

# *Happily* **Never After**

How Hollywood Favors Adultery and Promiscuity Over Marital Intimacy on Prime Time Broadcast Television



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Background .....	3
Study Parameters & Methodology ...	5
Results:	
A) Overall .....	5
B) By Network .....	6
Examples:	
Marriage .....	8
Infidelity/Adultery .....	10
Non-Marital .....	11
Non-Marital/Oral Sex .....	12
Prostitution .....	12
Incest .....	13
Threesome .....	14
Voyeurism/Third Parties	
Present.....	14
Adult/Child.....	14
Kinky/Fetishistic .....	15
Conclusion.....	16
Appendix Tables.....	17
More PTC Special Reports .....	18
About the PTC.....	20

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Today's prime-time television programming is not merely indifferent to the institution of marriage and the stabilizing role it plays in our society, it seems to be actively seeking to undermine marriage by consistently painting it in a negative light. Nowhere is this more readily apparent than in the treatment of sex on television. Sex in the context of marriage is either non-existent on prime-time broadcast television, or is depicted as a burdensome rather than as an expression of love and commitment. By contrast, extra-marital or adulterous sexual relationships are depicted with greater frequency and overwhelmingly, as a positive experience. **Across the broadcast networks, verbal references to non-marital sex outnumbered references to sex in the context of marriage by nearly 3 to 1; and scenes depicting or implying sex between non-married partners outnumbered scenes depicting or implying sex between married partners by a ratio of nearly 4 to 1.**

Even more troubling than the marginalization of marriage and glorification of non-marital sex on television is TV's recent obsession with outré sexual expression. Today more than ever teens are exposed to a host of once-taboo sexual behaviors including threesomes, partner swapping, pedophilia, necrophilia, bestiality, and sex with prostitutes, to say nothing of the now-common depictions of strippers, references to masturbation, pornography, sex toys, and kinky or fetishistic behaviors. Behaviors that were once seen as fringe, immoral, or socially destructive have been given the imprimatur of acceptability by the television industry — and children are absorbing those messages and in many cases, imitating that behavior.

PTC analysts examined all scripted prime-time entertainment programs on the major broadcast television networks (ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, and NBC) during four weeks at the beginning of the 2007-2008

television season (September 23-October 22, 2007) for a total of 207.5 programming hours, recording all manner of sexual content including not only on-screen depictions of obviously sexual behavior (couples depicted during coitus), but implied sex, discussions of sex and sexuality, innuendo, visual references to strippers, pornography, and the like.

### MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Across the broadcast networks, references to adultery outnumbered references to marital sex 2:1.
- Although the networks shied away from talking about sex in the context of marriage, they did not shy away from discussions of masturbation, oral sex, anal sex, manual stimulation, sex toys, bondage or kinky or fetishistic sex — there were 74 such references during the study period.
- The Family Hour — the time slot with the largest audience of young viewers, where one might reasonably expect broadcasters to be more careful with the messages they are communicating to impressionable youngsters — contained the highest frequency of references to non-married sex as opposed to references to sex in marriage, by a ratio of 3.9:1. During the 9:00 and 10:00 hours, the references to non-marital versus marital sex averaged 2.5:1.
- Visual references to voyeurism (a third party present, watching or taping while sex takes place), transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, kinky sex, bondage and sado-masochism, and prostitution outnumbered visual references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 2.7:1.

- Content descriptors, which are intended to alert parents to inappropriate content and work in conjunction with the V-Chip to block such content as parents may find unsuitable for their children were often lacking or inadequate. Every network had problems with the consistent and accurate application of the “S” and “D” descriptors.
- Of all the networks, ABC had the most references to marital sex, but many of the references were negative. References to non-marital sex, by contrast, were almost universally positive or neutral.
- In 46 hours of programming, NBC contained only one reference to marital sex, but 11 references to non-marital sex and one reference to adultery.
- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping, prostitution, threesomes, transsexuals/transvestites, bestiality, and necrophilia combined outnumbered references to sex in marriage on NBC by a ratio of 27:1.
- On NBC, there were as many depictions of adults having sex with minors as there were scenes implying or depicting sex between married partners (a 1:1 ratio).
- Fox broadcast only one reference to marital sex in 24.5 hours of programming, but 18 references to non-marital sex and five references to adultery.

Throughout much of the history of broadcast television, the networks adhered to a voluntary code of conduct which stipulated that respect should be maintained for the sanctity of marriage and the value of the home; that divorce should not be treated casually or justified as a solution for marital problems; that illicit sex relations should not be treated as commendable; and sex crimes and abnormalities should be viewed as unacceptable program material. Even with the

limitations of the NAB Code of Conduct, television writers were able to tell relevant, meaningful stories that explored the vast expanse of human experience.

Today’s television programming is squarely on the opposite end of that spectrum. Sexual content on television is predominantly extra-marital; the institution of marriage is regularly mocked and denigrated; adulterous relationships are treated sympathetically; and criminal sexual behavior such as sex with minors or prostitutes fuel story lines on many popular series.

Broadcasters, knowing television’s ability to influence behavior, could be more careful in their treatment of sexual situations during prime-time hours when impressionable children are in the viewing audience, opting for less graphic visual content, and favoring storylines that don’t celebrate promiscuity, glamorize criminality, or denigrate monogamy. The American people should hold the networks and their local broadcast affiliates accountable for pushing questionable content into their homes over the publicly-owned broadcast airwaves.

Advertisers, too, must be held accountable for the messages they underwrite with their advertising dollars, and the social cost of supporting those messages. Sponsors unquestionably do have a say in broadcast content. When all is said and done, the broadcasters’ audience is not the American television viewing public — it is corporate America, and the networks’ success as a business depends upon their ability to sell their product to advertisers. As long as advertisers are willing to associate their brand names and corporate image with salacious sexual content, networks will continue to produce it. Only when corporate sponsors band together in the name of responsible entertainment can we expect to see meaningful change from the broadcast industry.

It is too late to put the genie back in the bottle — and no one is advocating a return to the halcyon days of *Father Knows Best*, but television can and must do better... because our children are watching.

**www.ParentsTV.org®**

**Because our children are watching.®**

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## How Hollywood Favors Adultery and Promiscuity Over Marital Intimacy on Prime Time Broadcast Television

BY MELISSA HENSON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC EDUCATION • AUG 5, 2008

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### I. BACKGROUND

Lyricist Sammy Cahn once wrote that love and marriage “go together like a horse and carriage,” but sex and marriage apparently *don't* — at least, not according to Hollywood scriptwriters. Today's prime-time television programming is not merely indifferent to the institution of marriage and the stabilizing role it plays in our society, it seems to be actively seeking to undermine marriage by consistently painting it in a negative light. Nowhere is this more readily apparent than in the treatment of sex on television. Sex in the context of marriage is either non-existent on prime-time broadcast television, or is depicted as a burdensome rather than as an expression of love and commitment. By contrast, extra-marital or adulterous sexual relationships are depicted with greater frequency and overwhelmingly, as a positive experience.

Even more troubling than the marginalization of marriage and glorification of non-marital sex on television is TV's recent obsession with outré sexual expression. TV viewers are increasingly exposed to a host of once-taboo sexual behaviors, including adultery and non-marital sex, threesomes, partner swapping, pedophilia, necrophilia, bestiality, and prostitutes — to say nothing of the now-common depictions of strippers, references to masturbation, pornography, sex toys, and kinky or fetishistic behaviors. In a recent cover story for *TV Guide*, writer David Hochman observed, **“Horny kings, swinging suburbanites and sitcom threesomes ... TV's lusty new obsession [is] pushing the sexual envelope.”**

One could plausibly argue that TV writers have not merely pushed the envelope, they've shredded it.

Behaviors that were once seen as fringe, immoral, or socially destructive have been given the imprimatur of acceptability by the television industry — and children are absorbing those messages and judging from recent survey data, imitating that behavior.

For years, studies and surveys have shown that teens are aware of TV's profound influence in their lives and the lives of their peers. According to one survey published in the *Chicago Tribune*,<sup>1</sup> a third of youths 12 and older say the media encourages them to have sex. Thirty-four percent of youths surveyed said they believed some teenagers have sex “because TV and movies make it seem normal.”

Parents are likewise concerned about TV's ability to influence their children's sexual decision making. Approximately 9 out of 10 American parents believe today's media contribute to children becoming too materialistic (90%), using more coarse and vulgar language (90%), engaging in sexual activity at younger ages (89%), experiencing a loss of innocence too early (88%), and behaving in violent or anti-social ways (85%). The majority of parents believe that media negatively affect their *own* children in these ways.<sup>2</sup>

A newly emerging body of research also points to television's role as a formidable educator, informing children's sexual attitudes and behaviors. A 2006 study by Dr. Jane Brown of the University of North Carolina showed a link between sexually-charged media and earlier sexual activity among teens. Television influences behavior by altering a teen's perception of how many of their peers are sexually active and how much sexual experience they themselves are expected to have. Researchers believe one of the strongest predictors of early intercourse is the impression — real or imagined — that “everybody else is doing it.” Television, in this regard, acts as a “sexual super peer,” creating a perception among teens that everyone their age is sexually active, and that there is something wrong with them if they aren't. Researchers found that teens who are exposed to high levels of sex in the media are likely to become sexually active earlier in life, and that children with the highest exposure levels were 2.2 times more likely to have had intercourse at ages 14 to 16 than similar youngsters with less exposure.

A 2005 study by Dr. Rebecca Collins showed that watching sex on TV predicts and may hasten the onset of sexual activity among adolescents. Collins found that youths who watched more sexual content were more likely to initiate intercourse and progress to more advanced non-coital sexual activities in the year following the beginning of the study.

Research has demonstrated that teens don't even need visual cues to be influenced by TV's sexual content. Even sexually-charged dialogue on TV increases the chances that teens will engage in sex earlier, according to a 2002 survey of 15-to-17-year-olds by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

ABCNews.com tells the story of "Lisa" a teenager from Long Island who became a fan of TV's *Sex and the City* when she was 14. She quickly lost her virginity and soon "graduated" to sneaking into bars, ordering cosmopolitans, and cheating on her boyfriend — with up to seven other boys in one week.

"Lisa" told ABC, "When you're that age you try to emulate people on TV. Carrie smoked, so I smoked, Samantha looked at hooking up with random people as not a big deal, so that's what I did, too. It wasn't *Sex and the City's* fault. I love the show, but I think it made it a little easier to justify my behavior."

Children growing up in this TV environment are experimenting sexually in ways that would have been unthinkable for previous generations. By the time they have reached their senior year in high school, 3 out of 5 young people in the U.S. today have had sex, and 1 in 5 of those has had sex with 4 or more partners, according to the 2001 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. Just over half of American teenagers ages 15 to 19 have engaged in oral sex. A survey of Manhattan teens by *New York* magazine found that 46% had watched a pornographic movie with a member of the opposite sex; 18% had watched others having sex; 15% had taken pictures during sex or sexual activity; 15% had masturbated while someone watched; and 12% reported having engaged in anal sex.<sup>3</sup>

**Children growing up in this TV environment are experimenting sexually in ways that would have been unthinkable for previous generations. By the time they have reached their senior year in high school, 3 out of 5 young people in the U.S. today have had sex, and 1 in 5 of those has had sex with 4 or more partners, according to the 2001 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance.**

And while some may be tempted to dismiss sexual activity among teens as inevitable, consider this sobering fact: One in four teen girls has a sexually transmitted disease, and about 25 percent of sexually active girls say they are depressed all, most or a lot of the time, while only 8 percent of girls who are not sexually active feel the same. Fourteen percent of girls who have had

intercourse have attempted suicide; only 5 percent of sexually inactive girls have. And whereas 6 percent of sexually active boys have tried suicide, less than 1 percent of sexually inactive boys have.<sup>4</sup>

There may be a chicken or the egg argument to be raised here: Does depression lead to teen sex, or does teen sex lead to depression? Analysts at the Heritage Foundation point out that the majority of teens who become sexually active admit they'd started too soon and expressed regret, and that "differences in happiness between sexually active and non-sexually active kids are too large and too widespread for the depression to have caused the sex in most cases."

According to Heritage senior analyst Robert Rector, "Sexual activity by teens has both short-term and long-term negative psychological effects. It disputes their ability to develop loving,

intimate and committed relationships and thereby creates great unhappiness in later life."

Unlike media violence, which has been examined by social scientists for more than fifty years, overtly sexual content in media readily available to children is a relatively new phenomenon, and has only recently become the subject of scientific research. Most of the medical community now accepts as fact the premise that children who are exposed to high levels of violence in the media are more likely to engage in violent behavior. It's not much of a leap to conclude that pre-teens and teens, already under pressure from peers; experiencing the physical, emotional, and hormonal changes that accompany puberty; and who have a normal and natural curiosity about sex, might be more inclined to engage in sexual behavior if television tells them that it's okay. And in fact, recent

studies examining the connection between sexual media and sexual behavior in children bear this out.

Given a child's propensity to readily accept media messages concerning all facets of life, parents need to be aware of the nature and frequency of sexual messages their children are exposed to in popular media so they can effectively combat those messages in the home.

## II. STUDY PARAMETERS AND METHODOLOGY

PTC analysts examined all scripted prime-time<sup>5</sup> entertainment programs on the major broadcast television networks (ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, and NBC) during four weeks at the beginning of the 2007-2008 television season (September 23-October 22, 2007) for a total of 207.5 programming hours. Television broadcasts of movies, news, sports programs, reality and game shows were not included in this analysis. MyNetworkTV did not air programming that matched this study's criteria within the study period.

PTC analysts reviewed the programming for all manner of sexual content, including not only on-screen depictions of obviously sexual behavior (couples depicted during coitus), but implied sex, discussions of sex and sexuality, innuendo, visual references to strippers, pornography, and the like.

Analysts tracked and categorized each sexual element within a scene. Categories of sexual content tracked by PTC analysts included verbal references to marital sex, non-marital sex, adultery, teen sex, incest, pedophilia, bestiality, necrophilia, partner-swapping, prostitution, threesomes, sex with transvestites/transsexuals, masturbation, oral sex, manual stimulation, sex toys/dildos, anal sex, bondage, kinky or fetishistic practices, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, pornography and home-made sex tapes, child pornography, strippers, phone sex, and STDs. Visual sexual elements noted by analysts included depictions of marital or non-marital sex, adultery, visual innuendo, oral sex, teen sex, adults engaged in sexual behavior with a minor, voyeurism, sex involving transsexuals or transvestites, threesomes, bondage, prostitution, kinky or fetishistic practices, strippers/lap dances, sexual violence, pornography, and sexual touching (i.e. of a breast or genitals).

## III. RESULTS

### Overall:

#### VERBAL

- Across the broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, and NBC), there were 151 verbal references to non-marital sex, and only 54 references to sex in the context of marriage, for a ratio of 2.8:1.
- References to adultery outnumbered references to marital sex 2:1.
- There were 19 references to teen sex and an additional nine references to teen pregnancy, but only 15 references to condom use.
- Although the networks shied away from talking about sex in the context of marriage, they did not shy away from discussions of masturbation, oral sex, anal sex, manual stimulation, sex toys, bondage or kinky or fetishistic sex (all extramarital). There were 74 such references during the study period.
- The ratio of non-married sex references to married sex references was highest during the Family Hour (3.9:1) – the time slot with the largest audience of young viewers, where one might reasonably expect broadcasters to be more careful with the messages they are communicating to impressionable youngsters. During the 9:00 and 10:00 hours, the references to non-marital versus marital sex averaged 2.5:1.
- The 8:00 p.m. Family Hour also contained the highest frequency of references to out-of-wedlock pregnancy.
- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping (involving married and non-married couples), prostitution, threesomes, transsexuals/transvestites, bestiality, and necrophilia combined outnumbered references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 2.4:1.

## VISUAL

- Although visual depictions of sex were infrequent during the Family Hour, scenes depicting or implying non-married coupling were more common than scenes depicting or implying married coupling by a ratio of 8:1. Scenes depicting or implying sex were more frequent during the 9 o'clock hour, but non-married sex still outnumbered married sex by a ratio of 2.8:1. Likewise during the 10 o'clock hour, where there was the highest frequency of depicted or implied sexual activity, non-married sex scenes outnumbered married sex scenes by 3.9:1.
- Overall, scenes depicting or implying sex between non-married partners outnumbered scenes depicting or implying sex between married partners by a ratio 3.6:1.
- For every two scenes depicting or implying marital intercourse, there was one scene depicting or implying adulterous sex.
- Visual references to voyeurism (a third party present, watching or taping while sex takes place), transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, kinky sex, bondage and sado-masochism, and prostitution outnumbered visual references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 2.7:1.

## RATINGS

Content descriptors, which are intended to alert parents to inappropriate content and work in conjunction with the V-Chip to block such content as parents may find unsuitable for their children, were often lacking or inadequate. For example:

- On ABC, 38% of programs airing during the Family Hour that contained sexual content did not receive the "S" descriptor. During the 9:00 hour, 71% of programs containing sexual dialogue did not carry a "D" descriptor.
- CBS fared slightly better, but still failed to identify sexual content with an "S" descriptor 39% of the time during the 9:00 hour.
- Every network had problems with the consistent application of "S" and/or "D" descriptors during every time slot.

## Verbal and Visual Results By Network — (listed alphabetically)

### ABC

#### VERBAL

- Of all the networks, ABC had the most references to marital sex, but many of the references were negative. References to non-marital sex, by contrast, were almost universally positive or neutral.
- References to non-marital sex were almost twice as common as references to marital sex (1.8:1).
- Despite the fact that there were 74 verbal references to non-marital sex, there were only eight references to condoms.
- ABC featured five references to teen sex, and five references to teen pregnancy in 45 hours of programming.
- References to adultery were more than twice as common as references to marital sex (2.6:1).
- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping, prostitution, threesomes, transsexuals/transvestites, bestiality, and necrophilia combined outnumbered references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 1.4:1.

#### VISUAL

- Visual depictions of non-marital sex or scenes implying non-marital sex were three times more common than scenes depicting or implying marital sex.
- Visual references to voyeurism, transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, bondage and/or sado-masochism, and prostitution outnumbered visual references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 1.8:1.

### CBS

#### VERBAL

- References to non-marital sex were four times as common as references to marital sex (4.6:1).
- References to adultery were nearly as common as references to marital sex (0.9:1).
- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping, prostitution, threesomes, transsexuals/



transvestites, bestiality, and necrophilia combined outnumbered references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 2:1.

## **VISUAL**

- Visual depictions of non-marital sex or scenes implying non-marital sex were 7.5 times more common than scenes depicting or implying marital sex.
- Scenes depicting or implying teen sex were as common as scenes depicting or implying sex between married partners.
- Visual references to voyeurism, transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, bondage and/or sado-masochism, and prostitution outnumbered visual references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 3:1.

## **CW**

### **VERBAL**

- References to non-marital sex were 3.5 times more common than references to marital sex.
- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping, prostitution, threesomes, sex with transvestites or transsexuals, necrophilia, and bestiality were 4.5 times more common than references to marital sex.

### **VISUAL**

- Visual depictions of non-marital sex or scenes implying non-marital sex were 3 times more common than scenes depicting or implying marital sex.
- Scenes depicting or implying teen sex were as common as scenes depicting or implying sex between married partners.
- Visual references to voyeurism, transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, bondage and/or sado-masochism, and prostitution outnumbered visual references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 2:1.

## **Fox**

### **VERBAL**

- Fox broadcast only one reference to marital sex in 24.5 hours of programming, but 18 references to non-marital sex, and five references to adultery.

- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping, prostitution, threesomes, transsexuals/transvestites, bestiality, and necrophilia combined outnumbered references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 19:1.

## **VISUAL**

- The Fox network aired no scenes where straightforward sex between unmarried partners was the sole or primary focus of the scene and only two scenes where sex between married partners was the sole or primary focus. Visual references to voyeurism, transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, bondage and/or sado-masochism, and prostitution (all non-marital) were seven times more common than visual references to sex in marriage.

## **NBC**

### **VERBAL**

- In 46 hours of programming, NBC contained only one reference to marital sex, but 11 references to non-marital sex and one reference to adultery.
- References to incest, pedophilia, partner swapping, prostitution, threesomes, transsexuals/transvestites, bestiality, and necrophilia combined outnumbered references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 27:1.

### **VISUAL**

- Visual depictions of non-marital sex or scenes implying non-marital sex were 9 times more common than scenes depicting or implying marital sex.
- There were as many depictions of adults having sex with minors as there were scenes implying or depicting sex between married partners.
- Visual references to voyeurism, transvestites/transsexuals, threesomes, bondage and/or sado-masochism, and prostitution outnumbered visual references to sex in marriage by a ratio of 5:1.

## IV. EXAMPLES

### MARRIAGE

#### ***Carpoolers* — 10/9/2007 — ABC**

Laird: "I haven't heard the life-affirming sound of panties hitting the floor in over two weeks."

Aubrey: "Two weeks? I haven't seen my wife naked in two years!"

Dougje: "Well, what about sex?"

Aubrey: "When you've been married as long as I have, seeing your wife naked *is* having sex."

Aubrey begins to cry.

.....

Woman: "He told me he would rather have sex with a catcher's mitt."

Man: "No, what I said was I'd rather have sex with a mail box."

Gracen, their therapist: "On top of being a very hurtful comment, I think that's a federal crime."

Man: "It's a married thing, yo. You wouldn't understand."

Gracen: "No, yo. I'm, I'm married. I'm just not wearing my ring."

Woman: "Oh, I get it. You see women like me in crumbling marriages all day long, and if you don't wear your ring it makes it easier to nail us."

Gracen: "No, Sue, I don't want to nail you."

Her husband: "That makes two of us."

#### ***Private Practice* — 9/26/2007 — ABC**

Ken and Leslie are having trouble conceiving, so they go to a clinic to have Leslie artificially inseminated.

The clinic staff doesn't know that Ken is married. Ken dies while trying to leave a sperm deposit with the clinic. Leslie insists on having the sperm extracted from his dead body. While they go through the legal wrangling of determining whether Leslie is legally entitled to his sperm, Ken's wife intercedes.

Wife: "He told me he wanted to find himself. Turns out he wanted to find me, only fifteen years younger and half as smart."

#### ***Big Shots* — 9/27/2007 — ABC**

Duncan is with his ex-wife, Lisbeth in the wine cellar while a party is going on upstairs.

Lisbeth: "Do you think they can hear us?"

Duncan: "Only if we keep doing it right..."

Lisbeth is sitting on a countertop straddling Duncan, who is standing up. He begins to put his hand up Lisbeth's dress.

Lisbeth: "If we did it like this when we were married, we might still be married."

.....

Duncan later tells his friends, "When Lisbeth and I were married, she couldn't have been less interested in sex. But now that we're single again... Mmmm... We can't keep our hands off each other."

Brody: "Then maybe you should remarry her."

Duncan: "Yeah, right. Then sex in the wine cellar turns into 'Don't touch me, I'm exfoliating.'"

**Big Shots — 10/25/2007 — ABC**

Karl: "How's this? My shrink ordered me to have sex with my wife."

Duncan: "So what's the problem?"

Karl: "In the best of times, our sex life wasn't fantastic. And that was before Marla. Now that I've been on the Matterhorn, Mr. Toad's Wild Ride may not be wild enough. I'm the only person in America having G-rated sex. And the last time I had that was 6 months ago."

**Cold Case — 9/20/2007 — CBS**

A girl who was a member of teen chastity club is being divorced by her husband who says the marriage was never consummated.

**How I Met Your Mother — 10/15/2007 — CBS**

Marshall: "I am not irrelevant! If Lily and I have sex twice a week, which, let's be honest, we all know is being conservative, and we've been together 10 years, plus 17 more times on the honeymoon, minus the two-week drought when I said the checker at the grocery store looked like a young Lily, then, we have had sex a total of, wait for it, 1053 1/2 times. My mom called once. But that's more times than Barney has ever had sex. And to your point, Ted, Lily is a quality girl. I win."

Barney: "It doesn't count."

Ted: "It counts. As one. You've had sex once. How was it?"

**Rules of Engagement — 10/22/2007 — CBS**

Audrey tells her husband Jeff that Teresa and her husband are swingers. Then she tells him that Mary and her husband only have phone sex. Jeff asks her if she talks about their sex life.

Audrey: "Tonight I told them that when you sweat during sex, your chest hair looks like the rain forest."

Jeff: "And?"

Audrey: "That's it."

Jeff: "That's how you compete with swinging and phone sex? Sweaty chest hair?"

Audrey: "What do you want me to tell them?"

Jeff: "I don't know. Something that includes the words 'satisfied,' 'exhausted,' or maybe 'filthy.'"

**Bones — 9/25/2007 — Fox**

Investigator: "Did you consummate the marriage?"

Montenegro: "A full moon, tropics, yeah. There was definite consummation activity."

A private investigator is talking to Montenegro about her marriage to a man she can't remember.

## **INFIDELITY/ADULTERY**

### ***Boston Legal* — 9/25/2007 — ABC**

Denny and Alan talking about Alan's sexual encounter in the elevator:

Denny: "Right in the elevator?"

Alan: "I know. I'm in a monogamous relationship, for God's sake. One founded very much on trust."

Denny: "Alan, here's the thing about monogamy. It only works if you cheat."

### ***Big Shots* — 9/27/2007 — ABC**

Karl, in bed with his mistress Marla, answers her questions about his marriage.

Marla: "Can I ask you a question, Karl? Do you still sleep together?"

Karl: "No. I told you, not in months. And to be honest, after being with you, I'm not even sure if we were doing it right to begin with."

Marla: "But you still do other things with her, right? And I love you so much I want to do those things with you, too."

Karl: "To tell you the truth, the only thing we do together anymore is couples therapy two mornings a week."

### ***Desperate Housewives* — 10/07/2007 — ABC**

Gabrielle and Carlos are shown lying together. Carlos is bare-chested, and Gabrielle is in her underwear. It is implied that they just had sex.

Carlos: "Oh, I gotta get back. I told Edie I was just going for a jog. Do I look sweaty enough for a five mile jog?"

Gabrielle: "Yeah, unfortunately it's my sweat. When are you going to dump her?"

Carlos: "It's complicated, okay? Besides, I don't see you in any big hurry to dump Victor."

Gabrielle: "Generally speaking, women don't leave their husbands for guys who have girlfriends. Just boot the bitch. What are you afraid of?"

### ***Dirty Sexy Money* — 9/26/2007 — ABC**

Patrick Darling, a married man running for U.S. Senate, is shown in bed with his transsexual girlfriend. It is implied that they are naked under the bed sheets and that they just had sex.

### ***Two and a Half Men* — 10/1/2007 — CBS**

Evelyn greets a woman and asks her how married life is. The woman describes it as one long honeymoon.

Evelyn turns to Charlie and says: "That's because she bangs a different groom every night."

Charlie holds out his hand and introduces himself to her.

### ***Journeyman* — 9/24/2007 — NBC**

Olivia comes home and begins to change clothes. She is shown in her underwear. Dan and Olivia lie down on the bed and begin to kiss. Dan, who travels through time, notices his wedding band, apparently considering the fact that he is married to another woman in the future.

## **NON-MARITAL**

### ***Grey's Anatomy* — 10/04/2007 — ABC**

Meredith and Derek are shown in bed together under the sheets. It is implied that they just had sex.

Meredith: "This is the best break-up ever."

Derek: "I don't know why we didn't break-up a long time ago."

Derek turns off a light.

Meredith: "What are you doing?"

Derek: "Sleeping."

Meredith: "No, no sleep overs."

Derek: "Yes, come on, please. I've got to work tomorrow."

Meredith: "We agreed; no sleep overs. Broken-up people don't sleep over. Only sex. It's the only part of the relationship that will work."

### ***Cavemen* — 10/09/2007 — ABC**

Joel walks into a room where there is a ball pit. The viewer can hear the rustling of the balls and then Josie and Lyle pop up from under the balls. It is implied that they were having sex.

Joel: "This is the children's ball pit, okay? You guys can't be naked in here doing... that."

Kyle: "I didn't think it was against policy."

Joel: "Well, I didn't think it had to be stated outright."

Josie: "We promise we won't do it again."

Kyle: "Not during store hours."

Joel: "What? Are you guys out of your minds?"

Kyle: "Come on, dude – like you've never thought about doing it in here before?"

Joel: "No! I haven't. Now, I'm sorry, but you're both fired. Collect your stuff, let's go."

Kyle: "Whoa, whoa, hang on. As long as we're fired, do you mind if we finish?"

Joel: "Yes."

Josie: "Yes, we can finish? Or yes, you mind?"

### ***Bionic Woman* — 10/3/2007 — NBC**

Jamie gets drunk. She tells the bartender that there is no such thing as "Mr. Right." She says that from now on it's "Mr. Right Now." Just then an attractive man walks up to the bar. Moments later Jamie and the man are shown kissing passionately in the bathroom. It is suggested that she is about to have sex with him.

### ***Las Vegas* — 9/28/2007 — NBC**

Danny and Dalinda are shown waking up in bed together. It is implied that they are both naked under the covers. Dalinda rolls on top of Danny and they begin moving in a manner that suggests intercourse. Danny asks if they can still have sex now that she is pregnant. She explains that they can up until her water breaks. Danny makes a comment about how big her breasts are now and how happy he is about it.

### ***The Game* — 10/15/2007 — CW**

Malik and Renee go to his apartment. There is a bed in the middle of the floor and sexy music is playing.

Malik: "Welcome to Maki's magic room, baby."

Renee: "Can I pull the rabbit out of your hat?"

Later, Melanie, Malik's mother, walks in on them having sex.

## **NON-MARITAL/ORAL SEX**

### ***Dirty Sexy Money* — 10/10/2007 — ABC**

Jeremy is tied up in bed with Natalie, his girlfriend. It is implied that they are going to have sex. His sister calls him, and Jeremy tells Natalie that she's going to keep calling until he picks up. Natalie picks up the phone and holds it to his ear.

Juliet: "I've left like, three messages."

Jeremy: "I'm sorry, I've been kind of tied up."

Juliet: "What are you doing?"

Jeremy: "I'm chilling with some freaks."

As Jeremy is talking to Juliet, Natalie is shown taking an ice cube out of a cup, running it down his torso, and kissing the trail of water it leaves behind. She moves down out of the frame and it is implied that she is going to perform oral sex on him.

Jeremy: "This is not going to end well." Jeremy opens his mouth in pleasure, implying that Natalie is performing oral sex on him.

### ***The Game* — 10/8/2007 — CW**

Kelly: "So Kenny's your Deep Throat?"

Tasha: "Black women don't do that! That's nasty."

## **PROSTITUTION**

### ***Boston Legal* — 9/25/2007 — ABC**

Denny: "Oh, we're so right for each other, Cynthia. You're hot, I'm in heat, we're a match waiting to ignite."

Cynthia: "Oh, Denny. I have a career and my career is very important to me."

Denny: "What do you do?"

Cynthia: "Men. Rich men. [Denny groans with pleasure.] No, don't get me wrong. I went out with you because I find you funny, and attractive... And I'm a huge sucker for power. But if you want to have sex, it'll cost you five thousand dollars."

Denny: "Five thousand? What if you stayed a power sucker inside the car?"

Cynthia: "Twenty five hundred."

### ***Big Shots* — 9/27/2007 — ABC**

Duncan: "I was tired, so I pulled into a truck stop for some coffee to keep me awake for the drive home... There was a woman there. Dark, beautiful, sexy as hell... she smiled at me and we began to talk a little..."

In a flashback, a woman is seen approaching Duncan in a dark parking lot. She appears to be a prostitute.

James: "Don't tell me she was a pro."

Duncan: "I was lonely. One thing led to another, and before I knew it, we were in the men's room stall for a little... business transaction."

In a flashback, Duncan and the prostitute are shown going into a bathroom stall. The camera pans across the bathroom, showing the woman on her knees and Duncan's foot rocking back and forth. Duncan can be heard moaning and saying, "Oh, oh, oh!" A state trooper comes in and arrests Duncan. As he is being escorted out, the prostitute is shown standing at the urinal.

Duncan: "This dark, beautiful woman was full of surprises. Unfortunately, her penis was one of them."

Brody: "You got a knobber from a tranny?"

**Law & Order: Special Victims Unit — 10/9/2007 — NBC**

A high school teacher is impregnated by one of her students. Investigators assume she seduced the minor, but it is later revealed that he raped her, and that he has had sex with dozens of prostitutes.

Shane talks to George about his sex addiction

Shane: "I was on the computer one day when I was 10 and this pop-up appeared. It was a video of this guy and girl screwing."

George: "Do you remember how that made you feel?"

Shane: "I got excited. You know, I wanted to do what they were doing."

George: "Do you think that is why you spent so much time looking at porn on the Internet?"

Shane: "Yeah, it's amazing. Every day I find something new."

George: "How many times a day do you masturbate?"

Shane: "I don't know, five, six, sometimes more."

George: "Even if you're at school?"

Shane: "Yeah, if I'm in class and I get the urge I just ask to go to the bathroom."

George: "How did you feel when you found out you had gonorrhea?"

Shane: "I was scared."

George: "Scared enough to stop having sex with prostitutes?"

Shane: "I tried. I couldn't."

**INCEST****Ugly Betty — 9/27/2007 — ABC**

Amanda: "If Bradford is my father that makes Daniel my brother -- who I slept with... a lot. And that's the kind of dirty that don't wash clean."

Marc: "Okay, first of all, he'd be your half-brother... already a little better, right? And second, I gotta say, kinda hot."

**Aliens in America — 10/01/07 — CW**

The Paladino twins talk to Justin, remarking on his sister Claire's breasts.

First twin: "You don't love those? What, are you gay?"

Justin: "No, I'm not gay."

2nd twin: "Are you on that?"

Justin: "My sister?"

1st twin: "Oh, you gotta get on that."

2nd twin: "Man, if she was our sister, I'd be up in her room every night."

**American Dad — 10/7/2007 — Fox**

Steve masturbates to a nude portrait of his sister. He is seen carrying the picture out of the bathroom along with a box of tissues. Inside the bathroom candles are lit and the toilet can be heard gurgling as it flushes. He looks at the nude picture of Hayley and sighs.

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Steve rubs his nipple while looking at the nude picture of Hayley in the dining room.

Roger: "It's obvious what you have to do Steve, you have to kill yourself."

Steve: "What? Why? Nobody saw."

Roger: "God saw..."

## **THREESOME**

### ***Dirty Sexy Money* — 10/17/2007 — ABC**

Jeremy and Natalie kiss passionately in the restroom of a club. They move into a stall and hear someone else enter the bathroom.

Jeremy: "Someone just came in."

Natalie: "So we'll have a three-way?"

### ***Friday Night Lights* — 10/5/2007 — NBC**

Lyla: "What have you done recently, Tim?"

Tim: "I had a three-way with the Straton Sisters... Hey, uh, just so you know, you're still number one. You're still the best I've ever had."

## **VOYEURISM/THIRD PARTIES PRESENT**

### ***Big Shots* — 10/04/2007 — ABC**

Brody: "Ew! Are you kidding me!"

Duncan: "I panicked. I didn't know what else to do."

Brody: "So you slept with her with me in the room?"

Duncan: "I was trying to distract her so you could get out of the apartment."

### ***Ugly Betty* — 10/04/2007 — ABC**

Christina and Betty are hiding under Wilhelmina's bed.

Wilhelmina who is engaged to another man, enters with her bodyguard. They have sex on the bed, with Christina and Betty underneath it. Betty sends Christina a text message reading "Two hours?"

The viewer sees the bottom of the bed moving up and down, hitting Christina in the head. It is implied that Wilhelmina and her lover are still having sex.

## **ADULT/CHILD**

### ***30 Rock* — 10/4/2007 — NBC**

Describing a new TV show, Jack says "'MILF Island': 25 super-hot moms, 50 8th grade boys -- no rules."

### ***ER* — 10/4/2007 — NBC**

The mother of the dead boy runs into an adjacent trauma room to yell at the woman who was in the car with him. The woman appears to be his teacher. The mother tells the woman that she is going to prison because the boy was only 16. She mentions that there were pictures and e-mails exchanged. The teacher says that she is having his baby.



## **KINKY/FETISHISTIC**

### ***Bones — 10/9/2007 — Fox***

Bones and Booth investigate a murder within a community of fetishists. Men and women are shown dressed up in bridles and other such horse accoutrements. Booth and Bones are interviewing the woman who was Mr. Ed's groom.

Ann: "We met online over a year ago...We were a match: Compatible in every way. You have no idea how hard it is to find the perfect pony... Mr. Ed was easy to handle but he wasn't mindlessly obedient... And yes, we had sex if that's your next question."

Booth: "When did you first meet in person so that you could, you know, ride him?"

Ann: "Six months ago...I fell in love with him."

Booth: "Meaning what? A little light whipping?"

Ann: "When I say 'love' I don't mean romantically. I mean the way a young girl feels about her first pony."

Bones: "Have you ever heard of anything like one pony fighting another?"

Ann: "No, pony-play is not like that... The night Ed took off I was in the stables with him. I'd worked him hard that day and was rubbing him down which is when she caught us."

Bones: "Did you know he was married?"

Ann: "I didn't want to marry the man. I just wanted to play with the pony."

Booth: "How did he react when he saw his wife?"

Ann: "He never broke character."

Booth: "What?"

Bones: "He remained a pony..."

### ***Aliens in America — 10/22/2007 — CW***

Raja gets upset about the way Justin is talking about Anita.

Raja: "Oh, so draping your genitals across somebody's forehead is not degrading?"

Justin: "Not when you love each other."

### ***My Name is Earl — 10/11/2007 — NBC***

Joy is shown in a motel room waiting for Tim to come out of the bathroom for sex. Tim comes out in a baby outfit.

## V. Conclusion

Throughout much of the history of broadcast television, the networks adhered to a voluntary code of conduct which stipulated that respect should be maintained for the sanctity of marriage and the value of the home; that divorce should not be treated casually or justified as a solution for marital problems; that illicit sex relations should not be treated as commendable; and sex crimes and abnormalities should be viewed as unacceptable program material. Even with the limitations of the NAB Code of Conduct, television writers were able to tell relevant, meaningful stories that explored the vast expanse of human experience.

Today's television programming is squarely on the opposite end of that spectrum. Sexual content on television is predominantly extra-marital; the institution of marriage is regularly mocked, undermined, and denigrated; adulterous relationships are treated sympathetically; and criminal sexual behavior such as sex with minors or prostitutes fuel story lines on many popular series.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children in the United States watch nearly 4 hours of television a day. By the time a child reaches age 8 he or she will have seen 58,400 scenes of sexual content.

Given the prevalence of sexual messages that undermine marriage and celebrate promiscuity and high-risk behavior, this statistic should alarm all parents and grandparents of young children.

Since the Federal Communications Commission began more vigorous enforcement of federal broadcast decency laws, executives from the major broadcast networks have made dire predictions of the end of the broadcast medium and the "chilling" effect of enforcement on freedom of speech and artistic expression — but clearly the FCC's enforcement actions to date have done little or nothing to deter broadcasters from exploring once-taboo subject matter, and FCC enforcement has stalled in the face of court challenges from the networks.

Broadcasters also feel unconstrained by time of day. The once sacrosanct "Family Hour" is no more, and thematically mature content, sexually suggestive imagery, and graphic sexual dialogue now air throughout prime-time viewing hours — regardless of how many children are in the viewing audience.

Broadcasters, knowing television's ability to influence behavior, could be more careful in their treatment of sexual situations during prime-time hours when impressionable children are in the viewing

audience, opting for less graphic visual content, and favor storylines that don't encourage promiscuity, glamorize criminality, or denigrate monogamy. The American people should hold the networks and their local broadcast affiliates accountable for pushing questionable content into their homes over the publicly-owned broadcast airwaves.

Advertisers, too, must be held accountable for the messages they underwrite with their advertising dollars and the social cost of supporting those messages. Sponsors unquestionably do have a say in broadcast content because when all is said and done, the broadcasters' ultimate audience is not the American television viewing public — it is corporate America, and the networks' success as a business depends upon their ability to sell their product to advertisers. As long as advertisers are willing to associate their brand names and corporate image with salacious sexual content, networks will continue to produce it. Only when corporate sponsors band together in the name of responsible entertainment can we expect to see meaningful change from the broadcast industry.

It is too late to put the genie back in the bottle — and no one is advocating a return to the halcyon days of *Father Knows Best*, but television can and must do better... because our children are watching.

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*HAPPILY NEVER AFTER: How Hollywood Favors Adultery and Promiscuity Over Marital Intimacy on Prime Time Broadcast Television* was researched and written by Melissa Henson, PTC Director of Communications and Public Education.

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## FOOTNOTES:

- 1) "TV, Magazines Are Teens' Manual for Sex, Survey Says," *Chicago Tribune Co.*, June 25, 1996.
- 2) The 2003 Common Sense Media Poll of American Parents, May 2003. <http://www.common sense media.org/about/press/ParentspollMay212003.ppt>
- 3) <http://www.newyorkmetro.com/lifestyle/sex/annual/2005/15079/index.html>
- 4) Study by the Heritage Foundation based on the government funded National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health
- 5) Prime time begins at 8:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific (7:00 Central and Mountain) and ends at 11:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific (10:00 Central and Mountain), Monday through Saturday. On Sunday, prime time begins at 7:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific (6:00 Central and Mountain). Stations affiliated with Fox and the CW do not air network programming during the last hour of prime time.

## VI. Appendix

<b>TABLE 1</b>			
<b>Programs Missing Content Descriptors by Network</b>			
<b>NETWORK</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Sexual Dialogue: No "D" Descriptor</b>	<b>Visual Sexual Content: No "S" Descriptor</b>
<b>8:00 HOUR</b>			
ABC	13	15%	38%
CBS	18	0%	11%
CW	15	13%	20%
Fox	22	5%	18%
NBC	12	33%	17%
<b>9:00 HOUR</b>			
ABC	17	71%	35%
CBS	31	16%	39%
CW	19	21%	26%
Fox	13	8%	8%
NBC	16	38%	25%
<b>10:00 HOUR</b>			
ABC	19	11%	26%
CBS	27	7%	15%
NBC	21	33%	29%

<b>TABLE 2</b>						
<b>Depictions and Discussions of Married versus Non-Married Sex</b>						
	<b>DIALOGUE</b>			<b>VISUAL</b>		
	<b>Marital</b>	<b>Non-Marital</b>	<b>Adultery</b>	<b>Marital</b>	<b>Non-Marital</b>	<b>Adultery</b>
<b>ABC</b>						
8:00	9	16	6	1	6	0
9:00	16	26	20	5	12	2
10:00	16	32	78	12	37	7
<b>CBS</b>						
8:00	1	13	0	0	2	0
9:00	8	23	5	1	6	0
10:00	0	5	3	1	7	0
<b>CW</b>						
8:00	0	0	0	0	0	0
9:00	2	7	1	1	3	0
<b>Fox</b>						
8:00	1	10	5	0	0	1
9:00	0	8	0	2	0	0
<b>NBC</b>						
8:00	0	4	1	0	0	0
9:00	0	1	0	0	4	0
10:00	1	6	0	1	5	1

\*Table 2 does not contain all data points used in the analysis.

## More PTC Special Reports

The PTC has published many highly acclaimed Special Reports, all of which received nationwide attention and sparked the current national debate concerning broadcast indecency, localism, cable à la carte, the television ratings system, and the absence of family programming.

### Recent PTC Special Reports

#### ***The Rap on Rap • April 10, 2008***

The PTC, in partnership with the Enough is Enough Campaign, released shocking new data about BET and MTV daytime music video programming. As recently as March 2008, children who watched BET's *Rap City* and *106 & Park* and MTV's *Sucker Free on MTV* were bombarded with adult content - sexual, violent, profane or obscene - once every 38 seconds.

#### ***Rating the Top 20 Most Popular Prime Time Broadcast TV Shows Watched by Children Ages 2-17 • 2007***

The PTC's ratings are based on an objective quantitative and qualitative analysis of the frequency and explicitness of foul language, sexual content, and violence present in each series. The PTC also takes into consideration time slot, target audience, themes and plotlines of each program it rates.

#### ***The Alarming Family Hour...No Place for Children • September 2007***

The PTC's sixth analysis of Family Hour programming. The study sample included all entertainment programs originally airing on the six major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, CW, and My Network TV) in the Family Hour during three separate two-week periods of the 2006-2007 television season.

#### ***PTC Reveals Best and Worst TV Advertisers: Companies Must Be Responsible for the TV Content They Sponsor • August 8, 2007***

This annual report ranks advertisers according to how frequently they sponsor wholesome, family-oriented television shows or those containing sexually graphic, violent or profane material on broadcast television.

#### ***The Ratings Sham II • TV Executives Still Hiding Behind a System That Doesn't Work • April 16, 2007***

The PTC found that content descriptors are not being consistently used by any of the broadcast networks during prime time viewing hours. Two-thirds (67%) of the shows reviewed for this analysis containing potentially offensive content lacked one or more of the appropriate content descriptors.

#### ***Dying to Entertain: Violence on Prime Time Broadcast Television 1998-2006 • January, 2007***

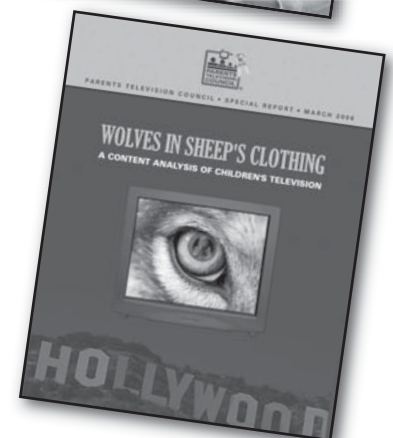
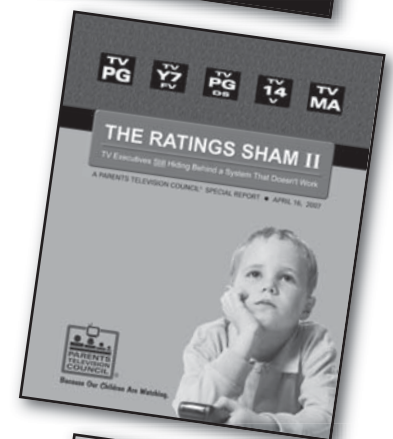
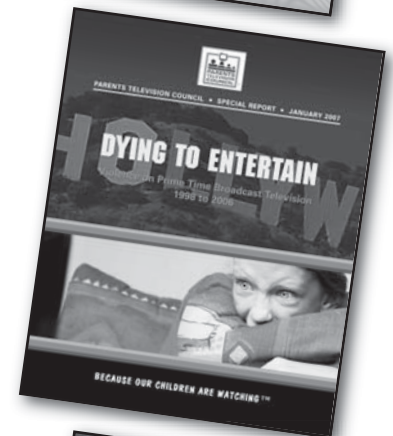
The PTC's second examination of TV violence during prime time on the six major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, UPN and the WB). Using the previous report, *TV Bloodbath* (released in December 2003 and analyzing content from the 1998, 2000, and 2002 television seasons) as a baseline, the PTC discerned some longitudinal trends and qualitative differences over the past eight years.

#### ***Faith in a Box: Entertainment Television & Religion 2005-2006 • December 2006***

This, the seventh study by the Parents Television Council on the treatment of religion in prime-time broadcast entertainment programming, examines the treatment of religious matters from the beginning of the fall season in 2005 throughout an entire year. Religious subject matter was divided into five categories: Faith, Clergy, Laity, Institutions and Doctrine, and Miscellaneous.

#### ***Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: A Content Analysis of Children's Television • March 2, 2006***

The PTC set out to discover exactly what young children are seeing on programming designed uniquely for them. PTC focused on entertainment programming for school-aged children aged 5-10 on broadcast television and expanded basic cable - for before-school, after-school, and Saturday morning programming. Eight networks — four broadcast and four cable — offer programming matching that criteria: ABC, Fox, NBC, WB, ABC Family, Cartoon Network, Disney Channel and Nickelodeon. The results were staggering. In the 443.5 hours of children's programming analyzed by the PTC there were 3488 instances of violence — an average of 7.86 violent incidents per hour.



### ***I Want My Foul TV: More Evidence Proving Cable Industry Campaign to Promote Responsibility is a Sham • August 11, 2005***

The results of a six month study of MTV original programming which shows that the cable industry's \$250 million dollar campaign to promote reliance on the V-chip and ratings system is a complete sham. The PTC's review of 136 MTV shows, representing more than 70 hours of original programming, revealed expletive-laden programming — both partially-bleeped and non-bleeped profanity — that occurred approximately once every three minutes with no language warnings to parents.

## **State of the Industry Reports**

*TV Bloodbath: Violence on Prime Time Broadcast TV*

*The Blue Tube: Foul Language on Prime Time Network TV*

*Sex Loses its Appeal: A State of the Industry Report on Sex on TV*

## **Reports on Top 10 Best and Worst Shows on Primetime Network TV**

2004-2005 Season  
2003-2004 Season  
2002-2003 Season  
2001-2002 Season  
2000-2001 Season  
1999-2000 Season  
1998-1999 Season  
1997-1998 Season  
1996-1997 Season

## **Reports on Cable TV**

*I Want My Foul TV- More Evidence Proving Cable Industry Campaign to Promote Responsibility is a Sham*

*MTV Smut Peddlers: Targeting Kids with Sex, Drugs and Alcohol*

*Basic Cable Awash in Raunch*

*Top Ten Best & Worst Cable Shows of the 2001-2002 TV Season*

*Prime Time Cable TV Wired for Raunch*

## **Reports on Reality TV**

*Reality TV: Race to the Bottom*

*Harsh Reality: Unscripted TV Reality Shows Offensive to Families*

## **TV Ratings Reports**

*The Ratings Sham II – 2007*

*The Ratings Sham: TV Executives Hiding Behind a System That Doesn't Work – 2005*

*Unintended Consequences – 1999*

*Bigger Isn't Better: The Expanded TV Ratings System – 1998*

*Ratings Reality Check: A TV Ratings Report Card – 1997*

## **TV Advertisers Reports**

*PTC Reveals Best & Worst TV Advertisers – 2007*

*PTC Ranks Top Ten Best/Worst Advertisers – 2006*

*PTC Ranks Top Ten Best/Worst Advertisers – 2005*

*Top 10 Best and Worst Advertisers of 2001-2002*

## **Reports on Religion**

*Faith in a Box - A Study on Entertainment Television and Religion:*

2005-2006 Season

2004-2005 Season

1998-1999 Season

1997-1998 Season

1996-1997 Season

1995-1996 Season

## **Other**

*Father's Day Study: More TV Fathers are Involved in TV Family Life*

*Ay Caramba! Spanish-Language TV Just as Risky as English-Language Fare*

*Dereliction of Duty: How the Federal Communications Commission Has Failed the Public*

*Kids in the Crosshairs: Children Still Targeted in Marketing of Adult Rated Entertainment*

*May Sweeps Round-Up*

*Father Knows Best - Latest PTC Study Shows More Positive Treatment of TV Dads*

*How and Why Howard Stern's TV Show Failed*

**For the latest PTC Special Reports and Publications, visit:**

**[www.ParentsTV.org](http://www.ParentsTV.org)**

## ABOUT THE PTC

The Parents Television Council is the nation's most influential advocacy organization protecting children against entertainment sex, violence, and profanity. Founded in 1995 to stem the dramatic rise in indecent programming, the PTC today has become one of the strongest watchdog organizations of the entertainment industry.

The PTC accomplishes its mission via two primary mechanisms: (1) by educating families so they can be more informed consumers of media; and (2) by motivating activism to reduce the amount and the degree of harmful and offensive content.

Through its comprehensive database of network prime time programming, the PTC makes available to sponsors and viewers an exhaustive list of network television shows that are considered socially responsible; that are uplifting rather than denigrating; that display positive role models; and are devoid of blatant sex, graphic violence, and profanity. With its powerful national coalition of more than one million members, national and local advertisers hear the PTC voice when they sponsor programs with harmful or offensive content. In many instances advertisers are unaware of the show's content and voluntarily pull their sponsorship of these negative messages.

The PTC works with the Hollywood creative community to encourage the production of programs that are appropriate for a family audience. When necessary, the PTC targets specific programs that contain egregious levels of sex, violence, and profanity by encouraging its members to contact the producers, network executives, and sponsors. It is a formula that has resulted in numerous shows being pulled off the air or rescheduled to a later time slot.

The PTC awards its Seal of Approval to producers, networks, and advertisers responsible for creating, broadcasting, and sponsoring programs with positive messages and that are free of strong sexual, violent, and profane material. The Seal is a highly sought-after award with strong economic benefits accruing to the honoree.

The Parents Television Council works closely with elected and appointed government officials to ensure enforcement of federal broadcast decency laws.

The PTC produces highly respected and objective analytical research on television content. Recent PTC studies have shown that foul language and violence on television has literally doubled in just the past four years. With PTC analysts watching every prime time television show and selected cable programming, the Parents Television Council is the leading authority on television content. Its videotape library chronicles every network prime time program since the organization's inception. It is considered one of the nation's foremost authorities for research and information on television content and advertising.

Yet much of the power of the organization comes from the PTC's ability to mobilize a grassroots outreach. With more than 36 chapters nationwide and growing, the PTC can, at a moment's notice, send a torrent of information to constituents across the country to address and respond to broadcast decency issues. These "feet on the street" carry the PTC message to their community; to local television affiliates; to national and local advertisers; and to local, state and federal officials.

Perhaps the PTC's most important role is to provide viewers with information about current television shows, films, video games, and other entertainment media. The PTC *Family*

*Guide* uses a concise system of "red light," "green light," and "yellow light" to rate television shows for foul language, sexual content, and violence. Families need only to log on to [www.parentstv.org](http://www.parentstv.org) to secure accurate, unbiased information about film and television content, as well as a list of pertinent information on important media issues.

The Parents Television Council does not believe in censorship. It strongly advocates free speech and free expression. What it does desire is a choice for families who do not want their children exposed to blatant sex, profuse violence or profanity. Adults should not be denied the right to consume any lawful media, but a balance must be struck to consider the public interest of protecting children from harmful content. Therefore the PTC advocates careful consideration of time, place and manner of adult-oriented content.

## Entertainment Tracking System: State-of-the Art Television Monitoring System

The PTC's ability to scientifically track network and selected cable programs for sex, violence, and profanity is directly attributable to its state-of-the-art monitoring system, ETS. Conceived and designed by the PTC, ETS, or Entertainment Tracking System, allows the Parents Television Council to monitor every instance of sex, violence and profanity in network programs, and in many cable shows.

This research allows the organization to produce important studies such *What Are Your Children Watching: Rating the Top 20 Most Popular Prime Time Broadcast TV Shows, Watched by Children Ages 2-17*, *Basic Cable Awash in Raunch*, the groundbreaking *Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: A Content Analysis of Children's Television* and *MTV-Targeting Teens*.

Here's how it works: Every evening PTC VCRs record every prime time series on ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, PAX, UPN, the WB, as well as original programming on basic cable, including MTV. The following day, the PTC's entertainment analysts don their headsets, turn on their computers, grab the remote controls and set about the arduous work of transcribing every offensive word, every instance of sexual innuendo and violence in detail. These reports are fed into the PTC's custom-designed computer program.

The PTC is able to generate reports from the information collected by ETS. These reports form the basis of the organization's comprehensive studies, e-mail alerts, television recommendations and newsletters. ETS reports are provided to the Federal Communications Commission and other federal regulatory agencies, as they are the most reliable analysis of television programming available. Even the television networks do not have as comprehensive a resource as ETS.

Today the PTC programming archive consists of more than 110,000 hours of programming on nearly 17,000 video tapes. There is no other organization in the world that has this comprehensive library of television content analysis.

The organization will soon transfer all current video taped programming into digital. It is a major undertaking requiring staff time and significant monetary resources. But as the repository of the most comprehensive archive of television programming, it's a responsibility the PTC sees as important. ETS is just one of the powerful tools that the PTC uses to affect positive change in the quality of television broadcasting.

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**[www.ParentsTV.org](http://www.ParentsTV.org)**®

The Parents Television Council (PTC) is the nation's most influential advocacy organization protecting children against sex, violence, and profanity on television and in other media because of their documented and long-term harmful effects. Founded in 1995 to stem the dramatic rise in indecent programming, the PTC today has become one of the strongest watchdog organizations of the entertainment industry.

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