER, AND WHAT HIS PLACE IN IT MIGHT BE."

I'M SURE THEY WOULD HAVE AGREED THAT "BIKER MICE FROM MARS" DOESN'T QUITE DO IT.

FIVE YEARS LATER, IN A 1974 POLICY STATEMENT, THE FCC DEFINED PROGRAMS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED EDUCATIONAL OR INFORMATIVE: "THERE ARE MANY IMAGINATIVE AND EXCITING WAYS IN WHICH THE MEDIUM

CAN BE USED TO FURTHER A CHILD'S UNDERSTANDING IN A WIDE RANGE OF IDEAS: HISTORY, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, THE ENVIRONMENT, DRAMA, MUSIC, FINE ARTS, HUMAN RELATIONS, OTHER CULTURES AND LANGUAGES, AND BASIC SKILLS SUCH AS READING AND MATHEMATICS, WHICH ARE CRUCIAL TO A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT.' THE FCC STATEMENT CONTINUED, "ALTHOUGH CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS MAY HAVE EDUCATIONAL VALUE (IN A VERY BROAD SENSE OF THE TERM), WE EXPECT TO SEE A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF PROGRAMMING WHICH IS PARTICULARLY DESIGNED WITH AN EDUCATIONAL GOAL IN MIND."

THE INDUSTRY RESPONDED WITH ITS FAVORITE EXCUSE: " WE PUT ON THIS TERRIFIC KIDS' SHOW.....AND NOBODY WATCHED!"

TAKE THE CASE OF "MAURICE SENDAK'S REALLY ROSIE," AN ANIMATED SPECIAL BASED ON SEVERAL OF THE AUTHOR'S BEST-LOVED CHILDREN'S BOOKS, WHICH WAS AIRED BY CBS IN 1975. THE SHOW ATTRACTED OVER 21 MILLION VIEWERS, MORE THAN 9 MILLION OF WHOM WERE UNDER 12. ACCORDING TO THE NETWORK, IT WAS A RATINGS FAILURE. SENDAK SAID, "THAT'S MORE CHILDREN THAN I COULD EVER REACH IN 20 PUBLISHING LIFETIMES."

ONE OF THE REASONS WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY IS BECAUSE OF THE WEIRD RESPONSES OF THE BROADCAST INDUSTRY TO THE 1990 CHILDREN'S TELEVISION ACT MANDATE TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS "SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED" TO EDUCATE AND INFORM CHILDREN..

THEY LISTED "G.I.JOE" AND SAID, "THE JOES FIGHT AGAINST AN EVIL THAT

HAS THE CAPABILITIES OF MASS DESTRUCTION OF SOCIETY. ISSUES OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY ARE SHOW THEMES."

I SUPPOSE IF JOE STOPPED ON THE WAY TO MURDER AND MAYHAM TO EAT AN ORANGE, THEY'D SAY THE PROGRAM WAS NUTRITION EDUCATION.

BROADCASTERS LISTED "YO, YOGI" AS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO EDUCATE AND SAID, "SNAG LEARNS THAT HE CAN CAPTURE THE BANK-ROBBING COCKROACH MORE SUCCESSFULLY BY USING HIS HEAD RATHER THAN HIS MUSCLES."

WEIRD! AFTER ALL, HOW MANY KIDS WILL EVER HAVE TO DEAL WITH A BANK-ROBBING COCKROACH!

CHILDREN'S TV TODAY IS A FRONT PAGE ISSUE. WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF TV IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG AUDIENCES? MOST OF US IN THIS ROOM KNOW THE ANSWERS TO THAT QUESTION.

MOST IMPORTANT: CHILDREN WATCH SO MUCH TV -- 20 TO 25 HOURS A WEEK. THEY LEARN FROM WHAT THEY SEE. THEY LEARN THAT VIOLENCE IS A SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS, THAT CASUAL SEX HAS NO CONSEQUENCES. THEY PICK UP RACIST, SEXIST ATTITUDES DIFFICULT TO DISLODGE. FOR CHILDREN AT RISK, TV OPERATES AS A KIND OF SUBSTITUTE PARENT.

EVERYONE INVOLVED IN LIGHTING UP THE NATION'S TV SCREENS SHOULD KEEP REMINDING THEMSELVES THAT ONE IN FOUR OF TV'S YOUNG

VIEWERS IS POOR, THAT ONE IN FIVE IS AT RISK OF BECOMING A TEEN PARENT, THAT ONE IN SEVEN IS LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL.

TELEVISION CAN'T BE BLAMED FOR THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY, BUT IT CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THESE CHILDREN. SHOWS THAT SPEAK TO A CHILD'S NEED TO KNOW, THAT TEACH COPING SKILLS AND ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. TELEVISION CAN EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD, THE TOWN, THE PLANET. IT CAN HELP CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP IN A DEMOCRACY.

AND SOMETIMES THAT'S JUST WHAT TV DOES DO FOR OUR CHILDREN. PBS DOES IT EVERY DAY. GIVEN ITS LIMITED RESOURCES, PUBLIC BROADCASTING'S RECORD IN SERVING YOUNG AUDIENCES IS REMARKABLE FOR THE ARRAY OF CHOICES IT OFFERS TO CHILDREN OF VARIOUS AGES AND FOR ITS WILLINGNESS TO TACKLE HARD-TO-HANDLE TOPICS AND MAKE THEM UNDERSTANDABLE TO KIDS: "READING RAINBOW," WHERE LEVAR BURTON INTRODUCES KIDS TO BOOKS; "CARMEN SANDIEGO," WHICH HAS MANAGED TO TURN GEOGRAPHY INTO EVERYONE'S FAVORITE SUBJECT, AND WILL SOON DO THE SAME WITH HISTORY WHEN A NEW SERIES FOCUSES ON TIME LINES INSTEAD OF MAPS. "WHERE IN TIME IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?" IS DESIGNED TO HELP KIDS UNDERSTAND WHY THE PAST CONTINUES TO AFFECT THEIR LIVES, AND WILL EXPLORE HISTORICAL EVENTS FROM DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW, STILL IN THE CONTEXT OF A GAME SHOW. ANOTHER PBS SHOW TO LOOK FOR IN THE FALL IS "ARTHUR," USING THE EXPLOITS OF THAT POPULAR AARDVARK AND HIS SISTER D J TO TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS.

CABLE DOES IT.....WITH SHOWS LIKE LINDA ELLERBEE'S "NICK NEWS" ON NICKELODEON, AND HBO'S "HAPPILY EVER AFTER," A DELIGHTFUL SERIES THAT TRANSFORMS FAMILIAR FAIRY TALES INTO MULTICULTURAL FESTIVALS OF STORY, SONG AND DANCE, AND THE CARTOON NETWORK'S "BIG BAG," WHICH FEATURES, AMONG OTHER MAGIC MOMENTS, SOME EXTRAORDINARY USES FOR THE MISMATCHED SOCKS THAT ALWAYS APPEAR IN MY WASHING MACHINE.

UNFORTUNATELY, COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING EDUCATES ALMOST NEVER.....AT LEAST IN REGULARLY SCHEDULED SERIES. AND WHEN IT DOES DO IT, THE SHOWS OFTEN APPEAR BEFORE KIDS GET UP IN THE MORNING. AT 6 A.M. SATURDAY IN BOSTON, WNAC-TV AIRS "NEWS FOR KIDS," AND WSBK SHOWS "BILL NYE, SCIENCE GUY." THESE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE CERTAINLY NOT DESIGNED FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS, THE ONLY POSSIBLE AUDIENCE SEGMENT UP AT 6 A.M. THAT'S WHY THE FCC GUIDELINE SHOULD ESTABLISH A 7 A.M. START FOR QUALIFYING PROGRAMS.

TO BE FAIR, I SHOULD MENTION THAT ON SATURDAY, WBZ, THE CBS AFFILIATE IN BOSTON AIRS "BEEKMAN'S WORLD" AND THAT REALLY WONDERFUL NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SHOW, "REALLY WILD ANIMALS" BETWEEN NOON AND ONE P.M., AND FOLLOWS THEM UP WITH THE AWARD-WINNING, LOCALLY PRODUCED "RAP AROUND" FOR YOUNG TEENAGERS.

THIS MEETING AT THIS MINUTE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE FCC IS ABOUT TO ENSURE THAT THE CHILDREN'S TV ACT WILL PROVIDE MORE TERRIFIC CHOICES FOR KIDS. CHANCES ARE THAT THE PROCESSING GUIDELINE, WHICH WILL REQUIRE THAT BROADCASTERS OFFER AT LEAST

THREE HOURS PER WEEK OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WILL ALSO CALL FOR EACH STATION TO IDENTIFY THE EDUCATIONAL GOAL FOR EACH SHOW LISTED UNDER THIS MANDATE. BROADCASTERS ~~WHO~~ HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING THAT THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT "EDUCATIONAL" MEANS, MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE MASS MEDIA~~AT~~ ITS 1989 CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. IT SAYS, IN PART, THAT MASS MEDIA EDUCATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO "THE PREPARATION OF THE CHILD FOR RESPONSIBLE LIFE IN A FREE SOCIETY, IN THE SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING, PEACE, TOLERANCE, EQUALITY OF SEXES, AND FRIENDSHIP AMONG ALL PEOPLES, ETHNIC, NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS."

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS REALLY DO UNDERSTAND WHAT QUALITY TELEVISION FOR KIDS IS ALL ABOUT, EVEN IF THEY HAVEN'T BEEN DOING MUCH LATELY. THERE ARE SOME WONDERFUL EXAMPLES FROM THE SEVENTIES: THE CBS "ALL ABOUT" NEWS SERIES, INCLUDING "WHAT'S AN ELECTION ALL ABOUT?" AND "WHAT'S CONGRESS ALL ABOUT?"; THE AFTERSCHOOL SPECIALS, INCLUDING ABC'S "ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY," A DRAMATIZATION OF MILDRED TAYLOR'S NEWBERRY AWARD-WINNING NOVEL, BROADCAST ON THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS. SET IN MISSISSIPPI AT THE HEIGHT OF THE DEPRESSION, THIS POWERFUL, POIGNANT STORY RECOUNTS AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY'S STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN ITS INTEGRITY, PRIDE AND INDEPENDANCE. ANOTHER IN THESE EXCELLENT SERIES WAS "THE DAY THEY CAME TO ARREST THE BOOK," DRAMATIZING NAT HENTOFF'S STIRRING BOOK AND VIVIDLY RAISING FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUES. THE PROGRAM TELLS THE STORY OF TWO HIGH SCHOOL FRIENDS, ONE WHITE AND ONE BLACK, ON

OPPOSITE SIDES OF A CENSORSHIP DISPUTE WITH SCHOOL OFFICIALS ABOUT RACIAL SLURS IN "HUCKLEBERRY FINN." AND I REALLY ENJOYED^{the very FUNNY} "HOW TO BE A PERFECT PERSON IN THREE DAYS," STARRING HERMIONE GINGOLD IN A BIT PART AS A TEACHER.

WHEN RICHARD PECK, THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS YOUNG ADULT NOVELS, WAS ASKED WHAT KIND OF STORIES WOULD APPEAL TO YOUNG TEENAGERS, HE RESPONDED, "ADOLESCENTS MUCH PREFER A SWEETLY SAD LOVE STORY WITH A HAPPY ENDING TO ANY SORT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION. THEY LIKE STORIES OF GOOD CHARACTER. BUT THE YOUNG WILL NOT BE PREACHED TO. THEY WANT INSTEAD STORIES THAT INSPIRE THEM TO SURVIVE IN THE WORLD AS IT IS: IN THEIR ALMIGHTY PEER GROUP, IN THEIR UNREMITTING NEED TO BE ACCEPTED. THEY DO NOT WANT THE BOAT ROCKED; THEY WANT TO KEEP FROM FALLING OVERBOARD. AND SO THEY WILL BE DRAWN TO STORIES THEY CAN RISE TO: STORIES THAT PIT THE STANDARD OF THE INDIVIDUAL AGAINST THE RULES OF THE GROUP. THERE ARE PLENTY OF SUCH STORIES, IF ONLY TELEVISION CAN CHANGE ENOUGH TO FIND THEM."

THE AFTERSCHOOL SPECIALS ARE A NIFTY EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF PROGRAMS PECK DESCRIBES. WHY DOESN'T EACH NETWORK ADD ITS SPECIALS FROM THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES TO TODAY'S ALL TOO OCCASIONAL SHOWS AND SCHEDULE A WEEKLY DRAMATIC SERIES FOR THIS UNDERSERVED AGE GROUP? AND ~~WHY~~ NOT RISK A FEW BUCKS BY SCHEDULING THEM AT 8 P.M., INSTEAD OF 4 P.M. ON A WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY? AUDIENCES ARE USED TO THE INDUSTRY PRACTICE OF AIRING AFTER-SCHOOL SHOWS EVERY DAY MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, AND

DUMPING THESE CAREFULLY^{produced} HOURS INTO SUCH A MIX DOES NOT MAKE SCHEDULING SENSE FOR THE TARGET AUDIENCE.

BRINGING QUALITY TV TO CHILDREN IS A JOINT RESPONSIBILITY. CONGRESS AND THE FCC HAVE STARTED THE PROCESS.

IT'S UP TO THE STATIONS TO DECIDE WHAT PROGRAMS TO LIST AND TO MAKE THAT LIST VERY PUBLIC, NOT ONLY IN THE STATION FILE, BUT TO THE PRESS AND TO THE COMMUNITY, THROUGH RELEASES, TV PROMOTION SPOTS, AND EVEN ON THE INTERNET. TO GIVE CONTEXT TO THIS LIST, I HOPE THE FCC WILL REQUIRE THE BROADCASTER TO LIST THE PARTICULAR AGE GROUP THE PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO REACH --- PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY OR YOUNG TEENAGERS --- AND TO LIST SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR EACH SHOW.

IT'S UP TO THE PRESS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS THAT EDUCATE PARENTS AND CHILDREN TO LET US KNOW WHERE AND WHEN TO FIND THESE SHOWS. CERTAINLY STATIONS SHOULD DEVOTE SUBSTANTIAL TV PROMOTION TIME TO HELPING US REMEMBER TO WATCH.

IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO EVALUATE WHETHER OR NOT THESE PROGRAMS DO INFORM AND EDUCATE CHILDREN. STATIONS WILL NEED TO HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC, NOT THE GOVERNMENT, ON THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THEIR CHOICES. LOCAL AUDIENCES, THE PTA, ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ALL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

THIS ANNENBERG CONFERENCE IS A FIRST STEP IN MAKING ALL THIS

WORK. WITH THESE FIRST RESEARCH REPORTS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRESTIGIOUS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EXCELLENCE IN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION, WITH MEMBERS INCLUDING JONATHAN KOZOL, ROGER ROSENBLATT, MARTA TIENDA, JAMES COMER AND KEN BURNS, THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS A MAJOR RESOURCE AND CONTRIBUTOR TO THE PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE ON THESE ISSUES.

SINCE I BELIEVE THAT ONE THING WE DO NOT DO OFTEN ENOUGH IN THE WORLD OF CHILDREN'S TV IS TO HIRE THE BEST WRITERS FOR KIDS' SHOWS, I'D LIKE TO CLOSE WITH A QUOTE FROM E. B. WHITE, THAT WONDERFUL WRITER WHO KNEW SO MUCH ABOUT MICE AND SPIDERS AND PIGS AND HOW TO ENCHANT YOUNG AUDIENCES. HE WROTE:

"CHILDREN ARE DEMANDING. THEY ARE THE MOST ATTENTIVE, CURIOUS, EAGER, OBSERVANT, SENSITIVE, QUICK AND GENERALLY CONGENIAL READERS ON EARTH. THEY ACCEPT, ALMOST WITHOUT QUESTION, ANYTHING YOU PRESENT THEM WITH, AS LONG AS IT IS PRESENTED HONESTLY, FEARLESSLY AND CLEARLY." HE SAID, "ANYBODY WHO WRITES DOWN TO CHILDREN IS SIMPLY WASTING HIS TIME. YOU HAVE TO WRITE UP, NOT DOWN."

DRAFT A 7/26/96 800 wds.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
OPENING STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING SUMMIT
THE WHITE HOUSE
JULY 29, 1996

We gather here with a clear purpose: To improve and expand educational television for our children.

I believe this is a positive and hopeful time...an age of enormous possibility...a chance for us to build a country and a world that is stronger and safer and more full of opportunity than any that existed before.

Our success in the next century depends on building strong families today. And strong families depend on parents committed to passing our basic values on to their children. Our challenge is to do everything in our power to help parents raise decent, responsible, well-educated children. That is why we have worked so hard to give American families more control over one of the most influential forces in our country: Television.

Television is part of our landscape: A typical child watches 25,000 hours of television before his or her 18th birthday. Preschoolers watch 28 hours of television a week.

We have dedicated ourselves to giving parents the power to screen out the television they know their children should not see. I signed the V-Chip into law -- and now parents can stop programs with explicit sexuality and violence from coming into their homes. You in the entertainment industry did your part. Meeting in this very room 5 months ago, you volunteered to rate shows for content. You came together as responsible corporate citizens to give America's families an early-warning system; parents who use the V-Chip will now be able to block objectionable shows before it's too late. Together, these initiatives constitute an invaluable arsenal for America's parents.

But that is only half the battle. As Americans, we do not define ourselves by what we stand against -- but by what we stand for. When we tear down the bad, we have never been content to leave just emptiness behind. We have always wanted to leave something beautiful in its place.

That is what we must do today. With your help, we have made progress cleaning up the television that is harmful to our children. Now we have the opportunity to use those same airwaves for something good: Educational programming that is as great as our kids are.

Television can be a strong and positive force. It can help children learn to count, read, and think. It can reinforce,

rather than undermine, the values we work so hard to teach our children -- showing kids every day what it means to share, to respect themselves and others, to take responsibility for their actions, even to recognize that it's not easy being green. So this morning, I would like to hear from you about what we can do to broaden the spectrum of quality educational programming for children. I hope we can focus on 3 specific issues. First, I'd like to talk about the new research that shows how kids can learn valuable lessons from TV over the course of their young lifetimes. Second, I'd like to find out more about what good shows look like. And third, I'd like us to talk about how we can break down the barriers to the development and production of quality educational programming for children.

Before we begin, I would like to make an announcement. For the past year, I have been calling on the Federal Communications Commission to require broadcasters to air a minimum of 3 hours of genuine educational programming a week. 3 hours a week -- 180 minutes a week, about 2.5% of the entire schedule.

Such a requirement would halt a steep and troubling slide. In 1984, the 3 major networks aired 11 hours a week of children's educational and informational shows. By 1990, they were down to 2 hours a week. [WHAT NOW?]. Like our air itself, the airwaves that broadcasters use belong to us all. In exchange for their use, broadcasters are required to serve the "public interest." I cannot imagine anything that serves the public interest better than seeing to it that we give our children at least 3 hours of educational television a week.

That's why it gives me such pleasure to announce that the 4 major networks, the National Association of Broadcasters, and some of the leading advocates for educational television have joined together to support the FCC's proposal for 3 hours of quality educational programming. Now all the FCC has to do is pass the measure, and the 3-hour rule will be the law of the land. Then we will prove in living color that the powerful medium of television can be a tool to build young lives up rather than tear them down.

We have become too used to talking about television as a scourge -- it either fills our children's heads with bad values or vacuums out their best thoughts. Today, let us work to reimagine television as a force for good. Let us dare to imagine what children's television would look like if it resembled what you all probably imagined it could be when you were children or when you first got started in this business.

In the last week, as families have gathered together to watch the Olympics, we have been reminded of all the good television can bring into our homes. It can bring us together. It can inspire and educate us. This must be our standard. Let's get to work.

DRAFT

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR WHITE HOUSE MEDIA CONFERENCE
JULY 29, 1996

TALKING POINTS

We all know television is a fact of life. *It is also* With hundreds of channels in millions of American homes showing blockbuster movies, 24-hour weather updates, soap operas and Saturday morning cartoons, television is a tremendously powerful medium -- ~~one~~ that touches all of our lives. *It has a particularly*

But as the President has pointed out, the technology of television is not intrinsically good or bad. Television has the potential to be a powerful force for good in our children's lives. But it does depend upon the values of the people in control of that technology and the decisions they make. *powerful influence on our children*

Now more than ever, American families are seeking more and better programming for their children. Parents don't just want to tune out bad shows, they want to be able to tune in good ones -- shows that stimulate, inform, and challenge our children. *This segment of the discussion is about making sure*

And thanks to research done by people such as Professors John Wright and Aletha Huston, co-directors of the Center for Research on the Influences of Television on Children at the University of Kansas, we know what a positive effect educational programming can have on children's intellectual stimulation and academic preparation. *who have been at the WH before to talk about their second work*

In June 1995, during a panel discussion at the White House, Professor Wright released the results of a four-year study of how exposure to educational programming on television influences the academic skills, school readiness, and school adjustment of low-income children. *release*

This study found that preschoolers who watched as little as twenty-five minutes per day of educational children's programs like Sesame Street did significantly better on standardized verbal and math tests when they started school and consistently spent more time on reading and other educational activities than did children who watched primarily noneducational cartoons and adult programming. *Today with the announcement of new study we have further evidence*

Today, Professor Huston is here to ~~release~~ *announce* a follow-up study. That study shows that children who had regularly watched educational children's TV programs in early childhood had better grades in high school than those who had not.

[Introduce Professor Huston]

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That study shows just how powerful -- and positive -- television's influence can be.
And from Prof. Huston we'll hear

DRAFT

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*Can we call this
report seminal
ground-breaking*

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 26, 1995

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AT PBS PANEL DISCUSSION
THE WHITE HOUSE

MRS. CLINTON: Good morning. And welcome, everyone, to the White House for this very important meeting. I am delighted that you could all be with us, and I want particularly to recognize a few people who were able to join us this morning. We have Representative Jim Moran from across the river in Virginia, and Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton from here in the District of Columbia.

We are also delighted that Richard Carlson, the President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Ervin Duggan, the President of the Public Broadcasting Service; Delano Lewis, the President of National Public Radio; and Larry Irving, the Secretary for Communications in the Department of Commerce are also all here with us.

This is a meeting about a very important subject. It is about the role that television plays in the lives of our children and, particularly, the role of public broadcasting. I think that it is very important in our country today to acknowledge and admit that television is a pervasive influence in our lives and has a particularly significant impact on the development of our children.

There are some who have engaged in a long discussion -- even an argument -- over the last decades about what television means in our lives, what the role of violence, for example, in television is. But I would like to focus today on an issue that we are now finding more about, and that I hope will influence the debate about the role of public broadcasting and its contribution to children's development as we struggle with and argue over the proper role of government.

MORE

Public broadcasting is for many, many children the only channel available that has consistently effective educational programming. Probably about 40 percent of our families in America do not have access to cable television. And because of the demographics and incomes of those 40 percent of our families, we know that they have a disproportionate number of our children. More than 40 percent of our children reside in those 40 percent of our families.

If you were to look, as I have done, at the daily television schedule of our three major networks and our public broadcasting channel, you would see what is available for those children in those homes. Now, certainly, there are other options on cable, but they are often far outnumbered by channels that provide information and programming that is not always suitable for our children.

But looking only at the four available channels that those 40 percent of our families have access to, it is clear that what is available to children with respect to their educational and developmental needs is not usually found on commercial television. It is found during the day on public broadcasting.

And there are those who think that the educational programming of public broadcasting is a luxury. But to them I would ask: What is the necessity that can be substituted for that luxury? Where are the outlets for the kind of helpful, productive, learning opportunities that children have access to on public broadcasting day in and day out?

But you don't have to take my word for it. You don't have to take anybody's word for it. We actually have research. We have evidence about the impact of television and the impact, in particular, of public broadcasting.

One of my great hopes from a meeting such as this is that our decision makers will not just engage in ideological discussions, but will make decisions based on the evidence that we have available to us. If one disagrees with the evidence -- fine. Provide counterevidence. But it is difficult to engage in a conversation about what is in the best interests of our children if the people engaging in it are merely taking ideological positions.

And so, today, I have asked some people who have a great deal of experience and knowledge about the impact of television and, particularly, the impact of public broadcasting on children, and

MORE

especially on low-income children who often do not have the educational opportunities, the intellectual stimulation, the academic preparation that many of us try to provide for our own children.

I am sure anyone who has followed our national discussion about television knows of the woman I am about to introduce. She is someone who, for many years, has been, in effect, sounding the alarm about the impact of television. I wish that alarm were heard in every family more loudly than it sometimes is, as well as in the board rooms and legislative chambers of our country because she has pointed out, time and time again, that children are shaped by what they see, by what they hear, by what they are taught.

And the constant, pervasive presence of television in most of our homes is a challenge for parents who will have to learn and be willing to accept responsibility for monitoring more closely the television-watching of their children. But it is also a challenge for the larger society.

And so it gives me great pleasure to introduce Peggy Charren. She is the founder of Action for Children's Television and is currently serving as a visiting scholar at Harvard, continuing to examine and accumulate and analyze evidence about the impact of television on our children's lives.

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MS. CHARREN: There's time for a few questions, and I thought that, given that we have the First Lady with us, we would let the First Lady ask the questions today instead of the audience.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, the one thought that kept running through my mind after what we've heard is, can you imagine any child rushing home from the first day of school and trying to tell the Power Rangers that she'd gone to school? (Laughter and applause.) You know, there's just sort of a disconnect there.

Well, I really find everything that each of you has said to be born out in our common experience. Really, it is common sense. But let's see if we can maybe take it one step further for people who are still saying to themselves, well, if this is so important, commercial television will pick up the slack; if this is so significant in the lives of our children, there will be a market for it, so all of what you are saying can be understood and accepted, but

MORE

doesn't necessarily lead to the conclusion that you have to have a public television presence with designated programming for children in order to make the point that each of you has supported.

So let me ask both Peggy and John and then everyone else to comment. Why isn't it likely that if the worst were to happen, and the programming that we've already talked about and the significance of it that the research has demonstrated were to disappear, that that vacuum wouldn't be filled by the existing marketplace?

MS. CHARREN: I think that if there's anything that my 27 years of activism on behalf of choices for children on television has proved, it is that even with a lot of conferences, even with articles in the paper, even with the people who make that kind of television having children, they will not provide the kind of programming that children need that really enhances education. They are more comfortable with the other kind of programming.

And the problem is that when you talk to 2- to 15-year-olds in a voice that you want to tell them something important, you speak in a different language to preschoolers, to elementary-age kids and to older kids. And if you want to get the most eyeballs watching the commercials, you tend to say things that all children will listen to. And maybe all children do read comic books at one point. But when you talk to them about how wonderful literature is, you do it the way the book business does. And Public Broadcasting handles that screen the way the book business handles children's books.

MR. WRIGHT: I think the most important thing to think about with respect to the private sector is not that it's unwise, not that it's entirely vicious, not that it's a handicapping condition to the entertainment and education of children, but that they are focused entirely on the bottom line. They exploit children. They gather eyeballs glued to TV sets which they then sell to ad agencies and advertisers who then re-exploit the children to sell them products they don't need, food that's not good for them, and toys that enhance their fantasy and their willingness to attend the programs which gather their eyeballs for sale. I think I'll stop on that line. (Laughter.)

But the research that they do -- I spoke to the executive producer of Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, and I asked her, what kind of research do you do? How do you know what messages you are getting across to children? And she said to me -- and this is a

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quote -- "After every rap we sit around and we ask each other, what questions have we answered; what ideas would children take away from this episode that we have just made?" And in the research community -- this was at a Children Now conference and some of you were there -- in fact, you were there by television -- everybody said, you asked who? They said, we asked ourselves.

Until we start asking the children, until we start doing the research, something other than market research, until we leave a program like "My So-Called Life," -- one of the few decent programs for young people that the commercial ever made that was cancelled. Not enough eyeballs to sell. Not a wide enough range of children watching it. And every network has done that. I can remember "Hot Hero Sandwich" on NBC -- a wonderful, wonderful program. What happened to "Big Blue Marble" on ABC? And many, many, many more.

It is incompatible. The system is incompatible. You've got to do it because air waves belong to the people, the children belong to the people. And you've got to have something for kids that is theirs.

MS. MANZANO: Well, I'd just like to say, the private sector won't pick up the slack because I'm always amazed that "Sesame Street" hasn't been imitated in the private sector. We've been on the air so long, and everybody agrees that we're great. But nobody cares to sort of -- to imitate us. And like you said, there were all these wonderful shows for children that got cancelled right away.

I was asked once to write for a children's show on commercial television. And I asked, what age group is this show aimed at? And they said, oh, you know, kids. (Laughter.) Well, how could -- you don't write for a three-year-old the same way you write for a five-year-old, and certainly not a seven-year-old. So I knew immediately that they hadn't even examined themselves and they didn't even know what they were going to say to these children. It was bottom line. And they started out with the result of what they wanted their show to do which was sell a certain product -- not what the show was about.

MS. CHARREN: And one of the worst problems that happened in the last few years is that the show itself has become a product too often on children's television on commercial broadcasting. And that's unfortunate because it -- that line between editorial and commercial speech so you don't know who's talking to you.

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And it means that we're telling our children, one in four of whom lives below the poverty line, what they should spend money on to feel good, to have friends. And that's really very sad. They can do what they do as long as we have the part of that broadcasting service that is saved for public broadcasting which cares first about the public and first about our children. And I'm not sure they care about anything else at all.

MRS. CLINTON: Joan, do you want to add anything?

MS. DYKSTRA: No. I think everyone has stated it very clearly. I think the bottom line is that we want quality programming for children. They have an opportunity. They can give us quality programming. I fail to see where it is. I do know that PBS brings me quality programming for children.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, I think it's an important point that the economy that we all rely on is driven by a need to create aspirations and expectations and, really, unfilled wants. I mean, that's how people continue to buy goods and services. So that's really the reason -- for a market economy in a way that is going to continue to grow and provide more prosperity for people, it has to be rooted, in a funny kind of way, in people's insecurity. I mean, if all of us today said to ourselves, we have more than enough stuff, we are not buying anything else, and we really meant it, you know, that would not be good for the economy. (Laughter.)

So there is a need on the part of the economy, and particularly one like ours, to continue to try to create in our minds the desire for more and different things. And there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. That is the way the system works.

But I do think there is a dark side that we don't pay attention to. And it's something that was just alluded to -- that when we turn our children and think of our children as miniature adults, and really see them primarily as consumers, as little shoppers who we want to turn into grown-up buyers of as many goods and services as we possibly can sell them, that has a very different perspective than if we see them as individuals with certain potentials who it is our responsibility as parents, as citizens to nurture.

And so there is an inherent conflict as the Professor pointed out. And it is very difficult, I think, to be fair to

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commercial television, for them to fulfill a nurturing developmental responsibility when that is not, as they clearly understand, their bottom line.

So part of what we have to do as a society is to assign different roles and responsibilities to different sectors of our society. And commercial television has a different role and responsibility, particularly as it pertains to children, than public broadcasting.

And I think without that kind of choice, it is very difficult for parents, even those trying hard to be conscientious ones, Joan, to do what they believe they should do. I mean, teaching values to children in between commercials on Saturday morning cartoons is a lot harder, believe me, than watching "Sesame Street" or "Mr. Rogers" or "Barney" or something like that with your child.

So it's not an either/or. And that's what I think we have to keep trying to emphasize. It is not an either/or where it's only commercial television or it's only public broadcasting. It is both. And we have to see the responsibilities, particularly for child rearing, in a much broader way so that each sector of our society, starting with parents, but expanding far beyond just the nuclear family, understands they have a role in determining how well our children turn out.

And that's really what your research has shown is that we know children are going to watch television. What we have to do is provide the best possible choices. But if we don't have the choice, then we've already made the decision, haven't we? And that's what we're trying to avoid in this discussion about what happens with the future of public television.

MR. WRIGHT: I'd like to add a parenting anecdote because I think you did bring in parents and you did bring in teachers, and they are going to be critical in the future of kids' understanding and use of media.

And I'd just like to tell a very quick story. I have four grandchildren, two more on the way. And these four kids love to watch television. They watch lots of television. But none of them, as yet, know that there is such a thing as commercial broadcast entertainment television. I'm not even sure about PBS. And the reason is that television for them is something that you take off the shelf in a little box and put it in a machine and play it. And on

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that shelf are videocassettes and books. And the videocassettes were taped off the air; they were bought; they were rented. I blush to admit, some of them were taped from rented copies. (Laughter.)

But they got there because some parent cared enough to put them there and to let the children watch over and over again, as they do with their favorite books, the stories that are dear and near to them.

MS. CHARREN: And to follow up on that, a lot of the choices that are available from the new technology, which I mentioned earlier, are not available to kids who need them the most. They are expensive. Cable is expensive. Some of the pay channels are money on top of money, and they provide a number of the choices that cable does provide for children, and that if we don't really take care of the public sector of broadcasting, we are going to have a situation in this country that will make what's going on now look nice by comparison when we don't reach one, whole, big portion of kids growing up in America. So I want to take very good care of PBS.

MRS. CLINTON: And I just want to add to that comment, Peggy, that we haven't talked this morning about the evidence that I think is now conclusive about the impact of watching violence on television and on children's behavior. We have argued about this issue ever since the Surgeon General's report back in 1972 talking about the impact of television viewing on children's behavior. There have been many studies since.

And it is like the old problem we have -- every time there is another irrefutable piece of evidence about the linkage between smoking and lung cancer, there will be somebody, well-paid, who will stand up and say, well, that's not definitive. And we face the same problem when we talk about the effects of violence and children's behavior.

But Peggy is right. I mean, this is not just a do-gooder, altruistic, nice thing that people like Peggy and I and the rest of us here think should be done because we like children's television. Certainly, I do. And I believe strongly in it. And that's what my daughter watched, and we read the books that went along with it.

But I am equally concerned about the other side of the equation that the Professor talked about. And that is, those children who are not watching the 25 minutes a day of public

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broadcasting but are, instead, watching the 25 minutes of commercial television without much parental supervision or mediation as to what they are seeing.

It is absolutely true that not every child who watches hundreds of hours of violent television becomes violent. But most of the reason for that rests in the home and the neighborhood that are structured and coherent enough that the child's experience of watching television is mediated. But in the absence of that mediation, and in the absence of the other factors that help a child separate reality from fantasy, that help a child learn empathy and sensitivity, it is absolutely clear that the television-watching habits of vulnerable children will affect both their own violent behavior and their response to violence that they see around them. It has a desensitizing impact.

So this is an issue that we think goes far beyond the narrow concerns of the group of us who are arguing strongly to preserve public television and, particularly, educational and children's programming. It is also a plea to all programmers of television, including commercial television, to think about the impact of your decisions.

The bottom line can be described in many ways. Only one of those descriptions concerns profitability and the dollars that come in. There's a bottom line to society as well. And we think that bottom line is better served by having better television programming for our children

Thank you all very much for being with us. (Applause.)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 29, 1996

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

1:10 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I have just concluded a very significant meeting with the leaders of America's media and entertainment industries. I am pleased to report on a breakthrough voluntary agreement to help parents protect their children from violence and adult content on television.

Our purpose in this meeting has been to find out how we can help parents raise their children in the right way and to protect them as they raise them. In this high-technology age, our goal should be more opportunity, more responsibility and more community, to make changes in the way we do business that will help people to raise their children and bring us together as a people even as we grow the economy and enjoy the opportunity that this new technological era brings.

Just a little over a month ago in my State of the Union address I challenged Congress to pass legislation that requires new television sets to include a V-chip, to give parents the power to screen out violence and objectionable content in television programs. Earlier this month, with the Telecommunications Act, I signed the V-chip into law. Since that time, our administration, spearheaded by the Vice President, has worked with broadcasters, cable firms, production studios and others to encourage them to find ways to take more responsibility toward meeting our shared goals.

I am gratified that the far-sighted leaders gathered here in this unprecedented meeting have risen to the challenge. And I thank them all.

As a result of our discussions, the media and the entertainment industry has agreed to a voluntary system of ratings for television programs. These ratings will be put in place by the end of this year or the beginning of next year to help parents decide what programs they want their children to watch. And the V-chip will give parents the power to block those programs they do not want them to watch from their televisions.

We're handing the TV remote control back to America's parents so that they can pass on their values and protect their children. In the next few moments, Jack Valenti will describe the next steps the industry will take. But they've already shown that they recognize that their creativity and their freedom carries with it significant responsibility. I applaud them for it, and all Americans are in their debt.

The work we began here is just that -- a beginning. In our meeting I invited the industry leaders to come back to the White House to report once they have developed their rating systems and I look forward to the work that they will do.

Let me say on their behalf -- I know Jack Valenti will say this, but this is a complicated and difficult undertaking. They talked a lot about some of the challenges that they will face. I think that that should cause all the rest of us to be all the more supportive of the fact that they are doing it, doing it together, and doing it with real deliberation and discipline on a specific timetable.

We also had a very good discussion this morning of the urgent need to improve children's programming. It is not enough for parents to be able to tune out what they don't want their children to watch, they want to be able to tune in good programs that their children will watch. We take the Children's Television Act seriously. We want to continue to work with the industry to do the very best we can for our children in both quantity and quality of children's programming. And I believe the executives here today will bring to this challenge the same sense of responsibility they have brought to the issue of TV ratings.

Ultimately, we're trying to raise our children successfully in an age of information overload in which the typical child will watch 25,000 hours of television before his or her 18th birthday. Television is a powerful force to bring people together, to entertain, to educate, to open our minds and hearts. But we also know that young people are exposed regularly to numbing and pervasive violence and other destructive behavior when they park in front of the family television.

I believe what we are doing here today shows how America can meet this challenge and many of our challenges by businesses and parents and government all working together, each doing our part. It shows what can happen when visionary business leaders do make a commitment to values and the common good as well as the bottom line, and when they live up to their responsibilities as corporate citizens of our great country.

I want to say, too, that I hope the kind of responsibility these leaders have shown here today will be matched by other executives in other industries, on other problems the American people face in common. That is how we can move forward into this new age of possibility.

Finally, let me give credit where credit is due. This breakthrough we see today is the result of literally years of concerns by America's parents. Ultimately it is only parents who can prevent our children from seeing programs that teach violence, that has no consequences or that inappropriate behavior is glamorous. So to all the parents of America, I say: You will be handed a powerful tool that you must now exercise it with the responsibilities that go with it.

And to all the parents who have worked for this day, I say a very special thank you, especially to Tipper Gore, who has worked on this issue for 20 years, and to the First Lady, who has given it so much of her concern.

America's media and entertainment industry is the world's most vital creative force. It would be much more difficult for me to be President were it not for the economic advantages in international trade brought to us by the creative energies of America's entertainment industry.

I hope that this agreement today will ensure that that creativity will forever be a source of learning and values and responsibilities in the lives of our children, even as it continues to be a great source of your own success, our entertainment, and America's strength.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

1:16 P.M. EST

LEVEL 1 - 3 OF 3 STORIES

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Federal News Service

MARCH 1, 1996, 9:53 A.M. EST FRIDAY

SECTION: WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING

LENGTH: 10472 words

HEADLINE: PRESIDENTIAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
REGARDING TELEVISION VIOLENCE
WITH PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON
FIRST LADY HILLARY CLINTON
VICE PRESIDENT AND MRS. GORE
AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
THE OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING

BODY:

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, ladies and gentlemen, the president and the first lady and my wife, Tipper, and I would like to welcome you here to this office. And traditionally this has been the office of the vice president since way back, since this became the Executive Office Building. And these families with their children have been invited here this morning for a discussion with the president and us here about the historic turning point in the relationship between families and the mass media.

As you know, President Clinton fought for, got passed in the Congress and then signed into law a real breakthrough measure called the V-chip, which makes it possible for parents to exercise more control over what their young children see on the television set.

Then yesterday, in response to President Clinton's invitation, the leaders of the entire entertainment industry came to the White House, and after a two-hour discussion with the president, announced their unanimous agreement to put in place a voluntary rating system for every program that appears on television, whether it's broadcast or cable, and to electronically encode that program with a signal that will interact with this electronic device called the V-chip, which will enable parents to say this particular kind of programming is not appropriate for my children in my judgment, and so when I'm not there, they're not going to be able to watch that.

Some of the parents who are gathered here today, and some of the children, too, have been thinking about this issue and this particular solution, in some cases for quite some time. Some of them participated in the family conference that Tipper and I host each year, and that the president spoke at last summer. Some of them have been featured in the first lady's book about what families can do, "It Takes a Village." And this discussion this morning we hope will shed some more light on the importance of the turning point yesterday.

And, of course, to lead the discussion and to explain why this is so important for our country, the president of our country, President Clinton.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. And I might say, aren't we all glad to be in this big, beautiful office here? (Laughter.) I love to come over here.

I want to thank all of you for coming, and to say to you and to the members of

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the media who are here, yesterday we heard for two hours from a remarkable assemblage of people who are involved in the television industry, and of people who broadcast the programs.

We heard from cable people; we heard from the people who write the programs, people who represent the actors, the producers. It was an amazing assemblage of people who got together and came to Washington to announce that they had decided to develop a rating system for television programs like the movie rating systems, and that, as the vice president, that that would be able to be used then when the V-chip becomes available in television.

Now the V-chip, of course, will -- will start coming in, in televisions, in a couple of years. And we replace about 25 million televisions a year, I think, in America, so it will quickly be a fixture in a significant percentage of America's televisions. But the rating system, presumably, will still be helpful for parents even before they have the V-chip.

I -- we wanted to have you in here today because we want to get a feel and we want the country to get a feel for what kinds of things parents and -- feel about this rating system and the V-chip, what the young people feel about it, what you expect out of it, what you think it will do, what won't it do, what would you like to see, how would you like to see it work. And of course, we have some advocates and professionals here who can talk about the impact of this on -- on child-rearing in America and on childhood.

I -- I must tell you, this is going to be a very complicated and difficult thing for these people in television to do, in the sense that they have -- there are many, many thousands of -- tens of thousands of programs on all these television stations, and as we get more cable channels, they will multiply exponentially, so the -- the job of rating them is very different from the job of rating a couple thousand movies a year.

So as they undertake this task, I think it's important for -- for the people in the entertainment industry and the public at large to get just a feel for how parents and -- and -- feel about it, how young people feel about it, and kind of how it should proceed, because -- because they've committed to have this done by the first of next year -- no later than the first of next year, and perhaps sooner.

So we really just felt we ought to have this conversation today, and we thank you for joining us. And maybe we ought to start with you, Mrs. Sompton (sp). If you could tell the press -- everybody, if you could tell the press your name when you speak and then we'll -- and how you happen to be here.

BARBARA SOMPTON (sp): My name is Barbara Sompton (sp). I've got two kids, Michael Eisenbray (sp) 11, and Rebecca Eisenbray, 8. And I'm here because I've been active with the PTA and I was asked to come here today.

I think it is fabulous that the industry has agreed to put in this rating system. I was growing up on Long Island. There were, I think, seven TV channels. And now, as the president said, it's impossible to probably count how many there are. It's impossible for a parent to hope to screen what's on television today. And it would be so helpful to be able to have the rating system that I now use for the movies, because -- especially with younger children, and I know it changes as your children get to be teenagers. But I can say to my children, "You don't watch movies that are PG-13." We don't have to talk about it. You know, those are off of the screen, off of the table. We don't have to talk about those, okay. So maybe we'll talk about what we do see, but we don't have to talk about those.

I think it's fabulous that they're going to start rating even before the V-chip is available because parents can use that rating as a tool and the V-chip as a

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tool as the children especially get older. Just Michael's age now, I'll leave him alone for a couple of hours and it's wonderful to be able to have that technology to enforce what I would be enforcing if I were home. And I, by the way, am home more than most parents because I don't work full-time. But I can't be with my children by their side at every moment guarding what they watch on TV, and nor would I want to. I think it's terrific and I really applaud the industry for doing a big turnaround.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Latonya (sp)?

LATONYA JONES (sp): I'm Latonya Jones (sp) and I am the mother of a three-year-old and a soon-to-be. And I work with a group in Maryland called Advocates for Children and Youth. We have something called the Maryland Campaign For Kids TV, so I know firsthand that there are a lot of parents who are very concerned about the issue of television. And I applaud not only the industry but this administration for the support that you've given for the Children's Television Act, for Public Broadcasting, and also for the V-chip. I see the V-chip, though, as really just the first step, because I think that parents not only need negative control over blocking the things that are coming into their homes that they think aren't good, but we need to continue to encourage the industry to produce good programming and to produce the kind of programming that we can become involved in helping our kids make good choices. One of the things that we always talk about is that television is such a wonderful educational tool.

And unfortunately, the V-chip and the recent developments are really because a lot of what's being produced is not really using the potential that television has to educate and enlighten. So I'd like to see the V-chip and this industry coming together as the first step, to taking it to where they can talk about pooling resources to produce better children's programming. And we're hopeful that the V-chip will be the beginning of that.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I want to talk about the better programming in a minute, but -- and -- because I think that's a big part of (that announcement?), especially when I asked the young people about it. But I want to give the parents who are here a chance to say anything they'd like to say about the V-chip and the ratings issue. And then I want to come back and talk about the V-chip with you. I want you to tell you're story. (Laughter.)

Q I'm Jim Murphy (sp). I'm here with my family today. I've been involved for a number of years through the Virginia PTA of the national PTA advocating for children and children's issues.

And I've long seen the impact that television has on our families and how we raise our children, and the environment that our children are living in today. The V-chip in our home is going to be an aid, a tool. Particularly when you look at diversity of ages of my children, ranging from 10 to 17, their viewing habits and what they should be viewing is vastly different.

I applaud the industry for the fact that -- and I applaud you -- for the fact that you have brought the industry to the rating scheme. I believe that the technology of what we're going to be doing with the V-chip is actually going to assist and aid the industry in refining and defining that ratings system.

I don't want to -- I want to make the judgment, along with my wife, as to what is good quality programming for my children. But I do not want to take that same standard to say that that has to be the industry standards. Those are the professionals. Let them worry about that. I'm worried about what's in my home. I do think that that V-chip is going to define for us now what has previously been defined by the industry, and that's the family hour or the family time, because I think people will actually vote -- since most of our airways are

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commercial, they'll vote with that V-chip. And advertisers will understand that, and programmers will understand that. And maybe we will see more family programming of the type that we would like to see, as a result. So I see it as the critic's choice, and I tend to view it that way.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I'm so glad to hear you say that because there were -- you made two comments, I just want to say, that kind of resonated with the discussion we had with the people from the industry yesterday. Ted Turner said -- and he went out and said in public, so I'm not saying anything in private he didn't say in public -- that he strongly supported the rating system and what we were doing -- what they were doing, but he did think it would be very costly. And I think it will obviously cost a lot of money to figure out how to do this and then review all these programs to set up a system, but I think he meant he thought it would be costly over the long run because programs would not have the same viewership and their advertisers would drop. I think I see it more like you do; it's a voting system. It would be another -- it's like the Nielsen ratings, except you won't have -- this won't be a sample; you'll be able to actually know. You know, you'll be able to at least sample all the V-chip homes. You take a representative sample. And it might actually change the content of programming so that the market, the market forces actually produce more positive programming.

The other thing you said I think is important -- a couple of the folks who were skeptical yesterday talked about how this wouldn't be a panacea, it wouldn't solve all the problems. One of the men in the broadcasting meeting said, "I'm going to take off my" -- I mean in the industry meeting, he said, "I'm going to take off my industry hat now and tell you that I'm a parent of three small children. I'm not looking for panaceas; I'm looking for a little help." And he was -- I think that's the way all of us who are parents look at this: There is no such thing as a panacea; we're looking for a little help. So you made that point, and I thought it was very good.

(The president calls on a participant. Name inaudible.)

MS. : Along that same line, I think that with the V-chip it will be possible to address the issue of whether a particular program is acceptable or not once and not have to keep revisiting it every time you come down to the family room and you find the children have conveniently forgotten that this is one of the programs that you deemed not acceptable, and you have to go back through the explanation over and over again, "No, remember, I told you you can't watch this because this is where it does not meet our family's standards." And I think it will probably reduce some of the tension that goes back and forth as you keep reiterating the same issue over and over again of the same programming. Once it's explained -- (inaudible) -- with the V-chip it's blocked out and it's done. So I think that's going to be another benefit of it. And again, the push for setting some standards and letting the standards be -- (inaudible) -- reflects the total reshaping of programming -- (inaudible).

JACQUELINE CALDWELL: My name is Jacqueline Caldwell, and this is my husband, (name inaudible) -- Caldwell, and we are the parents of toddlers. They are two and four. And we are delighted with the strides that the administration and the industry have made with respect to the V-chip and the voluntary rating system. We have a system right now where, if we happen to be watching television, I will notice that there may be something that we don't want the children to see, and my husband, who is the keeper of the remote, will -- (laughter) -- you know, change the channel. So we have to be sort of actively involved in what they see and don't see. And anything, as you say, that will assist -- is that something -- ?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: (Short remark, inaudible because of the laughter.)

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(Laughter, cross talk.)

MS. : Without a doubt.

MS. CALDWELL: (Laughing.) So we're really delighted with both of the V-chip and (this rating bill ?).

MR. CALDWELL (?): It is important. I mean, one of the first things that I noticed, as parents of toddlers, is that one of the first things our children learned is how to turn on the TV. And they were 2 -- (scattered laughter) -- and they could figure out --

MS. : Yeah.

MR. CALDWELL (?): -- how to hit the remote, what it channel it had to be on to actually get the screen on. So something like this is a vital first step for working parents like us, who, you know, can't be there every single minute that the baby's looking at TV.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Mr. President, you will remember that Dr. Robert Phillip (sp) with the American Psychiatric Association was one of the experts who met with us in Nashville last summer and the expert that pointed out that there have been about 1,000 studies about the relationship between televised violence and actual violence, and about six of them have said there's no connection. About 994 have said there is a very strong connection. And you were telling us in Nashville about why the expert community has felt strongly about this. Why don't you share some of that?

DR. ROBERT PHILLIP (SP): Well, I am a psychiatrist by training, although I remind my colleagues that I did a sub-internship in obstetrics, so I am ready to -- (laughter) -- (respond ?), if necessary.

MS. : I don't think I'll need you again. (Laughter.)

DR. PHILLIP: I spend most of my time evaluating persons who've committed crimes, and then testifying in court. And I -- what's becoming shocking to me (is ?) that the persons that I was called to evaluate were becoming younger and younger, and the crimes that they were committing were becoming more and more heinous. And it began to focus my attention on what some of the root causes were and what are the things that are (coming ?) to influence children to behave in ways that most of us, when we were children, perhaps would not even think of doing.

The research information is overwhelming and it's clear. Mrs. Gore called our attention to the way in which violence within demeaning musical lyrics can potentially affect the way in which children behave. Mrs. Clinton, in her book, talks about the way in which young brains form and the way the hard-wiring of that brain is so easily influenced because, by design, children are great imitators. That's how they learn. And in my own clinical experience and the research work that I've been doing, there's no question that both those things are true.

We are a society that has become infatuated with violence, and we feed our addiction to violence in every way conceivable, including at the news trailers at 5:00, 6:00, 10:00, and 11:00, on every show that you can think of. "The National Television Violence Study," which the American Psychiatric Association and other professional groups have participated in, has shown that violence is free and gratuitous on television, and its effect on children is powerful. Children are like little VCRs. They see something once and then they repeat it, and they repeat it over and over and over again.

I share the enthusiasm that my colleagues share today in thanking you, Mr. President, and you, Mr. Vice President, for taking the leadership in an area where parents -- and while I am trained clinically, my primary job is to be the

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father of a 16 and 14-year-old daughters and 7 and 5-year-old sons. And in that broad spectrum, I have seen some remarkable differences in attitude and behaviors towards what they see on television and what they listen to, only within that generational gap in my own family.

These are powerful influences. Television is an extraordinary media, one that we should be very, very pleased that we have access to that technology, because children have learned enormous things and have benefitted greatly. But with the good side of technology there is the potential risk, and it is that risk that I and the scientific community have become particularly concerned about because we know without balancing that risk, without paying attention to the ways in which children learn, the kinds of violent images that sometimes are seen on television in which violent acts go unpunished, in which violence may be masked in humor in which there is no pain -- you know I evaluated someone in a hospital down south not too long ago who looked at me from his bedside, having been involved in a homicide in which he was shot, and he said to me, "Doc, I never realized it was going to hurt to be shot."

These are powerful statements coming from our children. And these are the kinds of images that we, as parents, at the very least need some help in making determinations as to what children are exposed to, at what age, and what frequency. What my 16 and 14-year-old watch may be quite different from what I think my 7 and 5-year-old ought to watch.

And I think what the two of you have done has really helped facilitate the industry and parents to work together on creating a stronger and more healthy environment in which children can use television in a productive and useful way. PRESIDENT CLINTON: Hillary, do you want to comment on that based on what you said --

MRS. CLINTON: No, that was incredible. I mean, I think that if we could get every parent to hear that and understand it, then the rating system and the V-chip would be even more effective because, of course, one of our challenges is to convince parents to use the rating system and to take the time and energy that will be required to implement it in their own homes, and then when the V-chip comes along, to be ready to use that as well.

And the information they can get, such as the doctor is explaining, about what we know is the linkage between what they see on television and how they behave, I think the more willing parents will be to act.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I want to get to this -- to the young people here. But let me tell you it's okay if you disagree with us about this. (Laughter.) We want to hear what you really think. But I want to ask the doctor one more question. Before I had this job -- as I used to say, back when I had a life -- (laughter) -- I -- I used to -- I was a governor of my state, when I ran a big prison system and a big criminal justice system, obviously. And then I was attorney general. And before that, I taught criminal law. So I've been following issues of crime and violence closely, from that perspective, for more than 20 years now.

For most of my time, it was an article of (faith ?) that 75 percent of all the violence crimes in America were created by people between the ages of 17 and 26, and that there was almost a hormonal problem. If you could, literally, just get violent people and put them somewhere until they were 27, you could let them out -- (chuckling) -- and they would not do that again; that there really almost seemed to be sea changes.

Now we see an astonishing thing, with the crime rate going down among people 18 and over -- and I might add, with drug use going down among people over 18 -- and violence going up among people under 18 and -- (well ?) as well as casual

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drug use. And I think there are plainly other reasons for increasing violent behavior among young people, including the lives that many of them have to live, virtually raising themselves on some of the meanest streets in America.

But I gather from what you said, that you really believe that the sort of cumulative, almost deadening, impact of all this media-generated violence is, at least partly, the explanation for rising rates of violence among juveniles.

DR. PHILLIP: I don't think there's any question, Mr. President.

And you're right. If you look at the recent data that was released by the Justice Department, you see this rather unusual trend; a very positive trend that crime rates, overall, in this country are going down, except there has been an extraordinary explosion of crime among juvenile offenders, those individuals who are under the age of 18. MORE

The use of handguns by juveniles in this country has increased in the last six years by 144 percent, so that in the last year there were close to 2,000 murders committed by children under the age of 18, and whom the victims were other children under the age of 18.

Now, it would be foolish to suggest that the television set and the broadcast industry is responsible for that. It is a multi-factorial problem. But what is true, that something has radically changed from when you and I grew up on Long Island to the way in which people are growing up on Long Island and other places in this country now. And one of the things that I think scientifically helps explain the phenomenon is what we talked about in Nashville, and I think that is one of the powerful, negative effects of repeated exposure to gratuitous violence, whether it is through the ear or whether it is through the eyes and the eras combined, and that is the concept of desensitization. And I gave an example in Nashville, and if I can have a moment, I'll give it again.

Most of us probably remember the rather horrific image, that was captured quite accidentally by video cameras, of Rodney King being beaten in the streets of Los Angeles. And the first time you saw that image you probably were repelled by it. But quite honestly, by the 5th, 10th, 12th or 20th time, you did what most of my male colleagues in this room do, since we do have the remote controls, and that is to reach over -- there's a little joke that we've had in the room for the last few minutes that it was a male thing -- you reach for that remote control and you change the channel. And it's at the point that you change that channel that I think you demonstrated your desensitization to the cumulative effects of violent exposure.

In fact, if you think about the ways in which we have used desensitization scientifically, the more you show someone an image, the less impacted they are by that image, and they are then able to move on to the next step. This is part of what's happening in our society with our young. Because of the way young brains are hard-wired, because if you use misogynistic and violent language in musical lyrics and you listen to that, it becomes easier then to use that language and convey those attitudes when you interact with others.

I think these are the kinds of things that substantively contribute to some of the data that you referenced, Mr. President. But we've got to be very careful not to presume that the answer is in the television or that the blame lays with the broadcast industry, because that's summarily incorrect, and we have to remember that it is this very same industry that is responsible for substantively increasing the literacy rate in this country, and by reaching out and capturing the minds of children who are visual learners and learn better by visual and auditory images than print images. And so we have to accept both the good with the bad, but recognize that we have a responsibility when we identify something that could be problematic to try and deal with or create a safety net

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for those children for which this may be problematic.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Let me point out that next week, toward the end of next week, I believe it's on March the 7th, the president's going to be hosting a White House Conference on Youth Violence, looking at a lot of the other factors involved.

But the fact that children, on average, before graduating from high school, witness 20,000 simulated murders on a little box in their home, has to have some effect, as all the studies indicate. And while there are many other causes of the problem also, this is one, and it's one that, thanks to the president, is finally going to be susceptible to a solution, and thanks to the industry for taking the steps that they agreed to yesterday.

So we have to take each of the causes one by one.

And as the president was saying, these children here may have a different perspective and certainly have something to -- something to add to this.

You were -- you were going to --

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I thought maybe we ought to start with Catherine (sp), next to me, because Catherine Murphy (sp) actually passed the first V-chip bill -- (laughter) -- in the United States of America. I think you all need to know that. It wasn't us; it was her. And so I think you ought to hear her story. And I'd like to know how you came to propose this legislation and what you think of it.

MS. CATHERINE MURPHY (SP): Well, I first discovered the project actually with the aid of my father, who was working on the project with with -- (within the PTA ?). And it interested me, so I contacted Jim Moran's office and asked for a copy of the legislation that was in committee at the time, and he sent me the -- House Bill 1807, (I think it was ?). And I took a look at that.

And going to this seminar at Girls Nation -- 96 girls from around the country came and set up a mock Senate, and we were all responsible for proposing our own piece of legislation, be it a resolution or a bill, on something that we thought was important. And since I discovered this project and it caught my eye and -- I decided that I would write my own version of the V-chip and submit at the Girls Nation Senate. And so the first day we were there, you know, it went into committee, and we had to defend it there, and it got through committee and got onto the floor, and I had to defend it there. And you know, it got through the entire Senate, and I had a lot of support behind it and sent it to our president, who didn't believe in government regulation of private industry whatsoever, and she vetoed it. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: They'll do that sometimes. (Laughter.) The -- but let -- let me ask you, do you believe -- I want to -- I want to ask, and then I want to sort of go around to the students here. How do you think the V-chip should be used? And how much difference do you think there is in what -- in the age of the children, in terms of the regulation of the programming?

MS. MURPHY: Well, particularly in my home, we find that -- I'm 17 and a senior in high school, and my brother is 10 and a fifth-grader in elementary school -- there's a vast difference between the (four of us ?) -- between our TV-watching habits. I am so involved in so many (different ?) school activities that television is just not a high priority for me, and I don't find myself watching a lot of television. I watch the news, and I watch -- (inaudible) -- and (it's ?) probably a little odd, (but it's not in ?) my age group. But you know, it's not a very high priority for me, whereas the elementary schoolers will spend a lot of time, I've noticed, I mean, a lot of time.

And when I baby-sit, I'd go over and baby-sit, and the parents would say, "Don't

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worry about them; they'll get ready for bed," and turn on the TV. And (then ?) it's 9:00; send them to bed. And I'd go over there at 5:00 in the evening, they'd literally turn on the television at 6:00 and just sit there for three hours. And you know, I think, "It's a baby-sitting job, okay?" But you know, when it finally got to me and (really ?) thinking about it, these kinds could be reading in books or, you know -- (laughing) -- doing their homework possibly, you know. Something has got to be -- there's got to be a line between where television is useful and informative, and where it's just mindless activity.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: (To another participant.) Do you watch television a lot?

YOUNG BOY: I don't watch it as much as most of my peers because I'm somewhat busy, considering my age, because I play two sports. I do street hockey with my friends, and I fence, and I spend a lot of time in a creek near our house. But I do watch some news. I watch the news, one or two cartoons, and sometimes I watch "ER."

But I know a lot of my friends basically base their lives on TV. (Scattered chuckles.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: They do?

YOUNG BOY: That's all it is. They go home, turn on the tube, and at 10:00 they go to bed. That's it.

And then, during school, that's all they talk about, and they base their lives on it. And they think everything they see on TV is perfectly fine and it's how they should act, and a lot of it isn't. A lot of it is the exact opposite of how they should be acting, yet they base --

PRESIDENT CLINTON: But you've actually seen that in your friends who believe that --

YOUNG BOY: Yeah.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: -- that they -- (they're active ?); they model what they do based on what they see on television? YOUNG BOY: Yeah, they model themselves after Will Smith or Bart Simpson, and they act just like them. And they end up getting in a lot of trouble, too. And they never realize it, because they figure, "Oh, well, it's okay because I see it on TV every night."

And I like the V-chip because it doesn't automatically do anything, but it gives you the power, it gives the parents the power to control it so that kids won't do that. And what I'm hoping is that they can block out the bad programming, and if nobody's watching it, then they're liable to put good programming in there because they have to get their income somehow. So --

PRESIDENT CLINTON: (To another participant.) What about you? (Laughter, cross talk.) (Inaudible) -- you're 11, right?

YOUNG BOY: Yeah.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Okay.

YOUNG BOY: And I -- my sister watches TV sort of like -- she'll sneak away when she's done with her homework and watch TV, but I hardly ever watch TV.

I like the computer much better than the TV. I play on the computer for hours and hours. I like --

MS. : Is there going to be a V-chip for a computer? (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Well, (many have ?) thought about that because that's going to be a big issue.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Yeah, let me interject -- (inaudible) -- on that. The industry group and the computer industry that has put together this system for rating computer games just made an announcement yesterday that they're coming up with their own industry-based approach to give parents the ability to screen the Internet to prevent material that's inappropriate for young children to come into home computers on the Internet. Now, some of the online providers, like America On Line, already do that, but there needs to be this industry-wide

system to do it for the Internet generally in case that legal provision doesn't work out. It's real controversial. But that's good news. But I didn't want to interrupt you. Go ahead with what you were saying about TV.

YOUNG BOY: Well, I don't have -- I have a couple friends who watch TV a lot. They are brothers. One of them is in fourth grade, the other is in fifth grade. And they are sort of -- they spend most of their time playing with Leggo, playing on the computer, or watching TV, but they're not -- they don't watch many violent programs. They watch the "Simpsons," they watch cartoons, but they don't watch violent programs, and TV doesn't really affect them much.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Have you ever had a friend, either of you, who watches the "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers"?

YOUNG CHILD: No.

YOUNG BOY: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: You have?

YOUNG BOY: I have a friend who watches them, actually -- (inaudible).
(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well, does he act out the moves?

YOUNG BOY: Sometimes him and his friends, like during recess, will go away from playing kickball and they'll just pretend they are the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, or the (X-Men ?) or whichever show they saw, what they think was the most interesting episode the day before. And they'll just act them out, and then they'll just go around pretending they have such power and just pretend they're killing each other or such things, and think nothing of it.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: And they do the kicks and the --

YOUNG BOY: Yeah.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Teachers say that there are lots of little Mighty Morphin Power Rangers and many of them have gotten hurt.

YOUNG BOY: Yeah.

MS. : (Off mike.)

YOUNG BOY: Yeah, everyone.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: What do you think?

YOUNG GIRL: (Off mike.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Do you think your mother should have some influence over what you watch on television, or should you decide?

YOUNG GIRL: It would be good if my mom did because -- (inaudible) -- I watch. There are some things like especially shows that aren't really very (interesting ?), and I just don't think that -- (inaudible) -- should be able -- kids should be able to watch that.

Because kids in the second grade, kids in my class, well they're -- there are these two kids -- (inaudible), and they're always pretending to be the X-men. And they're like scraping me, and they're -- (inaudible) -- and stuff, and they take like three pencils and go like that and pretend that that they're like all these different people. And this gets really annoying. (Laughter.)

They go to -- they go to the principal's office (word inaudible), and they just don't really tell that because they're -- because --

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Playing out what they saw on TV.

Q Right.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: What about you all?

Q I'm 13. I see -- I baby-sit. And I see these kids playing games. And you know, they're just acting out what they've seen on television. But they hurt each other. And they don't -- and when you tell them "You can't do that, and you can't rough-house like this," they don't realize what's wrong with it.

I also see myself -- I watch less and less television, as I get more active in clubs and sports and groups at my school and going out with my friends. And there are better things to do than watch television.

And the kids could be playing -- like my little brother prefers to go out and play in the woods, or build forts with his friends than to watch television. Kids need to expand their imaginations. And they could be doing so many other things that would benefit them, instead of watching cartoons and violence, et cetera, et cetera, on television.

MS. : Recent studies have shown that kids in the inner city watch up to 11 hours of television a day. And it's important for us to acknowledge that for some parents, they'd much rather have their kids in the house, watching TV, than out in the neighborhood that might not be safe, or in activities or with friends that they don't particularly approve of what the friends are doing. So I'd much rather have my son at home watching "X-Men" and "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" than out there with someone who's actually -- has got a real gun, playing pretend. And when I talk to parents' groups about the fact that the average American household watches seven hours a day, people are usually shocked. They hear seven hours: "How could you do it?"

But when you really think of it, many of us use the television as an alarm clock in the morning. So it's very, very common for households to have the TV on for two hours in the morning, while you find out what's the weather, what are the school lunches.

And then kids who come home from school, they watch a couple of hours in the afternoon. And as we know, many parents watch the news with their kids over -- while they're cooking dinner and then at dinner. By the time you've added two or three hours of prime time, you're not even talking David Letterman or "The Tonight Show." It really is not hard to add those hours up a day.

And the kids who are watching 11 hours a day are going to school, but they're also watching cartoons in the morning or watching cartoons in the afternoon. They're watching in the evenings.

And this young man mentioned to me that he's got the sense that a lot of the kids here don't watch a lot of TV. And I said I think it's because your parents are really aware. And even though there are parents that are also concerned, they don't quite know what to do and how to offer alternatives, or the alternative of watching the show and having this fantasy makes them safer. So, I think that the V-chip will be helpful to a lot of the parents. But I also think that encouraging parents to help kids be critical viewers and choose what they're watching carefully is also really important, too.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: What do you think?

YOUNG GIRL: Well, I think it's kind of like sad what's being put on TV now. And it's really good because the V-chip is going to be able to get rid of those things. Because there are things like "Tales from the Crypt" and "X Files" and those things freak me out, and I'm -- (inaudible). And it's really sad because little kids are watching them and they get the wrong sense of reality. And they shouldn't be watching these things because that leaves them in their rooms hugging their teddy bears saying, "I'm not afraid of the dark, I'm not afraid of the dark," practicing for when they're supposed to go to bed, instead of going outside and like playing with their friends, riding their bikes and all that stuff. And they should be, you know, having fun and not being scared, and it's really awful that they get addicted to it and everything. They should spend more time outside, have fun with their friends because you only get to be a child once.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Have you or any of your friends ever had nightmares and trouble sleeping because of images you've seen on television?

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YOUNG GIRL: Yeah. We were spending the night at one of my friend's house once. It was her birthday. And we were talking about the last time she had rented a movie, one of the Chuckie movies, and they had seen it, they stayed up all night because they were terrified, they thought he was in the other room and they couldn't go to sleep. And it's just -- it's sad what -- like the things that go on TV.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: Well one of the reasons I ask that question is that many children that watch the television, you know, eight, 10 hours a day, will at a young age now often be exposed to decapitation or some very gruesome, violent scene that they're not in any way prepared to deal with. And many parents tell us that they have to spend a lot of time comforting children when they have these nightmares and have trouble going to sleep. And the V-chip gives those parents a tool with which they can instruct their television set, don't put those images on in front of my child anymore. And it's a major advance.

YOUNG WOMAN: I think that's what makes this really important. A lot of people are talking about the V-chip will do this, the V-chip will do that. It's not the V-chip that's going to do it, it's the parents. And that's got to be the biggest point people have to understand. New technology isn't -- it's not just this micro-chip, it's not just the broadcasting industry, it's got to start with the parents, and it's got to start at home, the parents educating their children about what's right and wrong on television, and then to be able to back that up with the technology, to be able to enforce the values that they're teaching at home with that technology they have access to.

MRS. GORE (?): I would just like to say a word for children. I think you're exactly right. It is power to the parent; the V-chip is power to the parent. But I think what you're saying is often something we've seen in our house. And as you get older, what we as parents want for our children is to make good critical decisions about what they view, to know what freaks you out; and you, yourself, can use the V-chip to block out programs that you decide that you don't want to see. And as kids get older, they can use it as a way to protect themselves from those kinds of (images ?).

And I think that's another value of it that we don't want to overlook. We want to focus on parents, and parents having the power, but older children also are going to be able to use the V-chip to help themselves have critical viewing skills and know themselves and what they want to see. And so kids, too, are to be given credit for having sense about this.

YOUNG MAN: I was thinking about -- we've heard a younger person's perspective on how violence in TV has affected them and their peers. We've heard Catherine (sp) talk about how her -- the activities she's involved with in school, it really doesn't -- it makes television go down on her list of priorities. And I think that when you look at the age groups, I think that there's kind of a transitional age between the children that are young enough to have adult supervision for the majority of the time that they're going to be spending watching TV or doing other activities, and there's a difference between that and the older kids who have soccer practice after school or who are independent enough to spend the afternoon at the library by themselves.

And I think it's the age 12, 13, 14, where kids are becoming more independent, they don't require constant attention from their parents or a babysitter, and I think that's the age where a lot of education and a lot of instruction and guidance as to what kind of shows are appropriate and what kind of shows are indicative of acceptable behavior, I think that's the age where that needs to be stressed.

MR. : I think that's a really key point because more and more of the studies are showing in that middle school period of time, where we go into the prepubescent period and early adolescence, that is probably the most critical time in a child's life, and it is also, I think all of us as parents know, is probably the most difficult time that we have raising our children. We're not only dumber than dirt -- (laughter), but they seem to have gone into a meltdown and just kind of tuned us out for a while. And that's where the influence of the television, and it really does seem to be -- that's there the mindset is, that they sort of vegetate there for a couple of years. And it's at that critical point where we're shaping those values that they're going to carry with them. And this goes back into what we were talking about earlier in the crime statistics.

DR. PHILLIP: You know, it's really interesting, because -- well, I think it's true with parents we always think about the most critical time as being what we're trying to deal with at the moment, and if you've got adolescents in the house, that's pretty preoccupying. But I vacillate back and forth with my sons and daughters because of the gap. And really, if you look critically at the research, you begin to recognize that it's all important.

While the value constructs that you talk about, I think, are extraordinarily critical because that's the time when normally, in fact, long before there was television, we were struggling at that age to try and figure out what's right, what's wrong, how we should behave, but, you know, between the ages of one and six, there's a lot that's going on that we tend to forget about. If you put children in a room with a monitor and you feed violent and aggressive images into that room through the monitor, and leave some toys on the floor and then shut the monitor off, guess what happens? Within minutes, those behaviors will be reenacted.

So that we've got to recognize that it's all important. And I think the most positive thing, as has been said by many of the young folks in this room and their parents, is that the technology is marvelous. When I was a kid growing up in New York there were three television stations, and programming was so sophisticated that the Million Dollar Movie ran the same movie four times a day, seven days a week. (Laughter.) Things have changed, and they've changed in such a way that you simply don't know what's on and you don't have a handle of what the information is that's available -- good and bad.

This small piece of technology really helps us create a reasonable environment for the broad range of children that may be in your home and in your community and in our nation. I predict -- and I hope I'm right with this prediction -- that this is the first in a series of technologies that will be helpful. This one happens to be viewed negatively because it's been cast as an instrument that will block-out signals. But I suspect that there's going to be technology that's going to help us facilitate identifying things that are of value. I think we're going to see (frame ?) shifts in the industry.

But most importantly, we have to make sure that this technology does not force parents to reach over to that television set and turn it off. Because if we turn off the television set, we are really denying our children probably one of the greatest inventions of this century that has really, I think, served an enormously useful purpose in providing strong and important influences.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I'm so glad to hear you say that as well. But that -- I don't know how much time we have left. But I think we ought to hear from the young people especially on the flip side of this. Because we believe it's important -- we applaud the industry for developing the rating system and making it compatible with the V- chip.

But the Children's Television Act, which was passed a couple of years ago, also calls upon producers of television programs to develop more and better programs that will be appealing to children in a positive way.

And I just want to make two points and then ask anybody who wants to comment to comment.

There were two interesting ideas which came out yesterday. One is the people who were there -- not us; the vice president and I just watched -- but in the room there, in the industry, there was a genuine argument about whether particularly younger people would be as likely to watch any kind of educational program as they would sort of a violent cartoon or something. And there was a woman there from the Discovery Channel who was a very powerful advocate said, "That is not true. If you make education entertaining, it will be watched." And she gave some examples. That's the first thing, shouldn't -- would you like to have more positive programming on television?

The second thing I think's important to point out, one of you kind of inched up to it when you were talking about the Internet, young people on the computer. All these technologies -- the vice president knows a hundred times more about this than I do -- but it looks to me like they're all merging. I mean, it won't be very long before you can call up any movie you want on your computer, and before a lot of the things you see on your television screen are interactive. So that I think that basically we're watching -- we're seeing a process -- and that, by the way, will engage more young people, because as they become more computer literate, if they have interactive programs on television, it will bring them up, or if they can call movies up on the computer it will -- so we really need to also focus on the positive things that they we ought to be doing for our children.

And so -- so what do you think? Do you think if there were -- would -- would young people be just as likely to watch more constructive programs if they were genuinely entertaining? Or do you believe there's just an inherent predisposition to watch the violence?

YOUNG MAN: I think that most definitely fun, educational television is -- it has been and will continue to be widely accepted by young children because young children are so fascinated by basically everything, and if you fascinate them with something that's going to benefit them and something that's going to make them more aware of what's going on, it opens so many more new doors and windows of opportunity for them.

Watching an educational show about animals, for instance, can spark a child's interest in biology or some kind of science related to animals. And just -- I mean that's such a fascinating field. And it can give a child like sort of a boost into a lifetime of educational fulfillment in terms of TV and their studies, and just basically their lives.

MRS. CLINTON: One of the things that was said yesterday that I did find interesting is -- the teenagers, I'd like to respond to this -- is that, you know, the movie industry, with few exceptions, mostly the Disney animated features, finds that a G rating is a kiss of death for most movies because teenagers won't go to see a G-rated movie.

And in fact, most teen-agers won't go to see a PG-rated movie. And they go to PG-13, and that's one of the reasons that the category was split, apparently. But one of the -- one of the people at the meeting yesterday said that they're -- you know, that they are concerned that when they get to older kids, who are a big market for consumer goods, that the older kids will have more control over the V-chip, because their parents will think they have more authority and right

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to do that on their own, and that they just won't choose programming once they get to be 12, 13 and above, that is educational. Younger kids, yes, you can encode it. And you can say, "I think you'll love watching this animal show." But, you know, when you get to be your ages, how do -- how do we send a message to the industry that older kids, also, will be interested in programs that aren't filled with a lot of -- you know, a lot of violence and cheap thrills all the time?

TEENAGE GIRL: Well, I date -- I'm 14, and I'm starting to date. And you know, when I go to a movie with some friends or that -- you know, we went and saw "Toy Story." We went out to the mall and saw "Toy Story," ate dinner there. So it's not necessarily that all teen-agers are picking the violent movies or the PG-13 and the "R" movies.

And I find more of my friends go see the new Disney movie or the -- you know, the movie that is marketed towards the (children ?) because it's cute, it's funny, you know. And so, it's not always -- I -- I mean, I mean, I can't speak for everyone, but we prefer to go see, you know, the new Disney thing, instead of the -- the rated-R movie with who knows who.

MRS. CLINTON: And you are an exception --

TEENAGE GIRL: (Laughs.)

MRS. CLINTON: -- (compared ?) numbers that are out there.

TEENAGE GIRL: I think also it has to do with where I live and the family upbringing that I've had --

MRS. CLINTON: That's exactly right.

TEENAGE GIRL: -- (chuckling) -- (of the ?) -- that I don't -- I watch a television show and, you know, someone dies in it, and I cry. And I'm just like, "Oh, my God" -- and -- because I'm not numb to it. But I notice that some of my peers are numb to it. They can watch, you know, really violent television and go, "Oh, okay, you know. Great." But I can't do that, and I sit there going, "Oh, my God," you know.

ANOTHER TEENAGE GIRL (?): I think -- (off mike) -- and I noticed in "Aladdin" -- and I haven't seen "Toy Story," so I don't know about that one -- but when I watched "Aladdin" with my peers, there were enough jokes that are on the higher level and that are almost bordering political satire that it catches the attention of the older crowd, and I think that's something that's very smart. What they've got to do is understand the same thing that apparently the advertising industry is a master at understanding: You have to have your target audience. If you're trying to target teenagers, there's going to be certain ways you're going to have to do it, and it's not -- you don't have to do it with the violent programming.

But educational programming for younger children is drastically different than -- (because what educational cries for is what would catch their eye. And I think probably one of the keys for the industry to start to create educational programming for kids aged like 14, 17, high school -- I mean freshmen through senior in high school -- is to use freshmen and seniors in high schools.

They've got to, because, I mean, teenagers want to relate to other teenagers. And I mean, that's what I can say. And to use other teenagers -- you know, the news, kind of -- in the kids' news stories, I think you were pointing out, when they have other teenagers that come on and share, like, experiences or neat adventures, or a teenager who got to go do this or got to go do that -- I think that kind of stuff -- sharing each other's experiences -- that's the kind of thing that educational programming cries for.

DR. PHILLIP: There's a dearth of quality children and young adult programming. The industry, by default, has left it to the cable industry that's done, really, a remarkable job of providing quality children's television. But the open

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airwaves -- and I think this is the important issue of the telecommunications act -- there really has to be an aggressive looking-at the kinds of programming which, even as late as the early '70s, was available. I can remember the information rock series, and when a bill becomes -- how a bill becomes a law, and those little five-minute vignettes that used to be on the broadcast networks, which have summarily disappeared.

Kids are information sponges, in answer to your original question, and they will draw up anything that you put in front of them. The problem is that we have tended not to put in front of them the kinds of things that will be beneficial to them as persons, but, more importantly, the kinds of things that are going to be beneficial to them as young citizens in this nation.

MS. : And that's why we feel that television, as the -- (inaudible) -- I'd be remiss, representing the advocacy community, to not talk about the opportunities with the FCC, with the fact that there are two openings, and now that the Telecommunications Act has been passed, it changes the license renewal period for stations and when communities actually will have a chance. So, who is the commissioners who are on the FCC and the strengthening of the Children's Television Act is really crucial because that is really impacting on the kids and the quality of the programming.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: You know --

MS. : I did just want to talk a little bit about an effort in Maryland, only because I think what we're all talking about is sort of the theoretical, but how do parents who are at home get involved in activities and in groups that are actually trying to do something. And in Maryland we have something called the Maryland Campaign for Kids' TV, which is the only statewide group that we have, teams that are assigned to each of the stations, that talk to station management and work in partnership with them to talk about what's on television.

And we did put out a book -- you talked about how important it is not to see turning the TV off as the only alternative. You hear people in the industry always say, "There is already a V-chip; it's the 'on' and 'off' button." But we think pulling the plug isn't the only option, and what we've done is we've organized this parents' guide by age group, because it's very true that toddlers are dealing with something very different. And then for three years we have evaluated the programming that's on Maryland stations to take a look at the educational programming to see is it getting better, is it getting worse. And we have kids involved in that, too.

I think that you're very right to say that the children are so savvy these days from a very early age. My daughter at three knew -- the fact that "VCR" was part of her vocabulary when she could start to talk. And I think that we're really remiss if we don't get the kids involved and realize, as you just said, that teenagers want to see other teens; they don't want to see old people telling them what to do. So get the teens involved. And the industry has the ability to use all those creative resources to do good, positive shows. It doesn't all just have to be the violent stuff.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE: I wanted to say before we close, Mr. President, I -- and I've been getting the signal that we've gone way overtime because this conversation has been so interesting, and I know the president has expressed the hope that conversations like this will take place in communities all across the country. And just as Tipper's campaign with music provoked conversation about this issue, this new law and the industry move yesterday will have the extra-added benefit of provoking conversation about the wide range of issues that television raises for families that often go undiscussed.

You were talking about children "vegging out" on television, that's a problem.

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You were saying they're little VCRs. Well sometimes they just blink "12:00, 12:00, 12:00" and that's a problem. (Laughter.) The nightmares, the -- but the studies -- the studies, while pointing out some of the problems, also demonstrate, as we learned in Nashville, that children who see a few hours of television each week, with the programming chosen thoughtfully with their parents involved in making the choice, actually do better in school and learn faster.

And so it really does not make sense for most families to just pull the plug and throw the television out of the house, although we've probably all been tempted to do that at times. It's not practical. Nor is it practical, as you said, for a parent to be told, you have to stand there every minute of every hour and monitor every single program your child is watching. That is impossible. What the V-chip provides is a third option, for parents to make categorical choices and say this is the kind of programming that I think is good for my child, and I want it available in my living room, as you said. But this other kind of programming, which has images or language or scenes that my child is not prepared to deal with yet, keep that out of my house. And the choice is made by the parent. But this conversation today, as I said, is one that's taking place all across America. And this new program, the V-chip and the rating system, is going to make it possible for parents to act on those choices. Mr. President?

PRESIDENT CLINTON: First of all, I would like to thank all of you for being here, especially the young people.

Thank you, Doctor, it's good to see you again.

DR. PHILLIP: Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I want to thank Tipper Gore. When she first proposed the ratings system for records, they -- it was considered heresy, and now that she's lived and worked hard at this -- long enough to make it just a matter of American conventional wisdom in television.

And let me say that -- that for Hillary and for me, based on our experience over the last 15 or 20 years, maybe the most important reason to have this conversation today was the point that Catherine (sp) made, when she first talked about her work for the V-chip, and that is that technology is intrinsically action-oriented, but neither intrinsically good nor bad. It depends upon the values and the action of the people in control of the technology. And while this gives more -- the V-chip and the ratings information -- will give more power to parents, it's utterly useless unless they use it.

And so, what I'm hoping that this did today is to convince other people, in other community settings in every community in our country, to begin to discuss these matters and to begin now, if they -- if their community does not have an advocacy group like the one (that I'm ?) involved in, perhaps to form one, or at least figure out how friends and neighbors can get together and figure out how they're going to use this ratings information and figure out how they're going to use the V-chip, as the V-chip comes in.

But I was glad to hear Mrs. Thompson (sp) say -- Ms. Thompsons (sp) say -- what she did about this "You don't have to wait for the V-chip to make use of the ratings information." You know, most parents -- (chuckling) -- are still influenced by what their -- I mean, most children still have some influence about what their parents say, and parents are influenced by their children.

So I just want to encourage that. We need that every place in America. This law that was passed, and this remarkable effort by the industry, will not amount to a hill of beans if the parents do not take action in their homes and if, in each community, the community activists who know how to make the most of this,

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don't work with the parents to do it.

MS. : Thank you. PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thanks a lot. It's great to see you.

MR. : Thank you.

END

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 2, 1996

EXCERPTS FROM *IT TAKES A VILLAGE*

Personal stories

(p. 277 - 278) "My parents did not worry so much about the content of the television shows my brothers and I watched as they did about the amount of time we should spend at it, if they let us. They wanted us reading, doing chores, or playing outside, so they regulated our viewing hours strictly. Bill and I restricted both the amount and the kind of television Chelsea watched as a child, and even now we check up from time to time on her TV and movie watching."

The V-chip and other technology

(p. 278) "Parents are beginning to come up with ways of defending themselves and their children from the excessive influence of television. They may eventually get some help from technology, such as the V-chip included in proposed telecommunications legislation. The V-chip is a computer chip with which parents could block television programs designated as containing material unsuitable for children. Making the technology available is only half the battle; putting it to good use will require a strong, clear rating system like the one we now have for movies."

What parents can do

(page 278) **Know what their children are watching:** "In the meantime, parents are on their own in making sure children are not watching inappropriate shows or too much television, period. They can continue to trade their own "ratings" informally. They can encourage the newspapers and magazines that are beginning to gear reviews of movies and music toward parents to cover television in this way as well. They can also teach their children *how* to watch television, the same way they teach them to cross the street: carefully."

(page 279) **Use television as a learning tool:** "We can ask children why characters act as they do and help them to distinguish between responsible and irresponsible acts. We can get them to talk about how the families on television are different from theirs and from other families they know. We can relate television to real-life situations. When Roseanne and Dan fret over bills because Dan's business is going under, for example, we can explain to our children that sometimes parents need to figure out ways to make sure they can meet all their responsibilities."

"Used wisely, television can help children to distinguish between fantasy and reality -- precisely because the fantasy it projects feels so real to them. Identify aspects peculiar to "TV land" that may seem obvious to an adult but aren't necessarily clear to a child. For instance, when watching a thirty-minute drama or sitcom, point out that it's not realistic to solve a problem in the span of a half hour. Explain that this is how writers and directors adapt to scheduling needs and discuss how the situation might have played out in real life."

(page 279) **Turn the television off:** "There is another option parents might consider: Just turn the televisions, video games, and VCRs off -- for an evening, a week, a regular day each week. When I made this suggestion in an interview with *Woman's Day*, readers responded enthusiastically. Some parents, fed up with not only depictions of violence but the excessive influence of television in general, wrote to say they had already tried out the idea."

Positive examples

(page 278) **The Cable Industry and the PTA:** "A publication entitled "Taking Charge of Your TV: A Guide to Critical Viewing for Parents and Children" is available from the Family and Community Critical Viewing Project, and initiative sponsored by the National PTA and the cable industry to teach television viewing skills to parents, teachers and children. It suggests ways parents can talk to kids about what they are watching, which not only makes television a less passive pastime but transforms it into a learning tool."

(page 279 - 280) **Parents:** "Here and there, parents are banding together and discovering their collective strength. The South Florida Preschool PTA monitors children's programming on the Miami television stations, with members volunteering to watch programming for one-or-two-week blocks to determine whether the stations are complying with the law."

(pages 283) **The Media:** "When he was a news director at WCCO-TV in Minneapolis, John Lansing realized that the more his station's news coverage resembled an entertainment program, the weaker its connections to its community were becoming. He decided to convene town meetings to allow the station to reacquaint itself with the expectations of its viewers. As a result, the news operation dropped its tabloid-style coverage, and WCCO became a pioneer in "family-sensitive viewing," reducing or eliminating descriptions and images of violence during designated early evening hours. Even so, WCCO has managed to maintain its first-place market share."

(page 284) "Television could take a cue from the several newspapers that have developed children's beats and long-term reporting projects focusing on family issues. The Cleveland Plain Dealer, for instance, has added a new "family section" that runs every Saturday. So far, it has run stories on children's television viewing habits (along with tips on how to make TV watching a more constructive activity), on ways grandparents and grandchildren can spend more time together, and on building stronger families (accompanied by personal stories about people in the region.) The section also includes a regular family finance column, with information on everything from the cost of buying a family pet to how to take a family vacation without breaking the bank."

The Children's Television Act and the Federal Communications Commission

(page 280) "The Children's Television Act of 1990 limits the amount of time the networks can devote to commercials during children's programming. It also directs the FCC more broadly to review, as part of the licensing procedures, whether stations air shows that "serve the educational and informational needs of children."

values. If either is undermined, the consequences will end up costing us all more in the long term, materially and otherwise, than we can possibly gain in the short term.

In this book I have talked about the responsibilities of individuals and institutions for the future of our children and the village they will inherit. No segment of society has a more significant influence on the nature of that legacy than business. We live in an era of what political scientist Edward Luttwak calls "turbo-charged" capitalism, which is characterized by intense competition; breathtaking technological changes; global financial, information, and entertainment markets; constant corporate restructuring; and relatively less public control and influence over the private economy.

This combination of changed circumstances poses new problems for families and communities, and for the children who grow up in them. Business affects us powerfully as consumers, as workers, as investors, and, more broadly, as citizens of the society it helps to create and as inhabitants of the environment it has a strong hand in shaping. Our circumstances therefore require new and thoughtful responses from every segment of society, particularly from business.

→ OUR economy grows as it gives consumers more and better products to choose from, at competitive prices. On the whole, this system has been a boon to us, not only allowing us to live comfortably but providing more Americans with jobs. But one of the conditions of the consumer culture is that it relies upon human insecurities

to create aspirations that can be satisfied only by the purchase of some product or service. If all of us said today, "Okay, I have enough stuff. From now on I will buy only the bare necessities," that would be a disaster for our economy. But spurred on by cultural messages that encourage us to feel dissatisfied with what we have and that equate success with consumption—messages fueled by the advertisements that constantly bombard us—we face the far more likely danger of allowing greed to overshadow moderation, restraint, and the stability that comes from saving and investing for the future rather than satisfying short-term desires.

The threat is greatest to our children, who will inherit that future and the values that shape it. "As a society," writes David Walsh in *Selling Out America's Children*, "we Americans of the late twentieth century are sacrificing our children at the altar of financial gain," and, in Walsh's phrase, to the lure of "adver-teasing." Those of us who believe in the free market system should worry about what we are in danger of becoming: a throwaway society sustained on a diet of unrealizable fantasies, a society in which people—especially children—define self-worth in terms of what they have today and can buy tomorrow.

Walsh documents the careful calculation—and hundreds of millions of dollars—that go into advertising campaigns directed at children, whose desire for instant gratification and lack of sophistication make them easy targets. Children parked in front of the television for hours on end are particularly susceptible, and advertisers know it. After the Federal Communications Commission repealed regulations that limited the amount of time that could be devoted to commercials during children's television shows in 1984, the number of commercials

again increased, and program-length commercials—shows that revolve around toy-based characters—exploded.

The Children's Television Act passed by Congress in 1990 again set limits on commercial time during children's programming, but compliance has not always been strictly enforced, although the FCC is trying. "Kids today," observes FCC chairman Reed Hundt, "can identify more cereals than Presidents." Nor is the drumbeat to buy, buy, buy confined to commercials; advertising permeates children's lives. Even their sports heroes have become walking (and slam-dunking) advertisements for everything from Nikes to Pepsis to Big Macs.

Mass consumerism and "adver-teasing" have parents competing with multinational corporations not only for their children's values and beliefs but for their health. According to one study, Joe Camel, the cartoon mascot of Camel cigarettes, is now as recognizable to six-year-olds as Mickey Mouse. Cigarette brand names have become affixed to virtually every professional sport, from soccer to skiing to sailing. If you doubt that tobacco companies target children as prospective consumers, ask yourself what gets three thousand American children to start smoking on any given day, or talk to Dave Goerlitz, an actor who appeared in commercials for Winston cigarettes for seven years, until he became so disgusted by the company's blatant attempts to lure children that he left the business and joined an antismoking crusade. Or take a look at the previously secret documents from Philip Morris, which produces two out of every three cigarettes American children smoke, that U.S. Representative Henry Waxman of California read into the *Con-*

gressional Record in July 1995. Among the revelations was that the company, as Waxman put it, "studies third-graders to determine if hyperactive children are a potential market for cigarettes."

In cases where children are directly and seriously endangered by products, the government can and should step in, as the President has done in his proposal to have the Food and Drug Administration restrict children's access to cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, curtail cigarette advertising that appeals to them, and require tobacco



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companies to fund an educational campaign designed to counter the message that smoking is "cool." (Predictably, the tobacco companies are spending millions of dollars to fight the proposal through legal action in the courts and through an advertising campaign against "government bureaucrats.")

But government is a partner to, not a substitute for, adult leadership and good citizenship. Parents must become more willing to stand up to consumer pressures from advertisers and from their own children. They can resist the impulse to "prove" their love by showering children with things they do not need and give them precious time and attention instead. They can make a moral statement to their children and to manufacturers by refusing to buy products that promote gratuitous violence, sexual degradation, or plain bad taste. In the summer of 1995, clothing designer Calvin Klein withdrew an advertising campaign targeted at teenagers that featured young models in sexually suggestive poses after consumers objected.

If parents do not take a stand, how can we expect children to resist the consumer culture's message that style is more important than substance? We can measure its potential for destruction in the young lives already lost to murder over a ski jacket or a set of fancy new hubcaps. Parents need help from the village to counteract and to curtail the force of this message. The broadcasters and publishers who provide time and space to advertisers must exercise greater restraint and better judgment. Business must work with government and families to find ways of balancing the interests of industry with the interests of children.

. . .

THE consumer culture's assault on values adds to the pressures families are under in today's fast-changing economy. Most of us remember a time when business was an anchor in our communities. After World War II, when America had about 40 percent of the world's wealth and only 6 percent of its population, our nation enjoyed an economic boom in which businesses were expected to produce goods and services of high quality, not only for the purpose of bringing in profits for stockholders but also to create the jobs and higher incomes that would build the middle class. After all, if no one had jobs or incomes, who would buy the goods and services that businesses were producing?

In recent years, however, long-established expectations about doing business have given way under the pressures of the modern economy. Too many companies, especially large ones, are driven more and more narrowly by the need to ensure that investors get good quarterly returns and to justify executives' high salaries. Too often, this means that they view most employees as costs, not investments, and that they expend less and less concern on job training, employee profit sharing, family-friendly policies, shared decision making, or even fair pay raises that share with workers—not to mention their families and communities—gains from productivity and profits. Even workers' jobs may be sacrificed as executives seek short-term profits by "downsizing" or "outsourcing" (farming out to independent contractors work previously done in-house) or moving production to countries where wages are lower and environmental and other regulations less stringent. Instead of "We're all in this together," the message from the top is frequently "You're on your own."



Seeing Is Believing

As television has ravenously consumed our attention, it has weakened the formative institutions of church, family and schools, thoroughly eroding the sense of individual obedience to the unenforceable on which manners and morals and ultimately the law depend. Obviously, we need to rebuild our families, our schools and our churches. But we cannot complete these reforms until something is done about television, for in both its advertising and its programming it has created demands that appeal, not to the best in our natures, but to the worst.

JOHN SILBER

A FRIEND OF mine told me about a visit she made to a family with five children. Down in the basement, she could hear the two teenage boys and their buddies singing along to the latest "gangsta"-rap CD. On the first floor, the six-year-old and the eight-year-old were slouched at either end of the couch, motionless in front of the screen, "surfing" the channels. *Click.* A futuristic battle scene. *Click.* Graphic images of a recent murder in the city. *Click.* Two men fighting. *Click.* What appeared to be a "docudrama" about rape. In an upstairs bedroom, their twelve-year-old sister was watching an "R"-rated video with a friend. It was a clear case of media assault.

When my friend gently raised the issue of the poison that was pouring into those children's minds, her harried hostess could only say, "Look, I'm doing my best." Clearly, this mother, like nearly every parent I talk with, could use some assistance from the village.

Some of that assistance has come from Tipper Gore,

whose 1987 book, *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society*, sums up the challenge parents face. Long before I met her, I admired Tipper for having the courage to stand up and say what millions of other fathers and mothers were thinking: that some of the media our kids are exposed to is doing them harm.

Tipper and her watchdog group, the Parents' Music Resource Center, were leading forces behind the effort to get record companies to put warning labels on music recordings with violent, degrading, and sexually explicit messages that are inappropriate for children. Yet Tipper was attacked and ridiculed for her outspokenness, and accused of supporting censorship for advocating voluntary warning labels.

Finally, other public figures have taken up her call for action. C. DeLores Tucker, head of the National Political Congress of Black Women, teamed up with William Bennett against "gangsta" rap. They confronted media giant Time Warner, which has since decided to sell its stake in Interscope Records, the company that produced some of the music with the most offensive lyrics. Although it has taken a long time, public opinion seems to be mobilizing to force the entertainment and news industries as well as the government to address concerns about the effects of the media on our children and our society.

The recent attention that has been brought to bear on the content of movies is also overdue, given their powerful influence on the culture. At least we have a movie ratings system, although there is much we can do to refine it and to improve the content of films in the first place. For example, we can look to countries such as Great Britain and Australia, which have stricter codes for violent content. But in this chapter the focus is primarily on

what happens all day on our television screens, both because that is where most people see the movies Hollywood makes and because its presence and influence so pervade our society.

Former Federal Communications Commission chairman Newton N. Minow sounded the alarm long ago. In 1961, Minow decried television as a "vast wasteland" and urged that the networks be held to a high standard of public interest. Since then, Minow has devoted himself to this vitally important issue in a variety of communications and public service positions. Most recently, in *Abandoned in the Wasteland: Children, Television, and the First Amendment*, he and Craig L. LaMay catalogued the overwhelming evidence of television's negative effects that has accumulated over the past three decades and took broadcasters to task for evading the consequences of their decisions by hiding behind the First Amendment.

Minow's portrayal of how deeply televised violence has embedded itself in our national psyche is as shocking as the violence itself:

So routinely do Americans accept television's version of their lives, that on January 18, 1993, when seventeen-year-old Gary Scott Pennington walked into his high-school English class in Grayson, Kentucky, and fired a .38 caliber bullet into his teacher's forehead, killing her, one of the students who witnessed the murder remembered thinking, "This isn't supposed to happen. This must be MTV." Must be. The average student in Gary's senior class had already seen 18,000 murders on television. The average student in the class had spent between

15,000 and 20,000 hours watching television, compared with 11,000 in school; every year the average American child watches more than a thousand stylized and explicit rapes, murders, armed robberies, and assaults on television.

Since the 1950s, a steady stream of articles, books, and studies have documented the harm television does to children. The American Psychological Association's Commission on Violence and Youth points to three major reports, each a decade apart—by a surgeon general's commission in 1972, by the National Institute of Mental Health in 1982, and by the American Psychological Association's Committee on Media in Society in 1992—which reviewed hundreds of studies to arrive at the same unshakable conclusion: that "viewing violence increases violence" and "prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward violence."

Ninety-eight percent of American homes have at least one television set, which is watched each week for an average of twenty-eight hours by children between the ages of two and eleven, and twenty-three hours by teenagers. Children who grow up in lower-income families, with fewer organized activities or places to play, watch even more TV than their more affluent peers.

Children themselves report that certain television shows encourage them to engage in sexual activity before they are ready, to behave aggressively, and to be disrespectful to their parents. Eighty percent of Americans responding to a 1993 Times-Mirror poll said that they believe TV is harmful to society and especially to children. And we know that saturating young minds with increasingly graphic and sensational depictions of vio-

lence prevents them from developing the emotional and psychological tools they need to deal with the threat and the reality of violence. Shootings, beatings, even killings, begin to seem normal and, in an odd way, painless. Children become numbed—"desensitized"—to violence.

Whether, and under what circumstances, the violence people see on television and at the movies actually incites violent acts is a question researchers have debated for years, ever since the surgeon general's 1972 report. As with smoking and lung cancer, however, we know that there *is* a connection. Yet just as somebody—most often somebody well paid by the tobacco companies—is sure to stand up each time a new finding confirms the linkage between smoking and lung cancer and shout, "That's not definitive," every time a new report draws a connection between the violence on our television screens and the violence on our streets, some in the entertainment industry try to refute, or at least to dilute, the claim.

You don't have to conduct research worthy of a Nobel Prize to grasp that what most children are seeing on television can't be good for them. Just turn on your television, any time of the day, any day of the week, and see what is competing for their attention. I'll bet that if a stranger came into your home and began telling your kids stories about the same kinds of characters and events, using the same kinds of words and pictures, you'd throw him out. You wouldn't wait for a surgeon general's report to validate what your instincts as a parent told you was a hazard to your children's mental and emotional health.

Defenders of television argue that children are subjected to images of violence in all sorts of media—including fairy tales and other literary classics—and complain that

it is not fair to hold television to a higher standard. But as Minow points out:

The tradition of oral and written storytelling embodied in both fairy tales and modern children's literature developed in the service of children's moral education, and its lessons helped to define the boundaries between childhood and adulthood. In traditional settings, violence was but *one* possible outcome of conflict, not the only one or even the primary one. Moreover, stories that included violence surrounded it with meanings created by adults for instructing children, not by adults for entertaining adults.

Television executives are also quick to say that they are a major provider of information as well as entertainment. They stress that it is the duty of journalists to report what goes on in the world. It's true that children now get most of their information about events at home and around the world directly from the media instead of filtered through their parents, teachers, or other adults. And it's also true that we need to be made aware of crime and violence so that we can take actions to protect ourselves, such as supporting measures to impose sensible gun control. But why, when we turn on the evening news these days, do we find ourselves awash in depictions of sensationalized violence that are increasingly difficult to distinguish from the gore that permeates the latest "action" series?

In 1992, the Center for Media and Public Affairs counted the acts of violence on ten television channels in the course of a single eighteen-hour broadcast day. When

the study was repeated just two years later, the center found that the incidence of television violence had increased by 41 percent, with the greatest rise occurring in news shows. Another recent study found that local news coverage of murders tripled last year, even though there was no corresponding rise in the recorded murder rate. The explanation is obvious. News executives are acting more single-mindedly from the same motive that drives their colleagues in the entertainment business: violence sells. Ellen Hume, a senior fellow at the Annenberg Washington Program in Communication Studies, points out in her recent report, "Tabloids, Talk Radio, and the Future of News," "News about crime and violence is cheap and easy to cover."

The exhaustive coverage of violence and bad news in general contributes to young people's increasing sense of alienation and to the dysfunctional, antisocial behavior that accompanies it. Many kids become depressed or have nightmares because of the barrage of bloodshed they see on TV. It numbs them to the pain and destructiveness of actual violence, encouraging a stance of ironic detachment. At worst, it contributes to what social scientist George Gerbner has identified as "the mean world syndrome," where children internalize the negative attributes of the world as they see it portrayed in the media.

Children also learn from television that we prize celebrity above all else, regardless of how it is achieved. At the same time, television may leave them with the impression that people hardly ever do anything good or right and that few, if any, adults are worthy of respect. We are saturated with stories about priests who molest children, gangs of young thugs who vandalize and victimize indiscriminately, and families that are nightmares of abuse

and neglect. The lurid accounts tend to eclipse positive stories about priests and other clergy who help people come to terms with loss and find meaning in their lives, teenagers who feed the homeless, clean up our parks, and help the elderly, and families who pull together in times of stress.

Small wonder, then, that many children grow up skeptical that organized religion can offer guidance and sustenance, that they or their peers can be a force for good, that families can be a lasting source of strength and stability. The merciless, minute scrutiny of crimes and victims emphasizes and exaggerates the powerlessness of individuals, especially in the minds of children, whose own lack of power in the world is all too plain to them. More insidiously, it undermines their faith in institutions, their belief that individuals can band together for good as well as for evil.

Leonard Eron, a psychology professor at the University of Michigan and a leading expert on the effects of television, warns: "In the same way television teaches violence, it now teaches youngsters that . . . dysfunctional families are par for the course." Professor Froma Walsh of the University of Chicago echoes him. Consistently seeing the sensational way families are portrayed on most talk shows and many prime-time programs encourages people to "view their own families through a glass darkly and look for pathologies," even when families are "just trying to cope as well as they can." Such research suggests that whatever is provided as a steady diet on television becomes reality in the minds of frequent viewers. That's not good news for any family, given what's currently on the menu.

And the menu is expanding. Video games have trans-

formed millions of television sets into scenes of blood and violence that children not only watch but participate in. Agile fingers race across the controls of best-sellers like *Mortal Kombat* and *Killer Instinct*, directing characters on the screen to execute the most desired outcome—a brutal murder. There are also moves like the Neck Breaker, the Skeleton Grab, the Skull Rip, and the Death Scream. In *Mortal Kombat*, a computer-generated voice urges “Finish him!” as blood continues to spray.

Recently, a fourteen-year-old boy from a Maryland suburb where actual violence rarely intrudes described his fascination with electronic violence to *Washington Post Magazine* staff writer David Finkel. “I like violence,” he said. “I like seeing violence. I just really like watching violence.” This boy’s parents are involved in their son’s life—they go to the movies with him and try to interest him in reading—but they also believe he is old enough to watch what he wants to see, listen to what he wants to hear, and play the games that amuse him. This boy assures Finkel that his life would be very different without this connection to violence. “I’d be scared to be with anyone else,” he explains. “I wouldn’t be able to relate to anybody else because *they’ve* all seen it.”

It is too early to evaluate the effects of video games fully. But already some psychologists have pointed out that children’s direct control of the violence in video games could be more harmful than what they only observe passively. Dr. Carole Lieberman, a UCLA psychiatrist and former chair of the National Coalition on Television Violence, refers to video games as a “new drug.” “I think it’s worse than television violence because children are pushing the buttons themselves,” Dr. Lieber-

man says. “They are getting rewarded for destroying people in a game.”

We already know that television doesn’t just affect what we think; it also affects *how* we think. The medium, as Marshall McLuhan pointed out, is itself the message. The episodic, reactive, almost frantic pace of what is broadcast makes children feel and act frantic and shortens their attention spans and their patience for activities that take time and problems that don’t yield immediate solutions.

Children—and teenagers—need stimulation, but there is a limit to how much they need, and what kind. Consider for a moment what it means to put the remote control in the hands of a preschooler. She does not have to work hard to be entertained, to use her imagination as she would if she were listening to a story or playing make-believe. She does not have the ability to screen out what she sees and hears, let alone to evaluate it. And least of all, faced with the dancing images and bright colors and exciting sound effects, is she equipped to walk away.

The pull of television is irresistible to children, riveting their attention the way traffic accidents draw rubberneckers. The homes in America where television sets blare night and day are like highways clogged with accidents. Only, in this case, the children gawking mindlessly, overstimulated and underchallenged, are the victims.

MY PARENTS did not worry so much about the content of the television shows my brothers and I watched as they did about the amount of time we would spend at it, if they let us. They wanted us reading, doing chores, or

playing outside, so they regulated our viewing hours strictly. Bill and I restricted both the amount and the kind of television Chelsea watched as a child, and even now we check up from time to time on her TV and movie watching. Parents are beginning to come up with other ways of defending themselves and their children from the excessive influence of television. They may eventually get some help from technology, such as the V-chip included in proposed telecommunications legislation. The V-chip is a computer chip with which parents could block television programs designated as containing material unsuitable for children. Making the technology available is only half the battle; putting it to good use will require a strong, clear rating system like the one we now have for movies.

In the meantime, parents are on their own in making sure children are not watching inappropriate shows or too much television, period. They can continue to trade their own "ratings" informally. They can encourage the newspapers and magazines that are beginning to gear reviews of movies and music toward parents to cover television in this way as well. They can also teach their children *how* to watch television, the same way they teach them to cross the street: carefully.

A publication entitled "Taking Charge of Your TV: A Guide to Critical Viewing for Parents and Children" is available from the Family and Community Critical Viewing Project, an initiative sponsored by the National PTA and the cable industry to teach television viewing skills to parents, teachers, and children. It suggests ways parents can talk to kids about what they are watching, which not only makes television a less passive pastime

but transforms it into a learning tool. We can ask children why characters act as they do and help them to distinguish between responsible and irresponsible acts. We can get them to talk about how the families on television are different from theirs and from other families they know. We can relate television to real-life situations. When Roseanne and Dan fret over bills because Dan's business is going under, for example, we can explain to our children that sometimes parents need to figure out ways to make sure they can meet all their responsibilities.

Used wisely, television can help children to distinguish between fantasy and reality—precisely because the fantasy it projects feels so real to them. Identify aspects peculiar to "TV land" that may seem obvious to an adult but aren't necessarily clear to a child. For instance, when watching a thirty-minute drama or sitcom, point out that it's not realistic to solve a problem in the span of a half hour. Explain that this is how writers and directors adapt to scheduling needs and discuss how the situation might have played out in real life.

There is another option parents might consider: Just turn the televisions, video games, and VCRs off—for an evening, a week, a regular day each week. When I made this suggestion in an interview with *Woman's Day*, readers responded enthusiastically. Some parents, fed up with not only depictions of violence but the excessive influence of television in general, wrote to say they had already tried out the idea.

Imagine what might happen if we all turned off our televisions for an entire week. The quiet—and the other activities we could take up—might be habit-forming.

Here and there, parents are banding together and dis-

covering their collective strength. The South Florida Preschool PTA monitors children's programming on the Miami television stations, with members volunteering to watch programming for one- or two-week blocks to determine whether the stations are complying with the law.

The Children's Television Act of 1990 limits the amount of time the networks can devote to commercials during children's programming. It also directs the FCC more broadly to review, as part of the licensing procedures, whether stations air shows that "serve the educational and informational needs of children." In three years, the Florida group found, the networks failed to meet the law's requirements. In their 1995 report, they noted that Miami commercial television stations were devoting only 1 percent of total programming time to educational programs for children.

The Miami group is among the many parent and consumer groups urging the FCC to enforce its regulations and to strengthen them, by requiring the networks to air more educational programming. In 1991, twenty-seven hours of quality children's programming aired each week. The President and FCC Chairman Reed Hundt would like to see the FCC require each network to broadcast at least three hours a week. As of this writing, the FCC has not yet taken action on this proposal. In response to public petitions, however, Westinghouse, which has recently purchased CBS, has voluntarily made such a commitment. The FCC's decision will not affect cable stations, since they are considered exempt from government regulations because they do not use the public airwaves.

The advent of cable television has dramatically expanded offerings available to children, for better and worse. Channels like Disney, Discovery, Nickelodeon,

and A&E are staples of Clinton family viewing. But only 65 percent of American households now have access to cable, and the demographics of the remaining 35 percent includes a disproportionate share of the nation's children. As with many other social changes of the past fifty years, the children hardest hit by the negative impact of the media, television in particular, are those in low-income families.

That's why public television, which has consistently provided educational programming for children, deserves our tax dollars and charitable contributions. Shows like *Sesame Street* entertain while they teach math and reading. *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* makes learning geography fun and exciting. With the help of music videos and special effects, *Bill Nye, the Science Guy* transports science out of the classroom and into the world. Many "hit" educational shows are creations of the Children's Television Workshop, which was founded in 1968 to explore television's potential as an educational medium.

In May 1995, John Wright and Aletha Huston, professors of human development at the University of Kansas, released the results of a four-year study on how television influences the academic skills, school readiness, and school adjustment of low-income children. They found that preschoolers who watched as little as twenty-five minutes per day of educational children's programs like *Sesame Street* did significantly better on standardized verbal and math tests when they started school and consistently spent more time on reading and other educational activities than did children who watched primarily noneducational cartoons and adult programming.

Educators, community leaders, church groups, and others can join in the effort to demand support for pub-

lic television and better commercial programming. They can also organize boycotts of gratuitously violent, sexually explicit, or otherwise offensive programming. One household won't have much of an impact, but a village or two can make or break a Nielsen rating percentage point, and ratings are TV's most critical barometer for making programming decisions.

Teachers can play a part, both directly and indirectly. First and most important, they can do their best to make reading fun. They can also assist parents in helping to educate children about how television manipulates them and undermines values like compassion and kindness that they are learning at home, in their place of worship, and at school.

Journalists and news executives have responsibilities too. When violence is newsworthy they should report it, but they should balance it with stories that provide children and adults with positive images of themselves and those around them, taking care not to exacerbate negative stereotypes. To report the truth in a thoughtful manner, mindful of the potency of the written word and the televised image, is to be not only a good journalist but a responsible citizen.

Acknowledging that commercial television is driven by the need to make a profit does not let executives and programmers off the hook. As Newton Minow said in a 1995 keynote address to a conference of Children Now, a leading nonpartisan, nonprofit organization for children: "In an ideal world, the people who work in television would have to take an oath like the Hippocratic oath: 'Do no harm.'" How could they uphold it? They could begin by asking themselves if they would allow their own children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and neighbors

to watch the shows for which they are responsible. They could form their own advisory panels—preferably of parents—who could be counted on to put children's interests ahead of financial ones.

Journalists and broadcasters tell me they have been talking among themselves about these issues and looking for ways to fulfill both their professional and public responsibilities. At their annual Family Conference, held this year in Nashville, Al and Tipper Gore brought together broadcasters, children's advocates, advertisers, researchers, and parents to discuss the media's impact on children and families. Oprah Winfrey has decided to steer her show in a more positive direction. One television station decided not to carry the more lurid talk shows, and another is considering dropping them. A few local TV stations have decided to abandon the tabloid approach and get back into the news business.

There may be monetary as well as moral rewards for such choices. When he was a news director at WCCO-TV in Minneapolis, John Lansing realized that the more his station's local news coverage resembled an entertainment program, the weaker its connections to its community were becoming. He decided to convene town meetings to allow the station to reacquaint itself with the expectations of its viewers. As a result, the news operation dropped its tabloid-style coverage, and WCCO became a pioneer in "family-sensitive viewing," reducing or eliminating descriptions and images of violence during designated early evening hours. Even so, WCCO has managed to maintain its first-place market share.

Numerous journalism associations and programs encourage balanced and open-minded reportage. One such organization is the Casey Journalism Center at the Uni-

versity of Maryland, which awards fellowships to reporters, editors, producers, and news directors. The recipients get the chance to participate in conferences and meet with experts on these issues. The intent is to encourage thoughtful, in-depth, well-documented reporting.

Television could take a cue from the several newspapers that have developed children's beats and long-term reporting projects focusing on family issues. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, for instance, has added a new "family section" that runs every Saturday. So far, it has run stories on children's television viewing habits (along with tips on how to make TV watching a more constructive activity), on ways grandparents and grandchildren can spend time together, and on building stronger families (accompanied by personal stories about people in the region). The section also includes a regular family finance column, with information on everything from the cost of buying a family pet to how to take a family vacation without breaking the bank.

Television, movies, video games, and music are here to stay and will continue to be influential in shaping opinions and behaviors in the years to come. As parents, we must be willing to reassert our authority over what enters our households. As creators and consumers of the media, and as citizens of the village, we must be willing to join with one another to press for improvements in what our children see and hear. A single act has little impact, but millions of decisions—to turn off television sets or to reject certain movies or CDs or video games—give us the voltage to send a message to advertisers and programmers that will reach them loud and clear.



Every Business Is a Family Business

The Golden Rule does not mean that gold shall rule.

BARBARA REYNOLDS

MY FATHER distrusted both big business and big government. When I was growing up, he never tired of quoting President Eisenhower's warning against the military-industrial complex and the dangers of concentrated, unaccountable power in anyone's hands. I thought of him during a trip I made to South America in October 1995, when I happened to hear a reference to the words of an earlier President, Theodore Roosevelt. I was to give a speech to students and faculty at the University of Chile in Santiago. When the rector of the university introduced me, he referred to remarks that Roosevelt had made in the same hall eighty-two years before. The former President, he said, had warned against the excesses of unchecked corporate power.

Intrigued, I tracked down a copy of Roosevelt's speech and was struck by how relevant his message remains today:

By allowing, with no control, this concentration of enormous enterprises in the hands of a few . . . many evils have arisen. . . . We must

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 4, 1994

REMARKS OF THE FIRST LADY
VIA SATELLITE TO CHILDREN NOW CONFERENCE,
VIA SATELLITE

Thank you all very much. I want to thank Dr. Kennedy and Mr. Steyer, for helping organize this conference and for inviting me to be a part of it.

It is an honor to speak to such this gathering that includes child advocates, academics, journalists, and educators, as Geoff already said. I know that many of you have traveled across the country to participate in the panels over the next few days, and I want to thank you for your willingness to tackle a subject as complicated, controversial and important as children and the news media. I'm only sorry I can't be there to join your discussions in person.

As you know so well, we live in an age of great promise -- and great peril -- for our children. While we have made considerable strides in improving the health, education, and job opportunities of our young people, our children continue to shoulder burdens never encountered by children in any other civilized society before this time.

To be sure, our children today have advantages that even those of us my age didn't know: things like computers and global information networks, in some ways a more united world, and the absence of Cold War tensions. But they also have disadvantages -- disadvantages that inject cynicism, anxiety, and fear into their young lives.

On the eve of the 21st century, American children are growing up in a world where competition for jobs is more intense than ever, where health care in our country is too costly, where college tuitions get higher and higher, and where poverty and neglect are increasing instead of decreasing.

And now, adding to those burdens, comes a plague of violence, both in reality and through the perceptions that

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are promoted by the media, that is claiming, in realistic terms, far too many lives, but is also engendering a climate of fear because of what children see and hear every day.

American children are immersed in a culture of violence. They see violence on television. They see violence in movie theaters. They see it on the streets where they live. They see it in their schools. They see it in their homes.

In too many neighborhoods, gunfire has become a daily ritual of life. An Uzi has become a badge of honor. A bullet wound has become an emblem of adulthood. Just this last week, on Monday, I was across the country, in New York, where I visited a very large hospital in Brooklyn, a hospital that treats gunshot wounds and knife wounds every hour.

And the doctors there told me that the most discouraging part of their work is that the age of the victims gets younger and younger, and that after they finish patching up a 13 or 14-year old from a gang shooting or a drive-by shooting, or a knife fight, they anticipate they will see that same young person in just a few months or years again.

In Washington, our nation's capital, a young four-year-old girl was shot in the head when young men opened fire on an elementary school playground as a crowd watched a pickup football game.

Last summer, again in Washington, gunshots rang out at a pool as children sought relief from 90-degree heat. A young mother is dragged by the side of her car during a car jacking that had the child in the car and the mother being killed trying to hang on to the car.

I could tell you many, many stories like that, but I think you know what happens every day in every neighborhood. This horrible chronicle of malicious violence goes on and on, every day and every week, every month, across the nation.

The reason we know about these tragic incidents -- the murders, the car jackings, the kidnappings, the beatings, the rapes -- is because the news media reports about them. And I'm sure that everyone in this audience today would agree that reporting about these sorts of incidents is part of the

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news media's job.

I think we all agree that the public needs to know about crime and violence. I'm sure that, to some degree, news coverage of crime has heightened public support for deterrents such as gun control. And it might also help this Administration and this President get a crime bill with real possible hope for change this year.

At the same time, we have to stop and ask ourselves some very important questions:

First, has the exhaustive -- and perhaps excessive -- coverage of violence contributed to increasing alienation and dysfunctional behavior on the part of our children and youth?

And second, does the news coverage engender so much cynicism and distrust among young people that they grow up with no faith in any of our institutions and little motivation to make something of their own lives?

These are questions I hope you will explore and that I think we must answer.

Over the past few years, a lot of attention has been paid to violence in movies and in television programming, and in the records that young people listen to. And on that score, things are beginning to improve. As the President said earlier this week, the entertainment industry has -- as a result of public concerns -- become much more involved in efforts to reduce violence in network programming. Their willingness to set up a voluntary monitoring system is a step in the right direction.

In the meantime, we're only now beginning to focus on the issue of violence and the news media, and it's a very tricky issue, given that information today comes from so many different sources -- newspapers, radio, local television, network television, television tabloids. This is an issue that must be addressed, even as we recognize that these different news media sometimes go about their jobs in different ways.

Just yesterday I read about the results of a new survey put out by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. It showed that network news coverage of murder and violence

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had doubled last year -- even though the nation's overall crime rate had remained the same.

Some of the coverage was a result of unusual cases, like the Branch Davidians, the World Trade Center bombing, the Menendez brothers' trial, the Polly Klass case, and the murders of tourists in Florida.

But what about the rest? Were the stories really newsworthy? Or were they part of a troubling pattern of sensationalism that threatens to desensitize viewers -- particularly children -- to the point where violence is considered a normal, accepted part of life?

Children Now's recent survey reports that young people are deeply affected by news stories they read or see on television. More than half the children surveyed said they felt angry or depressed after watching or reading the news. And about 60 percent of kids between the ages of 11 and 16 said the news too often conveyed negative images of young people.

The fact is that we all want to stop violence. We all want our children to experience their childhoods without being afraid, without being vulnerable, and without being insecure.

We want them to be able to be children -- to feel safe in school, to enjoy sports and recreation, to develop extracurricular interests, and to build healthy relationships.

But those kinds of positive childhood experiences seem less and less real to children who are routinely bombarded with words and pictures that seldom portray young people living that way. Saturating children with increasingly graphic and sensational stories of violence prevents them from developing the emotional and psychological tools they need to deal with violence.

One of the biggest dangers of excessive coverage of violence is that, in a child's eye, the stories validate, sometimes even glamorize, dysfunctional behavior. Violence becomes normal -- and, in an odd way, even painless. It becomes harder for a child to distinguish between fact and fiction. The latest drive-by shooting on the evening news looks a lot like the Terminator blowing his fictional enemy

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to bits on the movie screen.

The second danger of excessive coverage is that children become numbed -- or, as social scientists say, "desensitized" -- to violence. Children become so habituated to seeing and hearing about violence that shootings, beatings -- even death -- come to seem normal to them.

They develop an ironic detachment from life, a fatalism that prevents them from trusting anyone or anything. Recently I read a story about young children planning their own funerals. These children were so sure they were going to die violently that they had told their families what clothes they wanted to wear at their funerals, what music they wanted played, all with a casual detachment about what living and dying really means.

The third danger of excessive coverage of violence is that it exacerbates stereotypes. If African-American and Latino youth are usually portrayed on the news committing crimes, that stereotype is etched into the public consciousness. The same is true for women, who are often portrayed as victims.

Whether coverage of violence actually incites violent acts is one question we have to answer, and I know that researchers have debated it for years. Another equally important question is whether such coverage leaves us -- and particularly children -- with the impression that no one in our society ever does anything good or anything right.

For example, if children hear story after story about priests or clergy who molest children -- but never hear about those priests and clergy members who help children -- they are not likely to grow up trusting their churches. And yet, there are far more priests and ministers, and rabbis, in this country helping children than hurting them.

We need to ask ourselves whether some of our news coverage contributes to this lack of trust and whether it perpetuates a cynical detachment which, in turn, leads to abnormal behavior, including violence. Of course, I'm not suggesting that all news coverage of violence is bad or wrong, or that the media's treatment of violence alone accounts for our social ills. As I said earlier, the public has to be kept informed, including children.

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But I think there must be balance. Judgment must be exercised, and when it comes to children, prudence is certainly called for.

In past generations, children got most of their information about the outside world from their parents, their teachers, their church, their local youth organization, from intermediary adults. Today, children get most of their information from the media -- largely from television.

And frankly, children can't cope with much of what they see. Watching indiscriminate violence and sex does not strengthen a child's emotional, social or psychological development. Watching a daytime talk show about bestiality is neither educational nor informative to a small child -- nor, for that matter, I would argue, to an adult.

I know that journalists need to treat their subjects as objectively as they can. But I think that sometimes subjectivity, remembering what it's like to be a child, or be a parent raising children, is probably okay, too, as long as it's subjectivity grounded in values.

After all, we all rely on our personal experiences and feelings -- as mothers and fathers, as brothers and sisters, as daughters and sons -- to inform our judgments as professionals. And I think there are probably times when journalists should too, especially when it comes to children.

We shouldn't have to wait for the next national survey -- some objective, quantitative analysis -- to become aware of the fear that children feel when they are chronically exposed to violence on television, at the movie theater, or in their newspapers. Think about it. When you or I see violent images or read about violent acts taking place around us, we get scared. We get anxious. And we're supposedly adults. We could even put these events in context. Children, particularly small children, cannot.

When violence is newsworthy enough to be reported, it should be balanced with stories that provide children with positive images of themselves and those around them, particularly adults in authority. Journalists should work extremely hard to avoid exacerbating negative stereotypes. And they should work extremely hard not to contribute to what social scientists call the "mean world syndrome," where children become so self-critical that they take on the

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attributes of the negative world they see portrayed in the media.

After all, good judgment and caution, or prudence, do not violate the journalist's First Amendment rights. They do not deny the public their right to know. But good judgment and caution, and prudence do and can make a difference to children.

This is a debate that is long overdue. And perhaps we are having it now, in our country, because we are recognizing the unintended consequences of the explosion of information, the competition among news media outlets to try to get there first and be sensational enough to keep the audience looking.

We know that as we drive down a road where there is an accident, we can't help but turn our head and watch, and perhaps say to ourselves, thank goodness we're not among them. But a steady diet, every day, of that kind of sensational violence is not how any of us were raised or live our lives on a day-to-day basis.

And what we have to try to do is to create the sort of balance that we know is difficult but imperative if we expect our children to be given a fair shot at a childhood that allows them to develop emotionally and psychologically into adults that can be productive and deal with the world in all of its good and bad, in a constructive way.

Thank you all very much.

A PARTICIPANT: Mrs. Clinton, you've been kind enough to agree to stay for a while in the conversation, and I know you're used to cream-puff questions from journalists. We have five very positive role models here of young students who, in fact -- some of them are journalists -- who want to engage in a dialog with you, as well as asking some questions.

What I want -- I think you have some brief bios on them, but I'd like them each to introduce themselves and then to have them ask you a question or make an observation that might be helpful.

Luis, perhaps you could start.

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A PARTICIPANT: You want me to ask to ask the questions?

A PARTICIPANT: I want you to tell who you are. Introduce yourselves, and then we'll come back with questions.

MR. CRUZ: Okay. Hi. My name is Luis Cruz, and I'm 18 years old. I'm a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, and I'm a reporter for Straight Talking Teens. You might have heard of us from Mrs. Gore, who was there, and so I just want to offer you an open invitation any time you're in town.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Hi. My name is Shawntee Brown I'm 10 years old.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MS. BEHR: Hi. My name is Madeleine Behr (phonetic). I'm 11 years old. I go to Wood School in Alameda, and I'm a reporter at Children's Express.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MS. STRASSBERG: Hi. My name is Suzanne Strassberg (phonetic). I am 12 years old, and I attend the seventh grade at California Junior High School, and I have won several Young Authors awards.

MRS. CLINTON: Good for you.

MS. CHANG: Hello. My name is Lydia Chang (phonetic). I'm the student body president of Leland (phonetic) High School. I'm also the California State Junior Miss. I'll be representing California in the America's Junior Miss competition, and I am a correspondent for CNN's Real News for Kids.

MRS. CLINTON: Good.

A PARTICIPANT: Lydia, why don't you start with the first --

MS. CHANG: Okay. Mrs. Clinton, your talks about

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cynicism, how seeing all this violence in the news presents stereotypes, negative stereotypes of a lot of people in society, not just young people -- I'm concerned that because these images are being presented, and they're at least distorted if not inaccurate images, that adults watching the news are also garnering images that are false of young people.

And I'm really concerned about people on Capitol Hill -- legislators, Mr. President, yourself, who are all policy makers -- and if you get these images and your opinions from watching the news, then perhaps they're inaccurate. And so I'm just wondering, where do you get your information about young people? Do you get them from the news? Do you think -- does it ever occur to you that some of those portrayals might be inaccurate?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, one thing that I can tell you is that my husband and I never watch the news. We consider that part of our mental health routine, and so we don't get our images about you or anybody from watching the news. We do it from actually interacting with people.

And my husband likes to spend lots of time with young people. We have many groups of young people coming into the White House. He goes out and visits young people in schools and other settings, and I do the same as often as possible. I really like to look at people face to face. I like to hear from them, like I'm hearing from you, because I think that your point is well taken.

There is a lot of fear among adults about children, particularly teenagers, because of the constant images of teenagers being threatening, particularly young men, particularly young black and Hispanic men. And I think that it does present a distorted view and makes it very difficult for individuals to be treated fairly and given the chance to be whom they are trying to be.

So it is important that you and other young people really keep insisting that you be seen as who you are and not filtered through some media image that stereotypes you along with other young people. And we'll do our part the best we can, in Washington, to try to make it clear that most American children and teenagers are good kids. They are working as hard as they can in school or on the job. They are responsible, they don't get in trouble, and they deserve

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to be treated with respect by the rest of us.

A PARTICIPANT: Suzanne?

MS. STRASSBERG: Okay. Well, my school is sort of in an upper class neighborhood, and there was a random shooting that occurred just recently, and -- sorry -- and it was covered on every news station in Sacramento. But I've noticed that if something like a random shooting happened in a sort of poor neighborhood, it's just counted as an everyday thing, like it happens every day. And what can we do to help people realize that shootings are an everyday thing everywhere?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that part of what we have to do is recognize that violence is no respecter of anybody, anymore. You find it throughout our country, in rural areas as well as city areas.

And one of the things that the President has tried to do in this crime bill that I mentioned in my remarks, is to put more police on the streets, to try to come up with alternative punishments, to try to get guns out of the hands of criminals -- not just the Brady Bill, which actually went into effect this week, but try to ban some of the assault weapons and other things that kids get a hold of and use against one another. So there is at least some willingness now to recognize the problem.

It's not just somebody else's problem. It affects all of us. And so I think that once we are willing to say that, then we've got a chance to fix it. As long as it was somebody else's problem, you know, it only happened to a certain kind of people who lived in certain kinds of neighborhoods -- unfortunately there were too many Americans who were willing to ignore or deny what was happening.

Now, finally, we've got a President -- and I hope a majority of congress and the majority of the country -- who want to try to help everybody stop this epidemic of violence.

MS. BEHR: The media often covers stuff about adults without health coverage, but not usually do you hear stuff about homeless kids without education or health care. Do you think this is right? And what can we do to bring the subject up to the public?

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MRS. CLINTON: Let me make sure I heard you: what can we do to make sure that people know more about homeless kids -- who are homeless and without education?

MS. BEHR: About how that affects the need for health care -- health coverage, too.

MRS. CLINTON: Right. Well, that's one of the things we're trying to do with health care reform, is to make sure that every American and every child gets health coverage. Right now, you're right, that too many children don't have health insurance, either because their parents don't work for somebody who helps provide health care, or because they're not poor enough to qualify for government health care, or because they just get lost in the system, like some of the homeless children in shelters that I have visited or seen on the streets.

Under what the President is proposing, health care will be available to every American. It will no longer matter whether you work, or where you work, or if you've been sick. Everybody will get health care. That's particularly important for children, especially children like the ones you care about, who are in terrible situations right now without health care, and they deserve to have the same kind of health care I try to give to my daughter.

A PARTICIPANT: Were you asking the question, too, Madeleine, if there was more coverage -- about children and the problems that they have with health care -- would that help to affect the public debate on health care?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I think it would.

A PARTICIPANT: And how much of the coverage seems to -- of course, you don't watch the news, so you may not be a good witness on this. (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: People tell me about it, though.

A PARTICIPANT: How much of the coverage has focused on children and their need for health care?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know, it's -- this is slightly, I guess, off the subject, but I think it's related in that part of what we need is a consistent discussion about important issues like violence or like health care. And too

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often the news media thinks if they've done it once, then they've done it, and they've got to move on to something else, and particularly with the debate over health care.

Most Americans are only now beginning to focus on health care, so they need constant information. And it may be boring to people who follow this closely or watch the news every night, but for most of the rest of us Americans, we want to see something covered over and over again, so we really do get information.

And her point about covering what happens to children, particularly children who are falling between the cracks, that are not getting health care, is something that I think we should have a lot of coverage about, because we are paying a very high price in both money terms and human terms because we don't take care of our children and give them decent health care.

A PARTICIPANT: Shontee, I know that much of what the First Lady said in her opening remarks about violence on television is part of what has concerned you. Do you want to maybe talk a little about your own feelings as well as asking her a question about it.

MS. BROWN: Okay. The way that I feel about violence, that kids -- kids of color is being portrayed by the media because if -- because if you go to (inaudible) to shoot -- to shoot up somebody, they won't -- they won't put that on the news. They'll put a white kid going on a rampage (inaudible) just shooting everybody. I think they -- the media -- is just judging on whites instead of blacks.

MRS. CLINTON: You know I think that the concerns that you express are ones that I really share with you, because we've got to get, in our country, to a point where we see individuals as individuals, not as members of groups. If someone does something wrong, that individual should be punished, and that individual should be held accountable.

But whether a person is black or white, that doesn't make any comment on everybody else who is black or white. We ought to just look at the individual behavior and try as hard as we can to eliminate, you know, racial and ethnic, and other kinds of stereotypes. And the news media needs to help us do that as best it can, because it has such influence over how people see the world. And I think you're

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right to be concerned.

A PARTICIPANT: Luis?

MR. CRUZ: Mrs. Clinton, I've noticed that there aren't too many good stories in the media about public education. How do you feel about that, and how do you feel about the fact that you seem to contribute to this perception by sending your kid to -- your daughter to a private school?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that's a fair question, because all during the time that we lived in Arkansas, when my husband was the governor there, Chelsea always attended public school. And we worked very hard and believed very strongly in public school. And if her father were still the governor of Arkansas, or were not the President of the United States, she would still be in public school.

But we have, unfortunately, some special considerations having to do with security and some other things, that I wish we didn't have. I mean, I wish that we could still live like former presidents lived, who could walk out their front door and go for a walk, who didn't have to be surrounded by secret service people all the time, who didn't have to have their daughter surrounded by secret service.

But the world we're living in doesn't permit us to do that. So we had to make a decision based as parents because of her father's position. But I don't think you'll find any two people more committed to public education than we are, because it works. Again, here is an unfair characterization.

Most public education works for most kids. It doesn't work for every student, and we need to do better. But it is unfair to dismiss public education the way too many people do, when it is working. And you are a result, other people are a result of good public schools, and I think we ought to celebrate the successes.

We try to do something most other countries don't try to do, to educate all of our kids, no matter what language they speak, no matter what background they come from. And we ought to be proud of that.

A PARTICIPANT: If you have a couple of more

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minutes, I'd love to follow up with the students' feelings about some of the points you raised in your comments and maybe give you a chance to ask a question or two of them, if you'd like to.

MRS. CLINTON: They're telling, me, Geoff, that I've got about three or four more minutes, so I'd be glad to.

A PARTICIPANT: Okay. Madeleine, you told a story this morning about your father and television news, that I think might be interesting for the First Lady to hear.

MS. BEHR: Well, at my household my parents sometimes watch the news. We don't -- we don't watch it, like, daily, every night, but my dad usually doesn't like me watching the news because he knows that almost 100 of the things on it is violence, and he doesn't want me to go to sleep with bad nightmares, that I'm going to be kidnapped right out of my household or something like that. So he doesn't -- he doesn't really like me watching the news.

MRS. CLINTON: I can understand that. You know, one of the things that the news media cannot really deal with is the range of its audience -- who turns on the TV, who sits in front of it. But it is very clear to anyone who has studied it that children of a certain age and below take very literally what they see on the news. And there are just countless stories of children becoming very anxious and concerned about what they see, and thinking it was going to happen to them.

And it used to be possible, in previous times, and certainly before television was as pervasive as it is, to protect children of a certain age from that kind of information. You know, children -- when you're growing up, you have a lot of work to do. I mean, you know, babies have to learn to walk and talk, and then you've got to learn about how you write and you read, and you've got to figure out how the world works around you, like how you relate to the people in your family and everything.

I mean, I think a lot of adults forget what hard work it is to be growing up and to deal with the problems any child has to deal with. If you add on top of that a steady diet of violence that makes children feel frightened and scared, and anxious, it makes it more difficult for them to deal with what they have to do just as a daily part of

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growing up. Then you are interfering with what is or should be a kind of positive development in children's lives.

So I think your father and mother make a very good decision to try to at least act like the adults in your life, and protect you from being unnecessarily exposed to stuff that you can do nothing about, and that which only can make you anxious and block out your doing other things you should be doing and thinking about. So that's one of the problems we've got.

I mean, how do we let children be children, and grow up to be able to cope with all these things? If you get a steady diet of it too soon, it's like eating too much of anything. You get indigestion, and it interferes with your being able to deal with other problems. And I think that's happening with too many of our children.

* * *

For Release

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE NATIONAL PTA 100TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUNE 22, 1996

Thank you. Thank you so very much. Don't you feel like you were at the Olympics when that music started? You know I'm so excited about the Olympics coming, we had the torch arrival and departure at the White House yesterday, and the night before. And when the music started, I thought of all those times as a little girl when I would sit in front of our television set and watch the Olympics. My brothers and I would go out and race each other around, and my mother one time went to the dime store, you see how old I am, the dime store, and bought ribbons for us.

It is such, a pleasure for me to be with people who care so much about the values that make our country what it is, and who know how important it is to support our children. I want to thank Joan for that introduction, but more than that, for the leadership she has given on behalf on the PTA. She has been a strong, strong voice. And I know she is going to be succeeded by a strong, strong successor. So the leadership of the PTA is in good hands.

And how fortunate we are to be celebrating the 100th anniversary of this important group. I wasn't able to see the slides but I heard some of the laughter and I know that Joan did a quick change from the clothes she was wearing to the clothes she is wearing now. We are celebrating a centennial commitment to the children of this country. And there are lots of parallels between the times when the PTA got started and our times today. I was thinking as I stood backstage that a hundred years ago, we were changing from a society that was primarily agricultural and rural to one that was industrial, where people were leaving the farms and crossing the oceans to come to our cities. Where we faced new challenges about how to educate young people of different backgrounds to be prepared for a new century.

And here we are again, as we move from the industrial age, from the cold war, from the hot wars of this century, to a time when the global economy and technology have changed our world so much, and once again you are ready. You are ready to help us meet our challenges and protect our values. And for that as a mother and citizen, I say thank you -- thank you to the PTA and all of you who are among its leaders.

And during your conference here, I hope you will continue to celebrate your achievements. Since the turn of the century, the national PTA has been at the forefront of our country's efforts to create a better world for all children. Child labor laws, compulsory public education, the national health service, special education, juvenile justice issues, all that we have addressed as a nation in the past hundred years -- in these and many issues, we have seen the strong role that the PTA has played, both at the national level and in countless communities across our country.

And I know that as we prepare for a new century, and for a new millennium, all of us can count on your being there again. On behalf of the President, I want to thank you for helping to put the well-being of our children first in the recent budget negotiations. The PTA was one of the first organizations that realized that threats to programs like school lunches were threats to the well-being of all our children. Your rallies on the Hill and your participation in an active education coalition were key to our efforts to honor America's historic commitment to education, and to providing all children in this country with the knowledge and skills they will need to fulfill their own god-given potential.

And I am so pleased that your priorities and initiatives for the next years will also address these important issues -- protecting children from violence, AIDS education, reaching out to preschool parents, working with schools of education at colleges and universities to make it possible for more parents to be encouraged to participate in their children's education. Parental involvement is the key to how well our children will do.

Some of you know that I do think it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes strong parents who are committed to being their children's first teachers, to make sure those children get a good start in life, and to make sure the village lives up to our responsibilities as well. But despite all of the work you have done and the stands you have taken, we cannot let down our guard. We must stand very firmly on the side of public education and we need an even louder chorus of parental voices in the upcoming fights over the budgets to come. Because, even as teachers and schools prepare to welcome record numbers of students, some fifty-two million this September, and we know that our classrooms will be filled with more children than there were even in the baby-boom generation. And these children will need the time and attention of more teachers. They will need text books, they will need school buildings that are not falling down around their ears.

And yet there are some in congress who are proposing to freeze the education budget in the face of this new generation of students who need the same support that I could expect when I was

going to school. This is a time to invest in education, not a time to retreat from our historic investment.

You know that as our global economy becomes even more competitive and demanding, that all of us -- children and adults -- must sharpen and raise our skills -- we cannot walk away from the higher national educational standards set by Goals 2000. The national PTA helped turn Goals 2000 into law. And it is working well in 46 states. I ask you to help us defend these standards from those who would wish to reverse this progress.

I also want to congratulate American public education; too many people for too long have only accented the negative, and I for one am tired of that. America is filled with good news and positive stories about how people are solving problems. And just recently we saw a report that American students are second to only students in Finland when it comes to reading ability. Let's make sure Americans know that, because we've sure gotten all the bad news about educational achievement in the past.

So we know we can make progress and our students can live up to high expectations, but we have to keep working. And I urge the National PTA to become an active partner in Secretary Riley's "Read Write Now" effort. He is attempting to link one million disadvantaged kids with three hundred thousand reading mentors this summer. It is the one-on-one personal connection that nobody, nobody can argue against. It is what lights the eyes of a youngster who all of a sudden recognizes a word, and it is what warms the heart of the adult who takes the time to work with that child. Just think of what they could do to turn around the lives and school success of young people, if three hundred thousand of us mentor a young boy or girl this summer.

We also know that computer skills are important and the President is attempting to make sure that every school is hooked up in America to the Internet. We do need to make sure that there are technology literacy funds available, but even more so we have to make sure that our teachers are trained to use those computers in the classrooms.

So there is much, as you gather here in Washington, you have every reason to be proud of. I was thinking to myself how in the last few years the National PTA is again at the forefront of our debates about education, and about our children. And we know that parents today need to help. Every one of us has some area where we rely on someone else. Whether it's the teachers or schools, the doctors and nurses or hospitals, the police on our streets, the people we will never meet, who make sure our air and water are clean and that our food is fit to eat -- we are all interconnected. But I want to spend a few minutes today talking about specially the challenges we parents face in today's world. Particularly because we are living in a media dominated age.

It is a topic I feel very strongly about, and I want to expand on the thoughts I shared with some of you at the National PTA Legislative Conference earlier this year.

Specifically, I want to talk about television. Like it or not, and some days I do and some days I don't, TV is a fact of life. Hundreds of channels with everything from up-to-the-date-news to 24-hour-a-day weather channels to talk shows, to violent movies, to what everyone finds as we use our remote control devices. And for many of our children, those television images are disturbing, they are what some call "junk food for the eyes." And we have in every home in America children who are being influenced by the images and ideas that come into those homes through our television sets.

Now for those of us who are parents, trying to raise healthy, well-adjusted, compassionate children, it is easy sometimes to feel helpless against such a barrage of images and negative influences. But, in no small part due to the National PTA's advocacy and leadership on this issue, we are finally on the road to changing this situation. Let me thank you for working with the National Cable Television Association in the Family and Community Critical Viewing Project, which is helping parents to control the effects of television violence and commercialism on their children.

The President and the Vice President have long supported efforts to give parents the tools to make television a positive influence in their children's lives. And I believe that these past few months have marked a hopeful turning point for families and their relationships to those TV sets in their homes.

Earlier this year, the President successfully advocated for what is called a v-chip in TV sets. It is a device that parents can use to block out programming that they consider objectionable. It is totally within the authority of the parents. In February, at a White House meeting, The President helped persuade the nation's television broadcasters and producers to establish a voluntary ratings system that will inform parents about the content of shows they plan to air. That means that when the v-chip is operational, in just a few years, and the ratings system is going, parents will be able to make judgments by looking at this rating system and then programming the TV set to decide whether or not a program will be permitted to be viewed in their homes.

But parents don't just want to tune out bad shows, they also want to tune in good ones for their children. American families need more and better programming for children. This is especially true for elementary school-age children. A study released by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center showed that while 75 percent of programming aimed

at pre-schoolers could be called "high-quality," just 26 percent of programs targeted toward children ages six to eleven could be called good. Nearly half of the programming was rated "low quality."

Now the President, with your help, has been working hard to establish a minimum requirement for television broadcasters: **all that we are taking is for three hours a week of educational, child-friendly programming.** I don't think that is too much to ask. And the good news is that it's on the verge of happening. A majority of the FCC Commissioners will soon, I believe, take positive action on this issue.

The three-hour requirement is simple, and it is fair. As Vice President Gore noted a few days ago, "It leaves 98 percent of broadcasting time for other programs."

Next month, the President, the Vice-President, Tipper Gore, and I will meet with media executives and children's programmers to discuss ways to strengthen children's television.

We simply must demand more of the people who are producing - and profiting -- from the shows that young people watch. From my point of view, the very popular "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" show, for example, has no place on any lineup described as "children's programming."

Experts have said that the show is "devoid of any enriching value." "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" show for the example has no place in any line-up described as children's programming. Experts have said that show is devoid of any enriching value. "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" is one of the most violent television programs, on television today. Hundreds of acts of violence, from kicking to missile launches, are depicted in each episode. The shows teach children that heroes always resolve any conflict through violence. They convey to children the sinister message that the more powerful your weapon, the more powerful you are. And even though they are zapped, kicked and fired upon countless times, the Power Rangers never feel any pain or suffer any injury.

As a result of the show's popularity, young children on playgrounds across America are imitating these so-called "superheroes," they kick, they punch, they fight each other, as well as the imaginary archvillains Rita Repulsa and Lord Zedd.

Now you and I know that kind of playground activity has been a hallmark of playgrounds for generations. Long before television, and long before specific shows like the "Power Rangers". But the repetition, the intensity of this message that children see over and over again on television is different.

As Dr. Robert Phillips of the American Psychiatric Association explained, "Children are like little VCRs, they see something once and then they repeat it over and over again."

I know this not just from experts and news accounts, but from children themselves. At a roundtable discussion about the V-chip and TV violence with children and their parents, some of whom were PTA members, I met a 10-year old boy who told me that his playmates "just pretend they are Mighty Morphin Power Rangers or the X-Men and then they'll just go around pretending they're killing each other or such things and think nothing of it."

Producers and broadcasters of shows like the "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" say that they are simply giving children what they want to watch. In truth, they are appealing to the worst in our kids at the very times they are most likely to be watching TV. And, broadcasters are hiding the best children's programming in the least-watched "throw-away" hours.

We must stop showing violent, harmful programs to our kids during prime viewing hours. It is time for our media executives to show some greater responsibility for the children of America.

And as adults and as parents it is time for us to stand up and be counted. Decency and civility are values that are critical to the functioning of our society. Otherwise, in the absence of efforts to reach out to one other to teach each other good and positive lessons about how we work together and about how children grow up together, we will find ourselves and our children so inured to violence and sensationalism that we will not be able to help themselves.

We have enough evidence now from psychological and educational studies which shows that children, particularly from less stable homes, without the kind of structure that many of us have tries to impose, despite the media in our own houses, these children are particularly vulnerable to such messages. And they take those messages to heart. Like those little VCR's and they play back what they have learned.

As parents we cannot wait to act. We are on the front lines. We have to take responsibility, we have to start in our own homes by making clear what is and what is not acceptable television watching. We have to be willing to work with our schools as you have done to help families learn how to watch television critically, and to raise questions so that children know the difference between fantasy and reality. We have to give children something else to do besides watch television hour after hour after hour.

In many neighborhoods we should be working to keep schools open from three to six so that children are not on their own and unsupervised. We should be enlisting ourselves once again in programs, not only to mentor young people but to play with them, more recreational activities. We should take a stand against the

policies making it more difficult for young people to find extracurricular opportunities.

I was recently in Denver and I young man told me that he had been a wrestler for his first two years in high school, but next year because of budget cutbacks his family was being asked to pay \$150 for him to participate in that extracurricular activity. Many of us saw the Richard Dreyfuss movie, "Mr. Holland's Opus" and we could chart the decline in the drama, music, and art that was available that I took for granted in the 1950's and 1960's in my schools, where children now are not being given those opportunities. Television is being used to fill a void that parents, teachers, schools and communities used to fill with positive, productive activities for young people supervised by adults.

So while we take a stand against what we see on television, we should take a stand as you have done on behalf of providing more opportunities for children to say yes to, to give them something that is positive for them to learn from and be part of. There is wonderful opportunity in our country now, because I feel it as I travel around from place to place. Americans are tired of just wringing our hands at our problems -- we want to roll up our sleeves and get about the business of solving them.

And every where I go I find people who are doing just that. And it doesn't matter if I'm in an inner city school in Philadelphia, or in a school outside of Duluth, or in Corpus Christie, or in the San Frenado valley of California, everywhere I go it is so heartening to me, because every parent I talk with, every teacher, every young person is saying the same thing -- they are saying to me, as a young boy in Philadelphia, in a very tough neighborhood, in an inner city school that was attempting to be a haven against gangs, and graphti, and violence, he looked at me and he said, "You know Mrs. Clinton, most of us are good kids, but the only kids who get the attention are the bad kids, you know they are the only kids who get on television, they are the only kids who people really worry about sometimes, and most of us are really doing the best we can."

And I believe that, I know, I've looked into the faces of thousands and thousands of preschooler, and elementary kids, and middle schoolers, and high school students, and they are good kids. And even the ones who are teetering on the brink of gang pressures and family disruptions, and all of the problems children should not have to contend with, but do in today's world, they are desperate to be pulled back. They want some adult to say to them, 'You are a good young person, don't waste your life, learn to read, get out and do something positive for somebody else. Don't feel sorry for yourself, don't let yourself be turned into a victim.'

That is what the PTA has done for a hundred years. Because you have brought together parents and teachers in a partnership. You have presented a united front to our children that reminds ne

of my late father who used to say "You get in trouble in school, you get in trouble at home." And you know, that's the way it needs to be again.

And that is the crusade you are leading. Our children need to know that the adults in their lives care about them and we care about them so much that we not only love them, we discipline them. And we not only teach them, we guide them. And we're not only trying to do our best at home we are trying to make sure they get their best at school. That is what we owe to our children.

That is what you have done for a hundred years. And I believe that, just as at the time the PTA was formed, you have never been more necessary. You have never been more important to parents, struggling to make sense of a world that is sometimes very difficult to understand. You have never been more important to stand up against the forces of commercialism that would use our children, that would try to sell them products, like tobacco at an early age, that is not good for them.

You have stood against those kinds of pressures, and what we now must do, is with the same level of confidence and optimism that created the PTA, go forth into this next century, just as committed, just as concerned and just as ready to take on the challenges of this century, as were those who came before you.

I am very optimistic, I see positive signs everywhere I go of people taking back whether it's the authority in their own homes over the television set, or parental involvement in the schools. And what I hope each of us will do as we meet our challenges and protect our values, is to make it clear to every American, that commitment to children, to their education, their health and to their well-being is not a luxury. It is central to what of nation and people we will be.

Lady Bird Johnson once said that children are likely to live up to what you believe of them. I want every child in America to have at least one adult in their lives who believes that child has God given potential that will enable that child to be a good productive citizen, a good worker, a good family-member. And if we could just commit ourselves to reaching out to all those children, then I believe our future is in very good hands.

Thank you for what you have done for one hundred years, but do not grow weary doing this work -- we need the PTA now more than ever. Thank you all very much.

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FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

DATE: July 29, 1996

FROM: John Wright & Aletha Huston

ACCOUNT TO BE BILLED: CRITC - Markle

Number of pages (including this sheet): 2

TO: Laurie McHugh or Pat Lewis

LOCATION: White House Press Office - Washington

FAX #: (202) 456-~~6210~~ 6210

REGARDING: CHILDREN'S TV SUMMIT. Here's our
proposed press release. Please review and
correct paragraph 3 as needed. We are all
grateful to the White House for permitting
us to use this venue to release these
findings on behalf of children. John Wright

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Educational TV for Preschoolers Linked to High School Grades

Children who had regularly watched educational children's TV programs in early childhood had better grades in high school than those who had not, according to children's television researchers at the University of Kansas (Lawrence) and the University of Massachusetts (Amherst). The researchers announced today the results of a follow-up study of the high school achievement of children whose preschool TV viewing had been recorded in earlier investigations.

The study, supported by the Markle Foundation, showed that the 570 Kansas and Massachusetts youngsters had better Grade Point Averages in English, Science, and Math if they had watched more educational and informative programs, like *Sesame Street* and *Mr. Rogers*, when they were five. The results held even when the preschool data were equated for the child's vocabulary size and parents' education.

Professor Aletha Huston of the Center for Research on the Influences of Television on Children (CRITC) of the University of Kansas reported the findings at a White House Conference entitled the "Children's TV Summit", held today (July 29) in the East Room of the White House, and hosted by President Bill Clinton, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and "Tipper" Gore, wife of the Vice President. The conference was attended by representatives of the broadcast industry, public broadcasting, the administration and regulatory agencies, the Congress, and leaders of children's interest and advocacy groups. Professor Daniel Anderson, a psychologist at the University of Massachusetts was co-author of the report, as were John C. Wright, Professor at Kansas and Co-Director (with Huston) of CRITC, and Dr. Patricia Collins of U. Mass, a Research Scientist working with Dr. Anderson.

Early childhood TV viewing records and extensive testing, interview, and observational data were available on 655 children at the two sites combined. Of these 570 were located, and re-interviewed at ages 15 to 19. Official high school transcripts were obtained for 491 of them.

The findings support an "Early Learning Model" which argues that the cognitive and attitudinal benefits of regularly viewing educational programming as a preschooler lead to greater success as the child enters school. That success in turn results in greater expectancies of oneself and greater motivation for achievement, both of which act to improve and sustain high school performance.

Preschool educational viewing predicted grades for both the Kansas and the Massachusetts samples. These positive effects were somewhat stronger for boys than for girls. The benefits were not attributable to differences in preschoolers' cognitive ability nor to positive effects of the family environment associated with the parents' level of educational attainment.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR WHITE HOUSE MEDIA CONFERENCE
JULY 29, 1996

TALKING POINTS

■ We all know television is a fact of life. With hundreds of channels in millions of American homes showing blockbuster movies, 24-hour weather updates, soap operas and Saturday morning cartoons, television is a tremendously powerful medium -- one that touches all of our lives.

■ But as the President has pointed out, the technology of television is not intrinsically good or bad. But it does depend upon the values of the people in control of that technology and the decisions they make. *It has the potential to be an incredible force for good in our children's lives.*
■ Now more than ever, American families need more and better programming for children. Parents don't just want to tune out bad shows, they want to be able to tune in good ones -- shows that stimulate, inform, and challenge their children.

■ And thanks to research done by people such as Professors John Wright and Aletha Huston, co-directors of the Center for Research on the Influences of Television on Children at the University of Kansas, we know what a positive effect educational programming can have on children's intellectual stimulation and academic preparation.

■ In June 1995, during a panel discussion at the White House, Professor Wright released the results of a four-year study of how exposure to educational programming on television influences the academic skills, school readiness, and school adjustment of low-income children.

■ This study found that preschoolers who watched as little as twenty-five minutes per day of educational children's programs like Sesame Street did significantly better on standardized verbal and math tests when they started school and consistently spent more time on reading and other educational activities than did children who watched primarily noneducational cartoons and adult programming.

■ Today, Professor Huston is here to release a follow-up study. That study shows that children who had regularly watched educational children's TV programs in early childhood had better grades in high school than those who had not.

■ [Introduce Professor Huston]

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2ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1996 Reuters, Limited

May 31, 1996, Friday, BC cycle

LENGTH: 455 words

HEADLINE: Hillary Clinton urges boycott against TV violence

DATELINE: SAN FRANCISCO

BODY:

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton encouraged parents Thursday to refuse to buy the products of advertisers who sponsor violent television programs watched by children.

Clinton, speaking during the taping Thursday evening of a television program on the impact of television violence on children, said she hoped advertisers and programmers would hear from parents and citizens about what they expect.

She expressed hope "that we're not just going to be passive watchers any longer and that we now have enough evidence about the impact of television, particularly violence, on the desensitization of our children, and that we will say...we're not going to buy the product of advertisers who continue to push this kind of programing."

"We're not going to listen to it any more. We're going to turn off the television set," Clinton said. "That's the best way of getting the attention of the people who make the programming decisions."

"We have to send two messages: One, that we are not going to watch programming that we believe as parents is not good for our children, and that we will reward those programmers and advertisers who do put on quality programing by watching it," she continued.

Mrs. Clinton and several other speakers took part in "The Smart Parent's Guide to TV Violence", produced by KQED, a public television station in San Francisco. The one-hour program will be shown on public broadcasting stations in September.

Clinton said she believed there should be more quality programming "that you want your children to watch."

"I'm hoping that we're going to see broadcasters required to offer three hours a week of quality educational programming for children," she said. She said she hoped the Federal Communications Commission would require broadcasters to agree to such a requirement to have their licenses renewed.

Clinton said the "V" chip that a new U.S. law requires to be installed in new television sets within the next two years would be "a tremendous tool for parents." The chips will enable parents to exclude violent programs from their homes.

16TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1996 The Dayton Daily News
The Dayton Daily News

March 17, 1996, SUNDAY, CITY EDITION

SECTION: LIFESTYLE, Pg. 2E, TALKING IT OVER

LENGTH: 643 words

HEADLINE: V-CHIP NEW BEGINNING FOR PARENTS

BYLINE: HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

BODY:

As one of the few mothers in the room when the President met with leading entertainment executives at the White House recently, I can tell you how encouraging the discussion was.

The heads of companies that produce our movies and television shows were all there. Cap Cities/ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, PBS, Disney, Turner Broadcasting, DreamWorks, Warner Bros., Sony and Viacom, along with other major media companies, cable stations and the creative guilds, came together to launch plans for a television rating system.

They pledged to develop a system by early next year that will help parents gauge the amount of violence, sex and profane language used on shows. Also discussed were ways to improve the quality of children's programming.

During the meeting, I had a strong sense that these executives are listening to America's parents.

Just getting these entertainment executives to sit down at a table together was remarkable. After all, the entertainment industry is very competitive, and many of these professionals have conflicting interests. A few weeks ago, there were doubts that such a meeting could ever take place, let alone at the White House.

This is an impressive step forward. Information is power. And right now, parents don't have enough information or power when it comes to the programs their children watch on television.

Today, the majority of American children live in houses with three television sets. The typical family watches 51 hours of television a week. They can get shows on up to 70 channels, making it even harder for parents to control the messages and images their children absorb.

A rating system may not be the perfect solution, but it certainly will help. Ratings will be encoded so that parents can use the new v-chip to block out programs that are inappropriate for their children. As part of the telecommunications bill the President signed into law last month, v-chips will be required in all new television sets beginning in 1998.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S TV

(DRAFT)

~~VP INTRO'S POTUS AT PODIUM~~

POTUS STATEMENT AT PODIUM - ALL SIT

POTUS INTRO'S FLOTUS

2min- FLOTUS STATEMENT ON INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ON CHILDREN

Aletha Huston has an important announcement
FLOTUS CALLS ON ALETHA HUSTON

(INTRO STATEMENT FROM SKILA)

FLOTUS: Next I would like to call on Kathleen Hall Jamieson from the Annenberg School of Communications. Dr. Jamieson recently announced the creation of a blue ribbon group to review programs designed for children and to identify those that do the best job.

KATHLEEN HALL JAMIESON

FLOTUS: Mr. President, after the announcement of the industry decision to develop a ratings system for television shows, we discussed the V chip with a few families from the Washington area. Dr. Robert Phillips from the American Pediatric Association attended that meeting. I was struck by his insights into the power of television on children and I would like to call on him now for a few comments.

DR. ROBERT PHILLIPS

FLOTUS: Network television will play a major role in developing new educational programs for children. I would like to ask Margaret Loesch of FOX television to speak about her view of the influence of television on children and how it has guided her work.

A lot of people don't know
You guys have great children's tv
MARGARET LOESCH

FLOTUS OPENS FLOOR FOR DISCUSSION

DR. ALVIN POUISSANT

POTUS ENDS FIRST DISCUSSION & CALLS ON MEG

MEG STATEMENT ON "WHAT CONSTITUTES QUALITY":

Parents want their children to be able to watch television, but they want to know their children are visiting a safe place. There are safe places every parent knows their children can visit for television. Today we've invited people who represent those safe places. We want to learn from them how they blend education with entertainment, how they increase rather than decrease children's imagination and desire to learn.

One person -- or should I say two people -- we invited to discuss the secret of their success were Sherri Lewis and Lamb Chop. While they couldn't make it today they did send a letter. Let me read you a portion:

One of the safest places for children has always been anything with Bill Cosby. It is my pleasure to introduce him in the hope that he will spill the beans. Bill, how do you do it?

BILL COSBY

MEG: One of the most popular shows at our house is all about science. We don't just watch it, we get all the equipment and re-create the experiments. But everyone knows the Vice President is crazy about science. Oh yes...the children watch it too. We're very happy that Bill Nye the Science Guy could be here today.

BILL NYE

MEG: Every parent knows the joy of reading to a child. Levar Burton knows the joy of reading to thousands of children in the wonderful program Reading Rainbow. Those who know him only from Star Trek need to know: he is not just worried about the future of the universe, he is devoted to enhancing the future of children.

LEVAR BURTON

MEG: One face every child knows and loves is their best friend in the neighborhood -- Mr. Rogers. From Fred Rogers' success we can deduce that the first key to success in children's television is to respect your audience.

FRED ROGERS

MEG: One of the most successful developers of children's educational programs is Geraldine Laybourne, who made Nickelodeon a leader in children's television. ABC/Disney had the good sense to hire her. Geraldine, what makes a show a success?

GERALDINE LAYBOURNE

David Britt
MEG: OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

ERWIN DUGGAN -PBS -

GARY CHAPMAN - LIN TV

POTUS WRAPS UP DISCUSSION

POTUS CALLS ON VP

VP STATEMENT ON "BARRIERS":

We know from the studies released here today that educational television can help children learn. And we know from the successes described here today that we all know good children's programming when we see it.

The question for this last discussion is: "why don't see more of it?" What are the barriers to the development and production of more and better children's educational programming and how do we overcome them?

I would like to ask Rich Frank, the President of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences to give his answer to that question.

RICH FRANK

VP: Linda Ellerbee has built a career on taking on the hard issues. Her show ????? provides youth with a different view on the world -- but I'm sure if it were easy to do, she wouldn't be doing it.

LINDA ELLERBEE

VP: We're pleased to have today Jamie Kellner, the CEO of Warner Bros. Television Network. Mr. Kellner and Warner Bros are actively pursuing the children's educational market -- and something tells me they're not doing it to lose money or viewers.

JAMIE KELLNER

VP: Just in the last week J.P. Kids announced a major deal with the National Association of Broadcasters to produce a 30 minute children's magazine show. I would like to ask James Steyer, Founder and CEO to discuss how this came about

JIM STEYER

VP OPENS DISCUSSION

VP WRAPS UP DISCUSSION, INTROS POTUS FOR CLOSING

POTUS MAKES CLOSING REMARKS

Table 3.1 (Continued)

1977-81 (Continued)

Miss Winslow & Son, Mork & Mindy, Mrs. Columbo, Mulligan's Stew, Nancy Drew Mysteries, A New Kind of Family, Open All Night, Oregon Trail, Out of the Blue, The Pallisers, Palmerstown USA, Paris, The Ropers, The Runaways, Sanford Arms, Search & Rescue, Secrets of Midland Heights, Shannon, Skag, The Stockard Channing Show, Stone, Tabitha, Thirteen Queens Blvd., Thunder, Too Close for Comfort, Turnabout, The Two of Us, United States, Walking Tall, We've Got Each Other, Who's Watching the Kids, Woobind, Animal Doctor, The Yeagers, The Yellow Rose, The Young Pioneers, Zorro and Son.

1982-86/87

ALF, AKA Pablo, A Year in the Life, Baby Makes Five, Bare Essence, Better Days, Boone, Buck Jones, Butterflies, Cagney & Lacey, Call to Glory, Capitol, Captain Justice, Charles in Charge, Charlie & Company, Condo, The Cosby Show, Crazy Like a Fox, Crime Story, The Devlin Connection, Domestic Life, Double Trouble, The Ellen Burstyn Show, Emerald Point NAS, Everything's Relative, Falcon Crest, Family Ties, Family Tree, Filthy Rich, Foot in the Door, The Four Seasons, Full House, George & Mildred, Gloria, Golden Girls, Growing Pains, Gun Shy, The Hamptons, Heart of the City, Herbie the Love Bug, Hometown, Hot Pursuit, I Married Dora, It Takes Two, It's Not Easy, It's Your Move, Jack & Mike, Jennifer Slept Here, Joani Loves Chachi, Kate & Allie, Kings Crowning, The Law and Harry McGraw, Life with Lucy, Lime Street, Little House: A New Beginning, Loving, Momma Malone, Mama's Family, Matlock, Mr. Belvedere, My Sister Sam, My Two Dads, Newhart, Oh Madeline, Our Honor, Our House, Pac Man, Punky Brewster, Reggie Reilly, Ace of Spies, The Rousters, Scarecrow & Mrs. King, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Sidekicks, Silver Spoons, Simon & Simon, Spencer, Star of the Family, Starman, Thirtysomething, Together We Stand, Tucker's Witch, Two Marriages, 227, Valerie, Webster, A Year in the Life, You Again.

Note: From *Trends in the Portrayal of Families on U.S. Commercial Television, 1947-1987* by J. P. Murray, 1990, unpublished manuscript, Kansas State University, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Manhattan

Sabrina this was all I could find from the two sources. Julie

Educational and Persuasive Influences of Television

4

For the most part, the social and emotional messages on television are unintentional and their effects are unplanned. Most entertainment programming is not explicitly designed to teach or influence viewers' actions. Television can, however, be planned so as to teach social values and social behavior as well as academic and cognitive skills. It can be designed to mobilize viewers to take certain actions and it can be used as a forum for airing socially controversial topics.

In this chapter, we consider some types of television that are designed to teach or persuade, sometimes for the benefit of viewers and sometimes for the benefit of product manufacturers. Four topics are included: (1) programs to teach cognitive skills and prosocial behavior, (2) nutrition and health messages, (3) advertising, and (4) programming about controversial social issues. In some cases, unplanned messages are considered in conjunction with the deliberate efforts to educate or persuade.

COGNITIVE SKILLS AND PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Attempts to use television for instruction were begun in the 1950s, but they concentrated on formal instruction, primarily at secondary and college levels. The late 1960s witnessed the beginning of a major effort to use broadcast television for teaching academic skills to young children. This move was stimulated in part by the widespread social concern in the 1960s about poverty and educational disadvantage. In addition, in 1967, the Public Broad-

casting Act established a system of noncommercial stations with a mandate to provide diverse cultural and educational programming for both children and adults.

At first, public television was ignored because many people thought it was dull and appealed only to a small audience of highly educated people with esoteric tastes. That stereotype was shattered when a group of educators, psychologists, television writers and producers combined their talents to create *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company*. Production techniques from advertising and cartoons were used to package information about reading, cognitive skills, self-esteem, and prosocial behavior. *Sesame Street* was successful beyond anyone's expectations in reaching an audience of preschoolers, including many who were poor and educationally disadvantaged. Since that time, other educational programs designed to teach science (*3-2-1 Contact*) and math (*Square One*) have been created. *Reading Rainbow* has been remarkably successful in achieving its goal of stimulating children's interest in books. These programs reach a large number of children from a wide range of social groups.

Evaluations have demonstrated that children learn letters, numbers, and other cognitive skills from these programs. *Sesame Street* was evaluated in several parts of the country during its first two years. In the first year, children who watched the program frequently were compared with those who did not. In the second, the researchers used a field experimental design in which children were randomly assigned to view or not to view the program at home. The experimental group was given cable connections or UHF sets (necessary to receive the program), and their mothers were asked to encourage the children to watch the program. The control group did not receive extra television reception aids or encouragement to view. Both groups of children took a test of cognitive skills before and after the viewing season (about 6 months). The results of the two evaluations were consistent with each other. The children who watched *Sesame Street* regularly learned more than those who did not. Gains in the measured skills occurred for girls and boys from a variety of social backgrounds (Ball & Bogatz, 1970; Bogatz & Ball, 1971; Cook et al., 1975).

A more recent longitudinal study demonstrated that children's vocabularies improved when they watched *Sesame Street* regularly between the ages of 3 and 5 (Rice, Huston, Truglio, & Wright, 1990).

Similar evaluations were conducted for *The Electric Company*. Children who saw the program in school benefited from viewing it, but home viewing alone did not increase reading skills of children who were attending school. No information about individuals not in school (either young children or older drop-outs) was obtained (Ball & Bogatz, 1973).

The potential educational effects of television have been doubted, in part because the broadcast medium does not allow the "teacher" to be responsive to individual viewers' needs. The pace is invariant, viewers cannot ask questions or ask for repetition, the scheduling is inflexible, and it is difficult to build on earlier lessons. With the advent of inexpensive, portable videotape recorders, many of these limitations no longer exist. A wide range of programming for in-school use is creative, lively, and varied. Schools pay for permission to videotape educational programming and are then free to use the videotapes in whatever contexts and time periods they like.

Planned programming can also teach prosocial behavior and values (Fairchild, 1984; Gunter, 1981; Rushton, 1979, 1982). One of the longest running programs for preschool children is *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Several investigations have demonstrated that children learn such positive behaviors as nurturance and sympathy, task persistence, empathy, and imaginativeness from viewing the program (Coates, Pusser, & Goodman, 1976; Singer & Singer, 1981; Stein & Friedrich, 1975; Tower, Singer, Singer, & Biggs, 1979). Some of these investigations were field experiments in which one group of children was assigned to view the program, and a control group watched another program. Children in the experimental treatments demonstrated prosocial behaviors in natural settings when playing with other children and adults (Friedrich & Stein, 1973; Stein & Friedrich, 1972). In a subsequent study of economically disadvantaged children, the effects of the program were enhanced by providing relevant play materials to be used in

verbal rehearsal and role-playing of program themes after viewing (Friedrich & Stein, 1975; Friedrich-Cofer, Huston-Stein, Kipnis, Susman, & Clewett, 1979).

Several other programs designed to teach prosocial behavior were produced in the 1970s. One notable success on commercial television was *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*. Issues of importance in children's lives, such as divorce, friendship, child abuse, and drugs, were presented. Numerous investigations demonstrated that children understood the messages of the program and were able to apply them (CBS Broadcast Group, 1974; Calvert, Huston, Watkins, & Wright, 1982; Calvert, Huston, & Wright, 1987).

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Television is a major source of information about physical health. Programs frequently deal with health issues, and health remedies are often advertised. The medium also has real promise for planned messages about physical and mental health. For the most part, planned messages occur in advertisements and public service announcements rather than in the programs they surround, but, of course, the content of the programs is important as well.

Illness and Treatment of Health Problems

Doctors, nurses, hospitals, and illness are portrayed frequently on television, but in many respects television presents a distorted picture of illness and medical treatment. In an analysis of commercials and programs on prime-time television over two weeks, acute illness and injury were often portrayed; chronic illness and the long-term consequences of illness were shown less often. Doctors rarely made diagnostic errors, and health professionals other than doctors and nurses were rarely shown. Biomedical treatments (including drugs) and hospital care were emphasized instead of interpersonal or home-based ways of dealing with illness. Some current issues in the health field (e.g., cost containment, lack of availability) were not dealt with. Advertisements also emphasized over-the-counter drugs as a remedy for aches, pains, and ills of all kinds (Turow & Coe, 1985).

Children who are heavy viewers of television show high concern about getting sick and have heightened perceptions of the relief they can get from medicines. They have relatively positive attitudes about legal drugs (over-the-counter remedies), but there is no evidence at present that such positive attitudes extend to illegal drugs (Atkin, 1978). There is little evidence about adult perceptions or behavior in this domain.

Health Campaigns

Media campaigns to promote health have been used and evaluated in a variety of studies (cf. Solomon, 1982). Media campaigns to promote healthy practices can be successful, but there is some disagreement about what factors are associated with success. One author (Wallack, 1983) suggests that health-education campaigns will not succeed on commercial television so long as poor health practices (e.g., alcohol abuse) appear in the programs and advertisements that are supported by those with vested financial interests. Another review (Simpkins & Brenner, 1984) suggests that the contradictory findings stem from individual differences among viewers; viewer perceptions must be taken into account.

Television appears to be an especially potent medium for conveying information about health and nutrition, especially for reaching poorly educated people. Ettema, Brown, and Luepker (1983) found that an information campaign about cardiovascular health increased viewers' knowledge and decreased the knowledge gap between individuals of higher and lower socioeconomic status. Television was more effective than other media in a national campaign in Australia about disabled persons. It was most effective for creating awareness, but less effective for changing attitudes and behavior (Gething, 1984).

The Hyatt-Regency disaster in Kansas City occurred when a walkway collapsed, killing and injuring a large number of people at a dance in the lobby below it. Psychologists developed and disseminated media materials related to disaster reactions and mental health to the Kansas City community. Gist and Stolz (1982) describe a process for distributing such materials to reduce community mental-health problems.

Changing technology has opened the way for the use of video materials to promote health. Videotapes are used for in-service training of health professionals and staff development (e.g., Van Son, 1982). In hospitals and physicians' offices, people who are waiting are offered the opportunity to watch videotapes on health practices such as self-examination for breast lumps or rehabilitative exercises. Such informative uses of television appear to have considerable potential, and they overcome some of the problems inherent in broadcast television of targeting particular groups within a mass audience.

Nutrition

Both television viewing as an activity and messages about food in television content, are alleged to play roles in establishing lasting patterns of food preference, eating behavior, and physical activity levels in leisure time. Television programs and advertisements portray food consumption and contain frequent inducements to eat and drink that could affect consumption while viewing as well as eating habits in other situations.

Programs portray eating and drinking practices that are probably not conducive to good health. Prime-time programs contain frequent references to food—more frequent than those in commercials (Kaufman, 1980). Characters often eat snacks rather than organized meals, a practice known as “grazing” (Gerbner et al., 1982). The imbalance is even greater in weekend children's programs (Gerbner et al., 1982). People on television drink a lot of alcohol and coffee (Kaufman, 1980), but smoking is relatively rare (Gerbner et al., 1982). Despite their patterns of eating, television characters are rarely overweight; only 12% of adults shown are obese, and 90% of the obese persons are black (Palumbo & Dietz, 1985). One analyst summarized her findings as follows: “The television ‘diet’ may be unbalanced and fattening, but characters in commercials and programs alike remain slim and healthy” (Kaufman, 1980, p.37).

Dental problems and obesity are health consequences that could result from following the nutritional practices shown on television. Dietz and Gortmaker (1985) documented a clear association between television viewing and obesity among children

and adolescents in a nationally representative health survey of over 15,000 subjects. The probability of obesity increased by 2% with every hour per day of television viewed, even when a variety of family and environmental variables were statistically controlled. One sample of 2,153 subjects was studied on two occasions separated by three or four years; the subjects' television viewing predicted increases in obesity on the second occasion, even with initial obesity statistically controlled. The amount of obesity was not related to time spent reading or with friends. The authors concluded that television viewing causes obesity. A smaller survey of adolescent males did not show a correlation of television viewing with obesity, but did demonstrate a relationship between physical fitness and television viewing. The more television viewed, the less fit the subjects were (Tucker, 1986). Correlational evidence also suggests a relationship between television viewing by adults and their complacency about nutrition and smoking, but not about alcohol consumption (Gerbner et al., 1982).

Television can also promote positive eating practices. Public service announcements for nutrition and healthy food consumption appear to have some positive effects on children. Nutritional messages in a children's program (*Fat Albert*) had positive effects on children's food choices, particularly when not accompanied by advertisements for junk food (Goldberg, Gorn, & Gibson, 1978).

Future research could be usefully directed to disentangling three possible contributors to the association between television viewing and obesity: (a) television viewing is a low energy activity, (b) people tend to eat snacks while they watch television, and (c) the content of programs and advertisements promote the consumption of calorie-dense foods, with the implication that people who consume these foods rarely get fat. Advertising in particular is designed to induce consumption of food, as well as the use of many other products. We turn now to a discussion of advertising, its effects on nutrition and on other forms of behavior.

ADVERTISING

Advertising embodies commercial television's explicit efforts to use the medium for persuasion. Although advertising is sometimes



Melanne:

Attached are the memo we did for the VP on Haim Saban and the Power Rangers for the 2/29 media executives meeting and Saban's letter to the VP after the meeting. Greg wanted to be sure you noted that he disputes the facts of some of what the VP said at the meeting.

Greg also wanted me to send you a copy of the VP's remarks Monday at a conference held by the Annenberg School on children's television. They are forming an Advisory Council on Excellence in Children's Television (NYTimes article also attached); he thinks the First Lady might want also to highlight this sort of positive step.

He will call you as soon as he gets back to the office.

Kirsten

FEBRUARY 28, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

FROM: GREG SIMON

SUBJECT: MEETING ATTENDEE HAIM SABAN

As you may know, Mr. Haim Saban, CEO of Saban Entertainment and producer of the "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" and "The X-Men" will attend the media executives meeting.

The Power Rangers airs in 145 markets and attracts more kids than most other animated programs or sitcoms. Last year more than \$1 billion in licensed Power Rangers merchandise was sold.

Two reports in the last three years have shown that The Power Rangers and The X-Men are among the most violent programs on television for children. Both reports took into account the context and the purpose of the violence. The reports indicated that his shows use violence as the central theme to the plot and that options other than fighting are rarely used.

You should take a strong line on Mr. Saban. Since he was so persistent in his efforts to attend this meeting he should be made to explain why his multi-billion dollar company produces some of the most violent children's programs on television today and what he is personally planning to do to cut the violent content from his programs.

If he says that they already air segments at the end of each program to tell kids not to use violence you can remind him that the children have just spent the entire rest of the show listening to how cool it is to be violent and that violence is the only way to resolve conflict and that violence has no consequences.

Attached are some quotes from newspapers regarding the two reports and quotes from Mr. Saban and others at the FOX Network which airs his shows.

HAIM SABAN – SABAN ENTERTAINMENT

Haim Saban, owner of Saban Entertainment produces "The X-Men" and "The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" shows for television. Two studies of children's TV in the last three years have shown that these shows are among the most violent programs on television for children. Both reports took into account the context and the purpose of the violence and still found his shows to be at the top of the worst offenders of TV violence.

In children's programming, what the [recently released UCLA] report calls **'sinister combat violence'** showed up repeatedly in such programs as **"The X-Men," "Teen-age Mutant Ninja Turtles"** and **"The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers."** The report counted not just violent incidents, but the context in which they were displayed. Hence, the violence cited was, sadly, often central to the programs' basic themes, rather than incidental. (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, *October 7, 1995*)

"These shows are about fighting," the report says. "Rarely are options other than fighting considered in these shows and the heroes are always eager to engage in combat. . . . These are the shows that, by far, raise the largest number of concerns about violence." (The San Diego Union-Tribune *September 25, 1995*)

"...sinister combat violence," where fighting is the main purpose of the program and the plot only gives justification for the combat. (St. Louis Post-Dispatch *September 21, 1995*)

"TV Violence Report Card,"... the survey, released by Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.)... **"X-Men" on Fox topped the list of the most violent cartoon shows, with 129 acts of violence per hour,** followed closely by CBS's "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," with 123. (Chicago Tribune *December 19, 1993*)

The television show [Power Rangers] has been cited by anti-violence crusaders as an example of how TV keeps punching up kids' entertainment with violence to give it more impact. Last October the largest privately owned children's entertainment network in Sweden dropped the show – which the network also aired in Norway and Denmark – after the death of a 5-year-old Norwegian girl at the hands of a playmate. The kids were heavily into Power Rangers and their karate-kicking style. (The San Francisco Chronicle, *January 15, 1995*)

CJOH-TV in Ottawa announced it is cutting "X-Men" this month from its Saturday morning lineup. "We will not air this show because it no longer fits in with the new code. **The characters are lifelike and express themselves through graphic violence,**" said CJOH station manager Al Mackay. (The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, *January 8, 1994*)

SABAN & CO. RESPONSE

...to Cheryl Saban, a "Power Rangers" writer who just happens to be married to Saban Entertainment boss Haim Saban, **that's not violence, it's 'physicality.'** (Chicago Sun-Times, December 20, 1993)

'It is a truly uplifting show, full of action and physicality,' Saban says in a press release. **"'Power Rangers' is not preachy, but it does have a subtle moral fiber that children can embrace.** (Chicago Sun-Times, December 20, 1993)

'There's no reason all children's television should be as soft as Disney,' says Saban, ... **'Kids have a sense of humor.'** (USA TODAY, *September 26, 1994*)

Saban International, which produces "X-Men," said the show itself isn't to blame for its **cancellation**. [at CJOH in Canada] "It was a self-initiated decision to remove the show," said Saban spokesman Jeff Pryor. **"We consider 'X-Men' to be action-packed and do not believe there is any violence in the show."** (The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, *January 8, 1994*)

Margaret Loesch, the president of Fox Kids' Network, **acknowledges that 'Power Rangers,' 'X-Men' and 'Batman' are violent. But she claims it's 'balanced' by softer kids' shows, like 'Bobby's World.'** (The Sun (Baltimore) *January 23, 1994*)

Hoffman defended "X-Men," saying it's reviewed by a panel of child psychologists, psychiatrists and educators. (Chicago Tribune *December 19, 1993*)

"It's a multibillion-dollar business over the next five years," says Saban, who hopes to use the success of "Power Rangers" as a springboard to new business opportunities in television, movies, video games, live touring and even theme parks.

"We control all the streams of revenue," Saban says ... "The master toy license is one stream, video games is the second, home video another. . . . The ratings are the most visible, but they are just a piece of the puzzle."

In recent years, Saban has expanded into made-for-TV movies. Next up: a movie on the Menendez brothers for Fox. "Everything that has to do with family entertainment we will be in," Saban says. (Los Angeles Times, *March 11, 1994*)

The message, Singer said, "is you fight with your enemies. There's no trying to negotiate. You just get rid of them." Montgomery called that a mixed message. "On the one hand you have the pro-social messages -- **be good citizens and get along** -- and yet it resolves all conflict with a fight," she said. "It's very conflicted, and it's almost as if these so-called action shows have incorporated pro-social moments to justify the violence." (Los Angeles Times *February 26, 1994*)

Researchers at California State University-Fullerton found that children who were shown a Power Rangers episode responded by shoving and kicking their playmates with the same techniques that the Rangers used to fight off their foes. "One of the scary things about violence in the media is it gives children new ideas about how to be aggressive and be violent," Cal-Fullerton assistant professor Chris Boyatzis told The Los Angeles Times. (The Dallas Morning News, *September 7, 1994*)

Finally, there is one last insult to the intelligence of children. Each show concludes with the Power Rangers, back in their human guise, self-righteously lecturing little kids on how to avoid conflict. This comes, of course, after 20 minutes of showing kids that fighting is cool and effective. (Chicago Sun-Times, December 20, 1993)

The "Power Rangers" teach that:

The best way to resolve any conflict is through violence. The Power Rangers don't start fights, but they do respond to every threat with kicks, punches and explosions. In each show, the Power Rangers make the world a better place through violence.

The more powerful your weapon, the more powerful you are. The show's formula is a predictable escalation of violence, from kick-boxing to missiles.

Violence is without pain, consequences or remorse. The good guys -- the Power Rangers themselves -- never suffer the effects of violence. They are zapped, pummeled and fired upon, only to pop up and fight again. Even the bad guys get painlessly blasted away. If anyone suffers, it's only the kids who watch. (Chicago Sun-Times, December 20, 1993)

- education
- allude to past relationship
- some were PTA president
- VCRs



March 28, 1996

where was this ?!
[Signature]

The Honorable Al Gore, Jr.
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Vice President,

First of all, I would like to thank you and President Clinton for inviting me and my peers to the White House to discuss the planned television ratings system. While I believe the implementation of the system will be challenging for the industry, as a father of two young children, I support measures which help me to guide their recreational activities.

During the closed door session in Washington, you made two inaccurate statements regarding the "Power Rangers" which troubled me but which I chose not to address with you in that forum. However, I would now like to set the record straight. As you know, "Power Rangers" is the biggest phenomena in the entire history of kids' television and, as such, has attracted more than its share of both criticism and kudos. However, because the series became such an "event", certain myths have developed. Unfortunately, myths, if oft repeated, can become facts if not challenged.

One of these myths is that "Power Rangers" was taken off the air by its broadcaster (Global) in Canada due to violence issues. This is simply not the case. The show was edited slightly (less than 30 seconds per episode) and remained on the air for another year. Another myth is that "Power Rangers" was removed from the air in Scandinavia because a group of young boys killed a six year old girl. The show was pulled for one week and was immediately brought back when the official investigation determined that the boys involved had never even seen "Power Rangers".

My defense of the series with respect to these false stories notwithstanding, the series has received some legitimate criticism. Even though we have received far more positive than negative mail from parents, we take the negative comments to heart and many changes have been incorporated into the show in response to this criticism. As the father of a seven year old boy and a five year old girl, I pay close attention to what my children watch on television. As the world's largest supplier

of children's programming to broadcast television, I have a responsibility to the world's children, and I pay even closer attention to what my company puts on the air. The following are just a few examples of the steps we have taken to create a positive impact from the "Power Rangers" series:

- To date, we have produced seventeen positive, pro-social public service announcements (PSA's) which have been broadcast on the Fox Children's Network. These P.S.A.'s have covered such topics as honesty, fair play, teamwork, multi-cultural tolerance, etc. (I have enclosed a couple of those for your perusal.)
- "Power Rangers" is the only show on broadcast television that provides multi-ethnic and multi-gender positive role models for kids, with the underlying theme being staying in school and promotion of friendship, teamwork, social responsibility, etc., qualities that a lot of the shows out there do not promote with kids.
- For over two years, the "Power Rangers" have been official goodwill ambassadors of the D.A.R.E. program. The popularity of these characters has brought the D.A.R.E. message to many children at an age where it can do some good.

The list could go on and on, but it is not necessary. The bottom line is that I take my responsibility as a children's programmer very seriously and will continue to do so. I know children's programming has been a priority to you and Mrs. Gore personally. To that effect, I would like to work with your office to explore how we can utilize the popularity of "Power Rangers" and the many other series we control to convey educational and positive messages to the kids of America.

I will be speaking to Greg Simon about various ideas as to how we can work together to achieve our mutual goals. Thank you for listening.

Best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Haim Saban", written over a horizontal line.

HAIM SABAN

cc: Greg Simon, Chief Domestic Policy Advisor to the Vice President
Margaret Loesch, President of the Fox Children's Network

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June 18, 1996, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section C; Page 15; Column 5; Cultural Desk

LENGTH: 901 words

HEADLINE: Nudging TV On New Rule For Children

BYLINE: By LAWRIE MIFFLIN

BODY:

While the Federal Communications Commission is busy writing a new rule this week to require television stations to broadcast three hours a week of educational programs for children, momentum is gathering to help broadcasters comply.

Of course, "help" is not the verb most broadcasters and network executives would choose to label this movement. "Pressure" would be their choice.

Several media research organizations completed studies this month showing the benefits to children of educational television and the demand for it from parents, as well as citing scholars' arguments for ratings codes to identify not only violent or sexually explicit programs parents might want to avoid but also educational or informational programs parents might want to embrace. And President Clinton invited network executives to a White House conference next month on improving children's television.

Yesterday at a meeting in Washington, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, who is best known as an expert in politics and television, announced that the Annenberg Public Policy Center had created an advisory panel to "assess the quality of programs submitted to the F.C.C. by stations seeking license renewal."

The nine-member panel, called the Advisory Council on Excellence in Children's Television, includes the educators James P. Comer and Charles J. Ogletree, as well as the author Jonathan Kozol and the documentary film maker Ken Burns. All have agreed to serve for three years. "I'm delighted there'll be private-sector groups evaluating and publicizing the efforts of children's television producers," Commissioner Susan Ness of the F.C.C., who spoke at the Annenberg conference, said in a telephone interview afterward. "Government shouldn't be doing that. This will be a wonderful tool a community can use to

rally in support of, or rally to correct, the choices their local broadcasters are making."

If the Annenberg panel succeeds, advocates say, its approval could become something akin to the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval." But some fear it could also become something akin to academic censorship.

"It's not too different from the old days when the Catholic Legion of Decency rated movies, is it?" said Rick Siggelkow, co-producer, with Britt Allcroft, of the PBS show "Shining Time Station" and now vice president of the children's division of BBC Worldwide Americas.

Mr. Siggelkow said that the panel's value would lie in its independence, but that he also thought it should include representatives of the industry.

"These people have sterling credentials," he said. "But what's glaringly absent is any children's television producers, the people who have to raise the money, come up with the concepts and actually make the shows. Certainly, Ken Burns is a wonderful producer and knows what producers have to go through, but his programs are very far removed from the children's arena."

Many broadcasters argue that the advocates for more educational programming for children do not understand how difficult and expensive it is to make. They also complain that children don't watch educational programs. If a program draws paltry ratings, and therefore low advertising fees, they argue, it is a liability to them and of little service to the public.

At the Annenberg conference yesterday, Victoria Rideout, director of the Children and the Media division of the California-based advocacy group called Children Now, led a panel discussion in which advertisers talked about this quandary. She said studies released by the Annenberg Center yesterday showed that the higher-quality children's programs were usually scheduled in the least-watched time periods, creating a sort of Catch-22.

"How can we get networks and advertisers to give the high-quality programs a fighting chance?" she said by telephone from Washington. "On the panel I led, some advertising folks talked about forming a collaborative effort, where major advertisers and producers together would help produce some kids' programming, then take it to networks with some advertising support already there."

Federal law requires television stations, as a condition for license renewal, to broadcast some educational and informational programs for children. The law, the Children's Television Act of 1990, does not specify how much, but empowers the F.C.C. to decide that.

Many broadcasters object to a weekly three-hour minimum as a Government intrusion on their First Amendment right to broadcast as they see fit, according to their own community's viewing wishes.

Other broadcasters, particularly those who believe their stations already serve children well, argue that it is more practical -- and perhaps even more First Amendment-friendly -- to know in advance what's expected at license renewal time, rather than to have vague guidelines subject to interpretation by whatever five F.C.C. commissioners happen to be in place at renewal time.

Until last week, Commissioner James Quello, a conservative Democrat, and Commissioner Rachelle Chong, a Republican, had held firm against any numerical standard being adopted. But Mr. Quello dropped his opposition, saying more than half the broadcasters he had spoken to preferred firm guidelines. That left only Ms. Chong opposed. So a three-hour guideline is being written this week.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 18, 1996

Prepared remarks
Vice President Al Gore

National Press Club
Press Conference on Children and Television

Washington, DC
June 17, 1996

Good morning. About a year ago, my wife Tipper and I invited dozens of scholars, television programmers, and educators to Nashville, Tennessee, for a conference on the American family and the American media. Among the people who came to Nashville for those sessions was Kathleen Hall Jamieson, one of the country's most thoughtful analysts of the role of mass media in American life. In Nashville -- and in all the years I've known her -- she has taught me a great deal about how the media shape American politics and influence our children's lives.

That's why I was delighted when Kathleen and the Annenberg Public Policy Center took on this project. The Advisory Council on Excellence in Children's Television -- which begins its work today -- will establish private sector guidelines for what constitutes educational programming for children.

This blue-ribbon commission is the most recent sign that the movement for quality children's television has begun to pick up steam. For two decades now, my wife Tipper has been working to make sure parents know what's in the music their children listen to and what's on the television they watch.

And President Clinton and I have long supported giving parents the tools to make television a positive influence in their children's lives -- tools to help them welcome in the terrific and to keep out the trash.

For example, earlier this year President Clinton successfully advocated for the V-chip, a new device parents can use to keep their living rooms family-friendly. And he helped persuade the nation's television broadcasters and producers to establish a voluntary ratings system to inform parents about the content of shows their children might be turning on.

Those were important strides. But along with giving parents the tools to choose, we've been equally concerned about making sure our parents have something to choose. The V-chip and the voluntary ratings system are necessary, extremely necessary. But they are not sufficient. American families also need more programming and better programming.

So President Clinton has been working hard to increase both the quantity and quality of educational television. For example, FCC Chairman Reed Hundt, Congressman Ed Markey, children's advocate Peggy Charren and I -- along with many others -- have been working to establish a minimum requirement for television broadcasters: three hours a week of educational programming. Three hours a week is fair. It's simple. And it leaves 98 percent of broadcasting time available for other programs.

Three hours a week for our children is not too much to ask. And this week, the three-hour requirement that we've been pursuing for so long may become a reality. And that decision -- coupled with the blue-ribbon commission that's beginning work today -- could make this week the best week for children's television in a generation. By the end of this week, we will have begun to change the face of children's television.

The Annenberg Advisory Commission on Excellence in Children's Television is also an important step not simply in terms of what we're achieving, but how we're achieving it. We're improving television not by government fiat, but by the studied opinion of some of the nation's most pre-eminent private citizens, women and men committed to improving the quality of kids TV.

This technique -- "educate and inform" rather than "command and control" -- is also alive in a proposal PBS President Ervin Duggan made about two weeks ago. To further empower parents to make good choices for their kids, President Duggan proposed fixing an icon in the bottom corner of the television screen during shows that meet strict standards for quality educational programming. This way, as with food labels, parents will know whether they're choosing a healthy televised meal or simply another helping of a high-fat video junk food. It's a great idea.

So is the announcement President Clinton made last week to invite television leaders to meet at the White House for a summit on educational television. Once again, with the leadership and knowledge of the industry itself, we'll work to give parents additional guidance for making television a positive influence in their children's lives.

With the buzz of activity occurring in only the last few weeks and months -- the V-chip, the voluntary ratings system, the three-hour a week educational television requirement, the PBS icon, and today's announcement -- I believe we're ushering in a new era of high-quality educational programming for American children. The momentum we've unleashed may prove unstoppable.

I predict that a year from now, television networks will be fighting each other to win the Annenberg Advisory Commission's seal of approval, and to earn one of those PBS educational icons.

I predict that a year from now, television producers will be turning out more

educational programming and better educational programming -- and that vast numbers of talented producers, directors, actors, and writers will seize this creative challenge.

And I predict that a year from now, our nation will have moved ever closer to the goal President Clinton has been pursuing since he first came to office and others have sought still longer: television that's as good as our children, television that educates our young people and lifts up their lives.

Now I will leave you in the good hands of Kathleen Hall Jamieson, who will answer any questions.

DRAFT 7/24/96 12:00 pm

children?
- from existin program

VP INTRO'S POTUS AT PODIUM

POTUS STATEMENT AT PODIUM - ALL SIT

POTUS INTRO'S FLOTUS

FLOTUS STATEMENT ON "IMPORTANCE OF GOOD TV". Intro's theme of importance in children's lives. This is a breakthrough study. Very excited about work Ms. Huston has been doing for years. We have to understand what a powerful influence television is on our children.

SH: Include ref to older study about how parents perceive what their children watch. CTW helped sponsor it -- call on David Britt?

FLOTUS CALLS ON ALETHA HUSTON - talks abt. study

POTUS CALLS ON KATHLEEN HALL JAMIESON

POTUS CALLS ON BOB PHILLIPS

→ Dr. Alvin Poussaint
(PLACEHOLDER FOR NETWORK PERSON -- MARGARET LOESCH FROM FOX?)

FLOTUS OPENS FLOOR FOR DISCUSSION

Call on David Britt first to discuss older study.

Call on Poussaint?

MC - wraps up discussion

POTUS ENDS FIRST DISCUSSION & CALLS ON MEG ~~MARTIN~~

- Margaret Losch/Fox

MEG STATEMENT ON "WHAT CONSTITUTES QUALITY": There are safe places every parent knows their children can visit for a while on television. One of safest has always been anything with Bill Cosby. Parents want their children to be able to watch television, but they want to know its a safe place. We've invited people who represent those safe places.

READ LETTER FROM SHARI LEWIS?

MEG CALLS ON BILL COSBY

POTUS CALLS ON BILL NYE

POTUS CALLS ON LEVAR BURTON

POTUS CALLS ON GERALDINE LAYBOURNE

POTUS CALLS ON ERVIN DUGGAN TO OPEN DISCUSSION

SH: Shd throw out Qs to advertisers & local b'casters (Gary Chapman) in this section as well as in Barriers. Also one to David Kleeman.

David Britt

MEG WRAPS UP 2ND DISCUSSION

POTUS TURNS IT OVER TO VP

VP STATEMENT ON "BARRIERS": Most of the barriers to success can be overcome with more attention to the problem. It's not a technical problem, it's not even an economic problem. Peggy Charren's point about trial-and-error. TV industry/creative comm'y have to be as willing to take chances for children as they are with primetime programming. Failure is not the end of the process. How is this different from all the other things you do? ↗

↖ VP CALLS ON RICH FRANK

↖ POTUS CALLS ON LINDA ELLERBEE (reverse order?)

POTUS CALLS ON JIM STEYER

↳ testimonial

VP OPENS DISCUSSION

Throw Q to Laybourne

VP WRAPS UP DISCUSSION

POTUS MAKES CLOSING REMARKS

Janice Kellner
↳ WB/Fox
Judith McFall

Jeff Buchus/
HBO

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002. list	re: Personally Identifiable Information (5 pages)	07/29/1996	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12081

FOLDER TITLE:

HRC - Media Conference 7/29/96

2017-1164-S
rc2661

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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(page 280) "Many parent and consumer groups (are) urging the FCC to enforce its regulations and to strengthen them, by requiring the networks to air more educational programming. In 1951, twenty-seven hours of quality children's programming aired each week. The President and FCC Chairman Reed Hundt would like to see the FCC require each network to broadcast at least three hours a week. As of this writing, the FCC has not taken action on this proposal. In response to public petitions, however, Westinghouse, which has recently purchased CBS, has voluntarily made such a commitment. The FCC's decision will not affect cable stations, since they are considered exempt from government regulations because they do not use the public airwaves."

Research

(page 281) "In May 1995, John Wright and Aletha Huston, professors of human development at the University of Kansas, released the results of a four-year study on how television influences the academic skills, school readiness, and school adjustment of low-income children. They found that preschoolers who watched as little as twenty-five minutes per day of educational children's programs like Sesame Street did significantly better on standardized verbal and math tests when they started school and consistently spent more time on reading and other educational activities than did children who watched primarily noneducational cartoons and adult programming."

Note: For more research, see attached report on violence and youth by the American Psychological Association.

Consumerism

(pages 288 - 292) See attached.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S TV

DRAFT SCRIPT

1. Four principals enter, proceed to podium
2. VP intros POTUS
3. POTUS opening remarks: (if possible broadcasters announce support for kids TV rule compromise)
4. Four are seated
- 5. FLOTUS introduces first theme *talk about new study → impact of PBS on older kids*
~~(the to moderate program)~~
6. ~~POTUS~~ (FLOTUS?) calls on Aletha Huston
7. Huston presentation
8. POTUS calls on Kathleen Jamieson
9. POTUS Calls on Newton Minnow
10. POTUS open floor for discussion
11. POTUS ends first discussion and calls on MEG
12. MEG opens second theme
13. POTUS (MEG?) calls on Bill Nye
14. POTUS calls on Peggy Charren
15. POTUS calls on Levar Burton
16. POTUS calls on Linda Allerbee
17. POTUS calls on Geraldine Leybourne
18. POTUS calls on David Britt
19. POTUS opens floor to discussion
20. POTUS ends discussion and intros VP
21. VP intros third theme
22. VP calls on Gary David Goldberg
23. VP calls on James Goodman (or other station owner)
24. VP calls on Les Moonves/Bob Iger
25. VP opens floor for discussion
26. VP brings to close, intros POTUS for closing remarks.

*Aletha Huston, codirector of
The Center for Research on the
Influences of Television on
Children, U Kansas*

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