

A STUDY OF THE AMOUNT
OF VIOLENCE ON FOUR SELECTED
TELEVISION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was: (1) to determine the amount of violence on the television programs: Kojak, Starsky and Hutch, The Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour, and The All New Superfriends during the Fall of 1977; (2) to compare the amount of violence between the dramatic prime time presentations Kojak and Starsky and Hutch with the Saturday morning cartoon shows, The Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour and the All New Superfriends; and (3) to determine whether there is more violence on two prime time dramatic presentations or whether there is more violence on two children's Saturday morning cartoons.

The selection of these programs was based on their longevity on the air, popularity with viewing audience, and recent events concerning one of the programs.

The method used to determine the amount of violence in these programs was to tabulate each violent incident viewed on an individual program. Each violent incident was recorded on a monitoring instrument developed by the National Parent Teacher Association. The monitoring instrument divides violent incidents by categories.

The results of this study indicate the the two children's Saturday morning cartoons reviewed are more violent than the two dramatic prime time programs reviewed.

The Review of the Literature and Results of this Study have concluded that there is a great deal of violence in T.V. programming. More study is recommended to determine the effects of T.V. violence on the young viewer.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem and Definitions of Terms Used

There has been a conflict for many years about the amount of violence on television programming. Most of this criticism has been directed at selected dramatic programs in prime time viewing, or at children's Saturday morning cartoons. There has been a great deal of criticism of Saturday morning cartoons because many believe Saturday morning cartoons, viewed primarily by very young children, have more overt acts of violence than dramatic programs presented during prime time evening viewing.

Recently the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) began a program to inform the public and arouse public indignation over the amount of television violence. The National PTA is doing several things in an effort to get the major television networks to change their program format. They have developed an individual monitoring form for their members, or for that matter anyone who chooses to use it. The object is to monitor television programming and determine the violence in various programs. The method for doing this is simply to classify and categorize various types of violence. The viewer simply has to judge what kind of violence is occurring and indicate it on the monitoring form. When the one doing the monitoring finishes viewing a program they add up the number of incidents of violence in each category. This quickly gives one a picture of the type of program they are watching and whether it is suitable for family viewing.

The monitoring form also includes a section of questions about the quality of violence viewed and the consequences of that violence. Basically the questions are concerned with the necessity of the violent acts. Who initiated the violence? What were the consequences of the violence? Were the violent episodes necessary to the story? Did the program treat the violence in a realistic manner? Were the "good guys" initiators of the violent acts?

Each question is followed by a series of choices that the individual viewer can check off and use to decide whether the program meets their standards or not.

If the viewer decides that what they have been viewing does not meet their expectations the monitor form also tells them how to take action. The National PTA is suggesting to its members to write letters to the local stations urging them to change their programming or even drop it from their programming if it is offensive or inappropriate to viewers, particularly young viewers. The form also suggests that letter writers should compliment good programming or give examples of what they would like to see on television.

The monitor device also has a section to keep track of advertisers for a particular program. The purpose of this is to find out which advertisers sponsor the most violent programs. Here again, if the viewer doesn't like what they see, the National PTA is urging viewers to write to advertisers and express their dislike of programs with too much violence. Advertisers are very much affected by viewer tastes. If the

individual viewer doesn't like the quality of programming they are also urged to go to the F.C.C. and voice their complaints.

The National PTA is organizing T.V. station license challenges and national boycotts of products advertised on offending programs.

They have over six and one-half million members so it will be interesting to observe how successful the National PTA will be in its attempt to force the major networks to change their programming. The final judgement will have to be delayed until further observation and study can take place.

The American Medical Association has also moved into the picture. The organization has asked ten major corporations to review their policies about sponsoring excessively gory shows. The AMA has gone so far to suggest that television viewing may be dangerous to our mental health, "T.V. violence is both a mental health problem and an environmental issue." Dr. Richard Palmer, President of the AMA. "T.V. has been quick to raise questions of social responsibility with industries which pollute the air. In my opinion, television . . . may be creating a more serious problem than air pollution."¹

With organizations such as the AMA and National PTA beginning to throw their strength and talents behind an effort to change some television programming, it seems likely that the networks will take notice and begin to initiate change on their own. Perhaps that has already begun if one can judge from the new programs this fall.

It is not that television can't have its beneficial effects. That has been amply demonstrated by the showing earlier this year of the program Roots. That program commanded one of the largest viewing audiences any program has ever received. It also may have had a tremendous positive effect on its viewing audience if we are to judge polls taken after the program was over. Television can also do a great deal for children with programs like Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers. However, the problem is that television may have some very negative effects on viewers and particularly young viewers. Herein lies the problem.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem It was the purpose of this study:

(1) to determine the amount of violence on the television programs Kojak and Starsky and Hutch during the Fall of 1977; (2) to determine the amount of violence on the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour and the All New Superfriends; (3) to compare the amount of violence between the dramatic presentations Kojak and Starsky and Hutch with the Saturday morning cartoon shows, the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour and the All New Superfriends; and (4) to determine whether there is more violence on two prime time dramatic presentations, or whether there is more violence on two children's Saturday morning cartoon programs.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Violence In this study violence was defined as physical acts, or the threat of physical acts by humans or human-like characters designed to inflict physical injury or death on other humans or human-like characters or damage and destruction to property.

Prime time television Since this study deals with the amount of violence on two dramatic evening television programs, it has been defined as the viewing time between the hours of 7:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M.

Saturday morning cartoons Throughout this study Saturday morning cartoons refer to the hours between 7:00 A.M. and 11:00 A.M.

Acts of physical violence Acts of physical violence will refer to any fighting, beating, kicking, shoving or choking. It will also include specific acts of cruelty, rape, hostage and kidnapping.

Results of physical violence Results of physical violence shall indicate whether the person or persons attacked suffered, was wounded in any way, or was killed.

Weapons used or threatened Weapons used or threatened shall refer to any object which is being used in a threatening manner or has actually been used against a person or persons. This may include guns, knives, cars, bombs or other objects that may inflict harm in a person.

Violence to property Violence to property shall include arson, crashes (automobile, machine or bodies), theft, and acts of vandalism.

Violation of laws by law enforcement personnel Violation of laws by law enforcement personnel shall be defined as searches without warrants, illegal entry, and property seizure; persons arrested and not informed of their rights or giving coerced testimony; and traffic safety laws that have been violated.

Importance of the Study There have been many studies in recent years about the level of violence on television programming. Some of these studies go into great detail documenting the amount of violence in all television programming and attempting to show a relationship between the amount of violence observed on television by heavy viewers and human behavior. Many researchers believe there is a direct link between human behavior and the amount of television one watches. The purposes of this study are perhaps less encompassing, but nonetheless important. In this study an attempt was made to document the amount of violence on four television programs during the months of September and October, 1977. Two of the programs fall within prime time television programming and two of the programs are a part of Saturday morning cartoons.

When the actual amount of violence observed on these programs has been tabulated, a comparison between the two programs from evening prime time viewing and the two programs from Saturday morning cartoons can take place.

The purpose of this comparison will be to determine if the two evening dramatic presentations have more or less violence than the two selected Saturday morning cartoons and what the implications might be.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations in a study of this nature. Among them are the fact that not all networks are included in the study. There has been no attempt to exclude any of the major networks from this study. The programs used to make this study were chosen randomly. Neither was there an attempt to study

all programming during prime viewing time (7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.). Again the programs used during prime viewing time were chosen randomly.

A study including all major networks and all programs during prime viewing time would require a great deal more time and energy to complete. In all likelihood, such a study would also have to include portions of daytime television. Therefore, for these reasons the study shall be limited to recording the quantity of violence occurring on the selected programs during prime viewing time and children's Saturday morning cartoons, and comparing the level of violence between the two.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

The debate over the amount of television violence and how it affects behavior in our society has been going on longer than "Gunsmoke" has been around. In recent years there have been numerous studies to indicate that the amount of television violence is increasing. The significance of the problem has been underscored recently by the efforts of some to bring it into public focus.

Specifically, the National Parent Teacher Association and the American Medical Association have begun to focus their attention on the problem. Both organizations are involved in long term projects to monitor the amount of violence on television and both are studying the effects of television violence on human behavior. Particularly they are interested in the effect of television violence on the behavior of children. The American Medical Association has gone so far as to declare that the viewing of television violence may be dangerous to your health!

The problem has also been highlighted by the recent trial of Ronald Zamora in Miami, Florida. Ronald Zamora was arrested for the murder and robbery of an elderly Miami Beach woman in June of this year. He confessed to the police and was charged with first degree murder, burglary, robbery and possession of a firearm while committing a felony.

What has been described above perhaps doesn't seem very strange at first glance. All one has to do is pick up a daily newspaper and scan it casually to discover that cases such as this

one are happening everyday in our society. What is unusual about this case is the grounds upon which Ronald Zamora's defense attorney chose to defend him in court. Zamora's attorney, Ellis Rubin, claimed that the fifteen year old youth was innocent by reason of insanity, because he "was suffering from and acted under the influence of prolonged, intense, involuntary, subliminal television intoxicification."² Translated into layman's language, Rubin claimed Zamora was electronically "brainwashed" by television. "The tube became his parents and his school and his church. Pulling the trigger became as common to him as killing a fly." According to Rubin, Zamora, "was just acting out a script."³

What supposedly triggered this crime were two recent episodes of Kojak and a Dracula movie. Apparently Ronnie Zamora was something of a television addict. According to his parents, he watched an average of six hours of television a day. His favorite programs: Kojak, Baretta, and Starsky and Hutch.

Although television has been indicted in the past for its supposedly "lethal influence," this is the first time it has been used to defend someone's actions.

In another unrelated case, two men were accused of killing four brothers shortly after viewing a television dramatization of the Manson murders.

In the Zamora case, the defense attorney was never able to establish conclusively that television violence caused the boy to commit the crimes he did. As a result, some of the testimony and evidence attorney Rubin wished to use in Zamora's defense

was ruled inadmissible by the trial judge. Ronald Zamora was adjudged guilty of the charged crimes and will have to go to jail. The matter is not ended, however. The door has been opened and in the future others may use television and what one views on television to defend their actions.

In the past a great deal of confusion has surrounded the issue of T.V. violence because of the lack of a clear cut definition of the problem. A great deal of research is now being conducted in this area. Among the leading researchers is Dr. George Gerbner, from the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Gerbner has been plotting the amount of television violence for over a decade. He has come up with a body of evidence to suggest that television does effect human behavior.

Another study dealing with many aspects of television and its effects upon us was completed in 1972 by the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior.

Dr. Michael Rothenberg, a Child Psychiatrist at the University of Washington has reviewed 25 years of literature on the subject of television influence.

All of these studies and many more are beginning to suggest that television, and in particular, televised violence does indeed affect human behavior. Much of this research deals with the effect of television and children. This is the area where this study will concentrate.

According to Carol Kimmel, President of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the average school age child (from kindergarten age) will spend fifteen thousand hours in front of a television set through grade 12. Various other sources have estimated this figure to be between fifteen thousand and eighteen thousand hours. This is compared to eleven thousand hours that will be spent in the classroom.⁴ A Nielsen survey in November of 1976 indicated that the average pre-schooler watches fifty four hours of television per week. It has been estimated that by the time the average child reaches age 17, they will have witnessed at least eighteen thousand T.V. murders.⁵ This does not include muggings, fights, rapes, robberies, and beatings. By the time a child reaches age 17, they will have spent more time watching television than any other activity except sleep.

If one were to draw some conclusions from these statistics, it would be that television viewing has become a powerful influence on our beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

Much of the evidence collected in recent years dealing with the effects of television (over 2300 studies) deals with the anti-social or negative effects of television. Most showed that viewing television violence produces aggressive behavior among young people.

According to Dr. George Gerbner, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication, "Television has profoundly affected the way in which members of the human race learn to become human beings."⁶ Gerbner has been involved

in studying the amount of violence in television programming and its effects for more than a decade. His findings indicate a high level of violence in all television programming. This includes daytime television, childrens cartoons and prime time television.

The questions is just how much is violence a part of T.V. programming? This study concentrates on two areas - children's programs and prime time television.

Children's cartoons seem to have a great deal of violence in them. In studies going back to 1967, researchers found that violence increased in programming aimed specifically at children. Gerbner notes; "it is clear that children watching Saturday morning cartoons had the least chance of escaping violence or of avoiding the heaviest ... saturation of violence on all television."⁷ Over a three year period from 1967 to 1969, 95 cartoons were analyzed. Only two in 1967 and one each in 1968 and 1969 Did Not contain violence. By 1969, there was an average of one violent episode every two minutes on Saturday morning cartoons. The average cartoon had six times the violence rate of the average adult television drama hour (Comstock, 1972). In 1969, cartoons were responsible for more than one-half of all the violent episodes on television. The amount of violence varied by network, with one remaining consistently lower than the other two. The over all violence index showed CBS had the lowest amount of violence in its children cartoons. ABC generally had the most violent cartoons, although in 1969, NBC displaced it with more violence in its cartoons (Comstock, 1972).

In an analysis of Saturday morning children's shows in 1971, Dr. F. Earle Barcus found that "about three out of 10 segments were 'saturated' with violence and 71% had at least one instance of human violence with or without the use of weapons."⁸

The study also indicated that the violence never seemed permanently harmful. Only three acts of human violence resulted in any visible or permanent injuries. Dr. Barcus states, "since many characters were flattened by rocks, cars, or other objects, blown up by bombs and cannons, and lifted high in the sky by lift hooks. They simply seem immune to violence and pop back for the next dose . . . one is left with the impression that, after all, violence is harmless, since little permanent damage is done to the characters."⁹

Another study by John Schowalter, Yale Child Psychiatry Unit and Yale School of Medicine seems to support this view. Schowalter analyzed a six minute "Roadrunner" cartoon. He considered this to be the least frightening of the so-called preschool cartoons: "In minute one, a cannon blew his head off; in minute two he was pushed under a boulder; in minute three, he fell a long long way to plop in a puff of dust to the canyon floor; in minute four, he fell again and was later blown up; in minute five, he was run over by a truck and later crushed by a rock; and in minute six he was run over yet again to total eight alleged deaths in six minutes."¹⁰ Dr. Schowalter has concluded that the amount of violence and death children view on television desensitizes them and makes them seem callous when they have to deal with real death. Although many argue that violence and death are a part of life and television is only portraying real life Dr. Schowalter replies:

"Unfortunately, violence and death are often portrayed in the most unneutral forms and as the most obvious, if not the only, way to settle personal problems. Invariably absent are the damage, pain, grief, mourning, destruction, and other consequences of violence in real life . . . It is not that violence and death should never be shown on T.V., but that writers and producers of children's shows should take more into account what is already known about children's development."¹¹

In a 1976 study by Dr. Keith Osborn and Janie Osborn the authors attempted to find out whether the level of violence in children's Saturday cartoons had dropped appreciably since 1969 when a study was completed for Childhood Education and indicated Saturday morning T.V. was composed of high aggressive content. The study also found a high number of beatings, killings, monsters, and poor science fiction.

The survey recorded the offerings on prime time and Saturday morning cartoons for a period of two weeks. The number of deaths and violence was recorded for each program. The findings indicated that cartoons still dominate Saturday morning T.V. As pointed out, the 1969 Saturday morning cartoons were quite violent. The findings in the 1976 study reveal a substantial reduction in overt violence.

However, another more recent study by Gerbner disagrees (December 1976). He states that 9 out of every 10 cartoons still contain violence. The number of violent episodes per program is about 10 for children's cartoons. Gerbner states that roughly 85% of all leading characters in children's cartoons are still involved in some violence as they have been since he had to chart violence on T.V. in 1967. Roughly about 10% of the leading characters are still involved in killing. Gerbner also claims that the percentage of violent leading characters during weekend, daytime cartoons increased from a low of 65% in 1974 to 85% in 1976.¹²

The data for this study and others conducted by Dr. Gerbner comes from a violence index which he has developed to track the amount of violence on television.

Basically it works in the following manner. The first step was to investigate all violence in dramatic programs on prime time and weekend daytime programming: televised films, cartoons, plays and series for a selected amount of time. The significant traits of each violent incident are observed. The percent of programs containing violence is tabulated, the rate of violent episodes per program and per hour, the percent of characters engaged in any violence, either as perpetrators or as victims or as both, and percent of characters involved in killing. This includes those killed as well as killers. This information is used to devise a violence index. This is a single figure composed of the sum of all these measures.¹³ This has also been reduced to a formula: $PS = (\%P) + 2(R/P) + 2(R/H)$. PS is the program score and (%P) is the percent of programs containing violence. (R/P) is the rate of violent episodes per play and (R/H) is the rate per hour. The rates were doubled to raise the relatively low numerical value to an importance that the concepts of frequency and saturation deserve. The rest of the formula is expressed as $CS = (\%V) + (\%K)$. Here CS is the character score, (%V) represents leading characters committing violence, suffering violence or both and (%K) is those involved in killing either as killers or as victims or both.¹⁴ The violence index is obtained by adding the program score to the character score.

The violence index is now used by networks, congressional and other government agencies, and citizens' groups to follow the level of violence on television.

So far, the discussion in this study has centered around the amount of violence in children's Saturday morning cartoons. What about television during prime time viewing and its effect on the average viewer. This includes young children.

Criticism of the amount of televised violence can be found as far back as 1954. In that year a special subcommittee was established in congress to study the impact of television on the public mind. In 1954 the committee suggested a need for . . . a closer look at television programming. In 1961 the committee found more evidence to suggest that television programming was, indeed, violent. By 1964 it concluded, "the extent to which violence and related activities are depicted on television today has not changed substantially from what it was in 1961 . . ."15 The Interim Report of the Dodd Committee in 1965 also concluded: "It is clear that television, whose impact on the public mind is equal to or greater than that of any other medium, is a factor in molding the character, attitudes, and behavior patterns of America's young people."

The subcommittee also stated: "That the excessive amount of televised crime, violence and brutality can and does contribute to the development of attitudes and actions in many young people which pave the way for delinquent behavior."16

The Christian Science Monitor conducted a study in 1968 where staff members watched 74 1/2 hours of evening programs during the first week of the television season. They monitored 251 incidents of violence including threats. During this time there were 71 murders, killings, and suicides. Breaking it down by network, ABC in one evening had 46 incidents of violence and 11 killings. It was found that NBC devoted 56% of its evening scheduling to such programs, according to the Monitor study one incidence of violence occurred every 14.2 minutes and a killing every 45 minutes.17

Summarizing parts of the Surgeon General's Report on Television and Social Behavior from 1967 thru 1969 and published in 1972, they concluded:

1. The amount of violence on television didn't change dramatically from 1967 through 1969. The study found that over a three year period about 8 out of 10 plays contained violence, and violent episodes occurred at the rate of about five per day and eight per hour.
2. The frequency of lethal violence declined markedly and the pervasiveness of characters' participation in violence declined somewhat. (This is from 1967 through 1969). This means lethal violence dropped from two in ten leading characters involved in killing in 1967 to one in ten in 1968 and one in twenty in 1969. The percentage of characters involved in violence dropped from more than seven in ten in 1967 to more than six in ten in 1969. The actual number involved did not change however.
3. Grossly measured violence declined between 1967 and 1969. The index fell about 11% between 1967 and 1969. However, violent incidents remained constant. This was because of the reduced number of characters participating in violence and the reduction in killing.¹⁸

What has happened since this study was released in 1972? It seems that there is still a considerable amount of violence in television programming. A study by Keith Osborn and Janie Osborn for Childhood Education reported that prime viewing time contained a high incidence of violence. In 1976 another study was conducted by the same researchers and the 1969 study compared to 1976. They found that the T.V. death rate had dropped about 50% since 1969. 1969 television tended to show death in a quite visual manner, very bloody. In 1976, death was often discussed ex post facto. The deaths were seldom witnessed by the viewing audience, but rather referred to by the actors. The number of violent acts remained fairly constant from 1969 through 1976. However, again T.V. violence seems to be less bloody and graphic than in 1969. An interesting side note here however, is that the number of violent types of drama (action drama, crime drama, westerns) actually increased from 37 percent of prime viewing time in 1969 to 44 percent in 1976.¹⁹

Gerbner in a more recent survey found that after ten years of hearings and investigation television violence remains high.

In a December, 1976 article for the American Medical News, he claims that eight out of every ten network programs and nine of every ten cartoons still contained violence. The number of violent episodes per program was five. This number has remained constant since Gerbner began monitoring television programs in 1967. Roughly 65% of the leading characters in regular programming and 85% of the characters in childrens cartoons were still involved in violence. About 10% of the characters were directly involved in killing. This figure has also remained fairly constant since 1967.²⁰

There was a slight reduction in the amount of overall violence on T.V. However, this may be due to the fact that the amount of on-screen killing went down. During early prime time or the "family hour." The reduction in violence during early prime time viewing is offset by increases in violence after 9:00 PM in the evening and particularly about 10:00 PM. This seems to be the time slot where the networks are playing reruns of long playing and popular crime and action dramas. This includes Kojak, Hawaii Five-O, Police Story, The Rookies, The Invaders, and Baretta.

The pattern for the 1977 viewing season seems to be substantially unchanged. The early prime viewing time (7:00 PM to 10:00 PM) is devoted to more situation comedies and drama with a minimum of violence. However, the viewing time after 9:00 is another story. In the 9:00 PM to 11:30 period the incidence of programs with a great deal of violence tends to go up.

It would seem that many authorities on this subject are in agreement that there is a considerable amount of violent activity and violent episodes on current television programming. They are also in agreement that much of this television viewing is available to children. According to the most

recent Nielsen Survey (1977), 97 percent of U.S. households now own televisions (about 71.2 million). The survey also indicated that the average daily T.V. usage in the U.S. to be 6 1/3 hours.²¹ If we are to be exposed to this "blue flickering tube" for long periods of time what is the effect upon our attitudes and behavior. The National Parent Teacher Organization has begun in the past year a movement to find out the effects of T.V. violence on children and youth. Many people are beginning to question the amount of violence in T.V. programming as unnecessary to story development and injected merely to provide thrills or camouflage a weak plot.

Of great concern is what the continuous viewing of T.V. violence will do to children's sensitivity to human suffering and the ability to distinguish reality from fantasy. There is also concern that as children receive a steady diet of violence on television they will get a distorted perception of the difference between real and imagined violence. Real violence seen on T.V. news or in newspapers, or in the streets may fail to arouse a sense of compassion for victims or a desire to correct an injustice. A study completed recently by two psychologists, Ronald Drabman and Margaret Hanratty Thomas attempted to study the relationship between violence and violence in real life. The question they asked was, "to what extent does T.V. aggression make children more tolerant of the real thing." An experiment was conducted with 40 fifth graders from a white lower-middle class parochial school. The children were divided into two groups. One group was asked to watch a fifteen minute segment from a television detective series that contained shootings and many other acts of violence. The second group watched a fifteen minute segment of a baseball game.

After watching T.V., the experimenter told each child he had to leave for a while and would they mind keeping an eye on the kindergartners playing nearby. The child doing the watching was told that the small children were

being filmed by a camera and could be watched on a T.V. screen. The child was instructed to get help if anything went wrong. What followed was a staged videotaped sequence in which the kindergartners became more and more disorderly, screaming, fighting and kicking, until they apparently knocked over the camera and the monitor went blank. The purpose of this experiment was to see how long it would take the fifth grade babysitter to seek help after seeing real life violence. The results: those children who had watched the violent detective show took much longer to respond by seeking help from an adult than those who had watched the baseball game. Five children in the aggressive film group (2 boys and 3 girls) never went for help at all. Only one girl in the non-aggressive control group didn't seek help.²²

In another experiment with third and fourth graders, half of the children saw a violent Hopalong Cassidy film on a movie screen, while the rest saw no film at all. 58 percent of the control group children sought help before the kindergartners began to react violently to each other. The children who had viewed the movie aggression were much slower to react. 83 percent of this group didn't react until the kindergartners had actually come to physical blows. The conclusions of the experimenters Thomas and Drabman: 1. Perhaps violence on television teaches children that aggression is a way of life not to be taken seriously; 2. Perhaps real-life aggression is simply bland in contrast to the vicious violent on T.V.²³

What researchers are studying today is whether T.V. programs with a considerable level of violence may show the average young viewer who gets away with what, and against whom. Perhaps it teaches the role of the victim and the acceptance of violence as a social reality we must learn to live with.

George Gerbner and Larry Gross in a 1976 study determined that people who watch a lot of T.V. see the world as more dangerous and frightening than those who watch little. Heavy viewers are less trustful of their fellow citizens and more fearful of the real world. People who view evening network T.V. receive a heavy dosage of video violence. In 1976 it was determined that one half of all the characters on prime time were involved in some violence, one-tenth in killing. Approximately 20 percent of all T.V. characters were law enforcement officials. If one were to compare the actual population of this country to the actual number of law enforcement officials the data would reveal law enforcement officials to be about 1 percent. Heavy viewers of television were 18 percent more likely than light viewers to overestimate the number of males employed in law enforcement, regardless of age, sex, education, or reading habits. A light viewer was defined as one who viewed less than two hours per day and a heavy viewer was defined as one who viewed four or more hours a day. Heavy viewers seemed to perceive the real world as more dangerous than it really is. This may influence people's behavior. Heavy viewers of television also tend to believe that their own chances of being involved in some type of violence during any given week is much greater than light viewers. Heavy viewers were 33% more likely to have such fears.²⁴

A program that was shown in January of 1977 may support many of the ideas and conclusions expressed above. The program was "Death Wish." It starred Charles Bronson. A number of local network affiliates chose not to air the program because of the general theme and amount of violence. Basically the story is about a one-man vigilante who goes about the streets of New York in a vengeance like-style killing criminals. What has led him to do this? It seems his wife and daughter are the victims of intruders in their home who rape them and inflict other physical harm. Both mother

and daughter dies as a result of the incident. This causes the husband - father (Charles Bronson) to go on his rampage. He entices would-be muggers, robbers, and murderers to come after him and then instead murders them. The city likes his style and he becomes a modern day folk hero. Eventually the police catch him, but are in a state of perplexity because he has become such a hero that they can't prosecute him. The solution is simple - let him go! Of course, there is a condition; but naturally. He must promise to leave New York City forever. The hero faithfully complies. He quietly melts away only to turn up in Chicago and the implication is frightfully clear. He is about to begin his one man crusade again, so ended the movie. This movie was shown on CBS during prime time (8:00 PM - 10:00 PM). The program was intended for mature audiences, but in its time slot it may have had some youthful viewers. The message of this film was clear. First of all, living in the city is very dangerous. One must guard at all times against some act of violence which may be committed against them. In the opinion of this writer a heavy dosage of this kind of viewing could make the average viewer extremely apprehensive or fearful of their surroundings. A second message to this viewer and perhaps to other viewers is that the character initiating most of the violence was able to get away with it. In fact, he became a hero. Another message, violence is a way of life and we must be prepared for it.

Certainly not all or even most viewers who viewed this program or any other containing murders, muggings, rapes and other acts of violence are going to run right out and re-enact these crimes. However, the fact remains that some people who view this kind of explicit violence may, in fact, be influenced to commit such acts

after seeing them on television. Studies are beginning to indicate that people who view a great deal of violence and aggressive behavior on T.V. believe that aggressiveness and violence in real life can be successful - just as it is often depicted on television. The message of television violence apparently is: violence works. Often times in 60 minutes of a prime time dramatic program, 55 minutes is devoted to showing someone getting away with breaking the law or violent acts against a person or property. Only 5 minutes or less is devoted to showing someone getting caught or punished. Sometimes, the perpetrator of violent acts is never caught and punished. There is evidence to suggest that heavy viewers of violence may file away in their minds what they see on television and put into action what they have learned at a later time. It has already been suggested that most people aren't going to run out and copy the acts they see on T.V. Most people are going to be inhibited by laws, peer pressure and the threat of punishment. However, according to Robert Liebert, Associate Professor of Psychology, State University of New York, Stony Brook in a recent study: "at least under some circumstances, exposure to television aggression can lead children to accept what they have seen as a partial guide for their own actions. As a result of present entertainment offerings of the television medium may be contributing in some measure to the aggressive behavior of many normal children, such an effect has been shown in a wide variety of situations."²⁴ Dr. Liebert continues: "experimental studies preponderantly support the hypothesis that there is directional

casual links between exposure to television violence and an observers subsequent behavior."²⁵

Dr. Albert Bandura, Stanford University has experimented to find out what happens to children who are heavy viewers of a diet of slugging, stomping, shooting and stabbings on television. He reached two conclusions: 1. heavy viewing of this nature seems to reduce a childn's inhibitions against acting in a violent, aggressive behavior; and 2. children apparently do copy what they see on television.²⁶ This seems to support other studies cited in this work. A general theme of many studies on television violence seem to indicate that children who are heavy viewers of violence become dulled to violence. A steady diet of violence causes some children to condition themselves to the carnage they see on T.V. If they allowed themselves to become emotionally involved with the program or characters it might mar their sensibility. To cope with this situation many young viewers simply turn off their emotions. In effect, they get a tough skin. They condition themselves to seeing violence and accept it as a reality of life.²⁷

This study began by indicating that a ground-swell is beginning to grow in America to halt the proliferation of violence on television. Organizations such as the National PTA and the powerful American Medical Association are leading the way, but many others are beginning to echo their sentiments: the general quality of television programming is low and television programming contains too much violent activity which may be harmful to young viewers.

Earlier this year, NBC television produced a program called "Violence in America." The general theme was that violent crime in America has increased by some 250% in America since 1960. The footage in the film was of a very explicit nature: scenes included authentic murders, and child abuse. The program also suggested a remedy: show less explicit violence on television. This may not seem very startling in light of the discussion in this paper. However, what is interesting is that NBC had trouble finding a sponsor for the program. It seems that many potential sponsors are beginning to be affected by the criticism of television violence. Earlier in this study it was indicated that broad coalition of groups are determined to affect the amount of violence on television. One of the methods these groups have proposed using to bring change is to boycott products that are advertised on excessively violent programs. Perhaps the waves they are creating are achieving some results. An interesting sidelight here, in 1976, the American Medical Association and a reform group, the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting (NCCB) surveyed the networks to find out which advertisers seemed to purchase the most time on what was considered excessively violent programs. The top five "most violent" advertisers were Chevrolet, Anacin, American Motors, Sears and Roebuck, and Eastman Kodak.²⁸

Advertisers, of course, have a powerful influence over television programming. They in turn are influenced by reports coming from their advertising agencies and public relations firms. In March of 1976 the J. Walter Thompson Co., a large and respected advertising agency conducted a survey which showed

that 10 percent of television viewers considered not buying products advertised on violent programs. In an October 1976 poll, they found that 35 percent of viewers avoid violent programs altogether. 1.4 percent of those surveyed stopped buying products advertised on excessively violent programs. 25 percent of those surveyed believed the government should be taking an active role in policing programs.²⁹ Polls of this nature could be the most powerful force to bring change to excessively violent T.V. programs. If the television networks can't find sponsors for their programs or if they have to sell the time for less than they desired there will be change in television programming.

Although it seems that many viewers want less violence shown on the screen there is great disagreement as to what violence is. This is cause for some confusion to the major networks. They say; the average viewer wants less violence shown on T.V., but no one is defining it in an acceptable manner. The average viewer wants less violence, but when pressed to indicate what would be tolerable, the viewer simply says "less."³⁰

The networks and their defenders argue that many methods for measuring violence, rate on a count of violent episodes. This may attach the same rating to a shooting as a slap in the face. This means that some comedy shows may be labeled as very violent. Thus a program like the Dick Van Dyke Variety Hour might rank worse than Emergency or the Blue Knight. This causes some to have little regard for rating guides of television violence.

The most widely accepted method for rating the level of violence on television violence seems to be the Violence Index devised by Dr. George Gerbner, of the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania. However, not all accept Gerbner's definition of violence and device used to measure violence. It does seem to be the most reliable at this time.

There is one last comment to make on the subject of violence on T.V. So far the negative side of T.V. violence has been discussed. However, there is another question to look at. What about people who enjoy television programs with a great deal of violence. After all, television is a form of media that can and does reach almost all of our population. Therefore, as the networks see it, they have a duty to bring forth programming that appeals to the widest possible audiences. This may include some programs of a violent nature since many people enjoy this kind of program. It should be pointed out that advertisers want to reach this audience too.

It seems like this is perhaps a matter of judgement on the part of all concerned, the networks, producers, advertisers, and of course, the viewer.

Violence on television will never be totally eradicated and the question is why should it be? In some programs violence may be necessary to story development. If the act of violence is handled properly it can be a positive experience to the viewer, particularly if it happens to be a child. The incident should be handled in as realistic a manner as possible. It

might be important to show that some violent acts do occur in life situations. However, the criticism directed at television programming today is that often times the producers have violence simply for the sake of violence. One gory act follows another. As pointed out earlier many interested groups are trying to change it, and the networks may be responding to this pressure. If the Fall '77 programs are any indication, the networks are making attempts to control the level of violence. Some programs have been dropped entirely for new series while others considered to be excessively violent have been moved to a later hour. Some Saturday morning cartoons have been changed or dropped also in an effort to control violent viewing available to young viewers. More programs such as the "Fat Albert Show," (Bill Cosby), Zoom, and Saturday morning specials written especially for children are being aired.

While the networks certainly have a responsibility to bring good quality programming to their viewers, including young children perhaps there is another point to be made.

People don't have to watch violent programs. They can still get up and walk across the room and switch it off or turn to another program if they find one distasteful. The problem is that often people sit in a catonic stupor in front of this mechanical marvel and gulp down everything spewed forth.

Parents also have a responsibility to pick and choose programs for their children.

CBS Vice President Gene Mater comments: "should T.V. be programmed for the young through midnight? It's a real problem. T.V. is a mass medium and it must serve more than

just children." Particularly after 9:00 PM in the evening if a young viewer is still watching T.V., the parents should censor programs that are particularly violent or unsuitable. The channel could be switched or the "box" turned off entirely. (One wonders about the good judgement of parents who allow their offspring to view this late in the evening totally unsupervised, but apparently there are still some young viewers after this hour). After all, we still control this wonder of electronic gadgetry; or do we?

CHAPTER III

Experiment Procedure

Introduction

The review of literature has attempted to show that many groups, such as the National PTA, the AMA, and individuals in America are concerned with what they believe to be a high level of violence in television programming. What follows is an explanation of the method used to study violence on four television programs. Two of the programs were viewed during prime time in the evening and two of the programs were viewed on Saturday morning cartoons.

Program Selection

The programs used in the study included Kojak, Starsky and Hutch, and All New Superfriends, and the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour. Why were these programs selected for the study instead of other programs? Primarily the selection of these programs was a random one. Starsky and Hutch and Kojak are both programs that have been on the air for several years. They continue to be popular and draw a sizable viewing audience. Starsky and Hutch particularly seems to draw a younger audience that are very loyal viewers. One consideration that led to the use of Kojak in this study was the recent murder trial of Ronnie Zamora in Miami Beach, Florida. You will remember that in this case that Zamora was being tried for the murder and robbery of an elderly Miami Beach woman. Zamora's defense attorney claimed that Zamora had been "electronically brainwashed" by television.³³

Zamora claimed he had conceived the idea for his crime after watching a recent Kojak program. Apparently Kojak was his favorite television program. Zamora's attorney attempted to use several experts on television and aggressive social behavior to prove that television caused Ronnie Zamora to commit the crime. Actor Telly Savalas, of Kojak, was also scheduled to be called as a witness for the defense. Although Savalas never testified and Zamora was eventually convicted of murder, it was an interesting case as television was used to defend someone's actions.

The study was conducted during the months of September, October, and November. It involved viewing each program a minimum of five times.

Hypothesis

The purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that children's Saturday morning cartoons contain more violent acts than dramatic television programs in prime time television. Included in the violent acts were such things as fighting, beating, kicking, rape, kidnap; the use of weapons such as guns or knives; or violence to property such as arson, crashes, theft, and vandalism. It also includes the use of weapons such as guns, knives, and bombs.

Monitoring Environment

The study was conducted in a home environment. A 19 inch JVC color television was used to monitor the programs. Individual family members were often present while the monitoring was going on. However, they presented little distraction to the

monitoring. In fact, during the viewing of Saturday morning children's cartoons, there was no distraction as they were viewing their favorite Saturday morning cartoons.

One problem encountered with viewing the Saturday morning cartoons for the first couple of weeks was that the All New Superfriends began at 7:00 AM in the morning and the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour began at 7:30 AM. Because the All New Superfriends lasts for 60 minutes, this necessitated having two televisions and viewing two programs at the same time. The volume stayed up on the All New Superfriends and was turned down on the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour. The Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour was viewed for 30 minutes on a 12" black and white Hitachi television. At 8:00 AM, when the All New Superfriends was over, the rest of the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour was viewed on the J.V.C. This was only a problem for two weeks. Part of the problem was alleviated by watching the All New Superfriends one week, but not the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour and reversing the procedure the following week. The problem finally resolved itself because the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour moved to a new time. 8:00 AM instead of 7:30 AM. This is noted in Table V. The Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour also changed from a 60 minute program to a 90 minute program the last two times it was viewed. What this did was to add an average of two to three extra Roadrunner cartoons to the total program. This accounts for the substantial rise in all categories of violence on that program for the weeks of November 19, and November 26, 1977. This is also reflected in Table V.

Monitoring Instrument

The instrument used to measure the quantity of violence on an individual television program was the monitoring form developed by the National Parent Teacher Association. The Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association has mimeographed this instrument and disseminated it to its members. The Wisconsin PTA, of course, wants parents to monitor their children's viewing habits. It is hoped that by monitoring their children's viewing, PTA members can influence what their children watch and perhaps eliminate heavy diets of violent programs from their viewing. This mimeographed monitoring form is included in Appendix A.

The survey is divided into four different categories of violent acts. These include:

1. Acts of physical violence - fighting, beating, kicking, shoving, choking, cruelty, rape, hostage, and kidnapping.
2. Results of physical violence - attacked, wounded, killed.
3. Weapons used or threatened - guns, knives, others, cars, bombs
4. Violence to property - arson, crashes, theft, vandalism

Each category was also subdivided into various sub-categories and have been listed above. The monitor form also included a category to tabulate violations of the law by law enforcement personnel. This category was not actually a part of this survey, but a record of such violations was kept.

As the monitor form indicates, the surveyor tabulated all incidents of violence in which one human or human-like character:

1. hurts another human or human-like character, or property of;
2. forces action or threat of being hurt or killed.

This was accomplished by placing a hash mark in the appropriate category. The number of incidents for every category were not totaled together. Each incident was tallied on the monitor form as it occurred. However, the number of incidents were taken to mean the number of incidents occurring per individual scene. What does this mean? As an example, suppose that in a scene a gun was used and was fired six times in rapid succession. Is this to be counted as six separate incidents or as one? In this survey, it was counted as one incident. The same method was used to tally a fight scene. Every punch, kick, and shove was not counted in a single fight scene. A fight was counted as one incident.

Although the advertisers were kept track of, they were not a part of this study. It is interesting to note which advertisers vie for time on the programs reviewed for this study.

In chapter four an attempt will be made to support the hypothesis set forth in this chapter by reviewing the results of this study.

CHAPTER IV

Results of the Study

This chapter is an attempt to measure the level of violence in four programs viewed during the fall months of 1977. There has been a great deal of criticism directed against programming on the major networks in the last few years. The networks claim they have substantially reduced the violence level in TV programming. Particularly, the networks claim to have substantially reduced the level of violence in children's Saturday morning cartoons. The purpose of this study is to look at that network claim. However, it should be pointed out that a study of four programs shouldn't be viewed as indicative of what all television is like. In order to make valid conclusions about the level of violence in all television programming, more programs would have to be studied and reviewed. Some generalizations can be made about the programs used in this study from the data collected and reviewed.

Has the level of violence gone down in fall 1977 T.V. programs? It is difficult to measure; many critics are saying so. If one were to judge by the composite tables included with this chapter, the answer may be no.

In judging evening prime time dramatic programs, however, some patterns to begin to emerge. There are still deaths and killings occurring on prime time television, but based on the two programs viewed for this study there may be fewer actual deaths than in past years. This is based on observation and reviewing Gerbner's most recent analysis of television violence in 1976.

In a five week period Starsky and Hutch had three killings and two of those occurring on one program. Kojak, during a five week period, had eight killings. Killings don't seem to be portrayed so graphically. Oftentimes the viewer doesn't see the actual killing taking place. Instead the viewer gets a quick look at the results or is told that a killing has taken place, but doesn't actually view any bodies or results. The programs also vary somewhat in that killings don't take place in every program. Sometimes several program episodes go by without a visual killing on the program.

How does this compare with Saturday morning cartoons? There was one death over a period of several weeks on the cartoons. This was the death of a robot (human-like character). He was judged dead because he exploded into pieces and wasn't put back together. Cartoons almost never show death occurring to a human or human-like characters. Cartoon characters are often shown being attacked, beaten, kicked, stomped, blown up, or blasted with a gun. However, the characters are usually reincarnated within thirty to sixty seconds (after all, an average cartoon only lasts about six to seven minutes).

Where death is shown as being very permanent on programs such as Starsky and Hutch and Kojak, it is not shown as permanent on the cartoons. The Roadrunner cartoon from the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour is a good example. In a typical cartoon the coyote is blown up several times, usually run over by a truck or train, blasted by a gun or cannon occasionally and typically has several huge rocks

fall on him or he falls off a huge cliff to the bottom of some deep gorge. Yet, he always manages not only to survive those adversities, but comes back in the next cartoon for more. Over a five week period one hundred and seventeen acts of physical violence took place. One hundred and forty one incidents took place where weapons were used or threatened. Many of these incidents took place in Roadrunner cartoons, but not all. Roadrunner cartoons seem to contain an above average level of violent acts.

The number of physical acts of violence on the All New Superfriends is considerably less than the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour, but higher than Starsky and Hutch and Kojak. The All New Superfriends is a cartoon series made up of Superman, Batman and Robin, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and the Wonder Twins. Here again death is never shown. The characters in this show are often shown fighting the forces of crime and evil. Often times the characters are shown fighting creatures from outer space or giant mutated creatures from Earth. The general theme is that someone is usually attempting to conquer or destroy Earth. Although guns are often used, more often than not special types of weapons are used. Instead of guns that fire bullets they usually emit special rays that immobilize the victim. The major weapons used on the All New Superfriends seems to be rocks, rays, kryptonite, truth beams, or vanishing weapons. This is reflected in Table I under Others, Cars, Bombs, etc. The highest level of violence for the Superfriends seems to take place in this category.

The number of physical acts of violence on Starsky and Hutch and Kojak is considerably less than the Saturday morning cartoons. This also applies to the results of physical violence. The major difference being that the two evening prime time programs do show death occurring.

Looking at Table I in the category Weapons Used or Threatened, again the cartoons seem to consistently have more incidents occurring. In the cartoons more bombs, dynamite, rays and rocks are used to pulverize the victims. In the evening prime time programs the gun was the most common type of weapon used or threatened.

In the category Violence to Property, the only figure standing out from all the rest is the one under crashes in the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour. Thirty seven incidents occurred. Specifically, the Roadrunner was often crashing into objects or being crashed on by some object, usually a rock.

Based on the discussion of violence in the programs used in this study and the tables comparing the actual number of violent incidents, it seems that children's Saturday morning cartoons have more violent incidents occurring. However, one has to be careful judging these figures. There was no attempt made to judge the quality of violence in the programs reviewed. For example, there has been no attempt to measure the quality of a killing or death on the evening prime time programs with the children's Saturday morning cartoons. Neither has there been any attempt to measure the quality of Results of Physical Violence

between the evening prime time programs and children's Saturday morning cartoons. If we are to judge the programs on the basis of quality and quantity there may be some differences in the level of violence. However, based on quantity alone, children's Saturday morning cartoons have a greater number of violent incidents.

The criticism of this kind of ranking may be that it is not fair because it doesn't take quality of violence into consideration. Certainly, as has been stated earlier, children's Saturday morning cartoons contain a different kind of violence. It is a very unrealistic type of violence since it seldom if every shows permanent death or injury. It demonstrates a kind of slapstick violence which even though not real may have an adverse effect on very young viewers. Some of the programs while containing a high level of violent activity also contain something else which is more difficult to measure. Many times the theme of the story is very disturbing. The All New Superfriends seems to dwell on stories that contain monsters and creatures from space. Some examples: On the November 19th Saturday program, one episode dealt with giant rodent like creatures with lobster-like claws attempting to attack the Superfriends. In another episode, all the rats of Gotham City were being affected by some mysterious beam which makes them turn on humans and overrun the city. Although the viewer doesn't actually see any rats bit a human, they are constantly seen flashing sharp scissor-like teeth and coming directly out of the screen. The theme

in another episode was killer bees attacking the local populace. Although no one is shown actually being physically assaulted by the bees, the viewer does see and hear people screaming and fleeing in panic from the killer bees. Although no violent acts could be recorded in many scenes of this story, it still made one shudder. The point is that the story was scary. A story of this nature has little value for a young viewer and with some children could leave adverse effects such as nightmares or unreal fears of rodent-like animals or bees.

Another disturbing theme of this program is that it often projects conflict between males and females. The female is projected as the weaker sex who is trying to become stronger than men by "putting them in their place" or enslaving them.

These kinds of stories while having a number of violent incidents in them to create interest for the viewer may also have another effect. They may be scaring the young viewer. The effect of these kinds of stories on young viewers was not a part of this study. However, it does deserve research in the future.

The main objective of this research was to demonstrate which two TV programs contained the most acts of violence - two children's Saturday morning cartoons or two evening prime time programs. Table 1 indicates that the children's cartoons do in fact, contain many more acts of violence than do the two evening prime time programs. This is true in every category of violent acts. It seems that the hypothesis that children's Saturday morning cartoons contain more violent acts than dramatic programs in prime time television is a valid one. It can be concluded, therefore, that the hypothesis has been proven.

TABLE I

Total Number of Violent Incidents for all Programs Reviewed

		Acts of Physical Violence	Results of Physical Violence	Weapons Used or Threatened	Violence to Property	Violations of Laws by Law Enforcement Personnel								
		Fighting, Kicking, Beating, Shoving, Choking Cruelty	Rape, Hostage, Kidnap	Attacked, Wounded Killed	Guns Knives Others, Cars, Bombs, etc. Arson	Crashes Theft Vandalism								
						Searches w/o warrants; illegal entry/prop. seizure Arrested, not informed of rights; coerced testimony Traffic safety laws violated								
Starsky and Hutch	17	4	5	4	16	5	6		1	1		2		11
Kojak	5	5	2	9	31	1	14		1	2		1		1
The All New Superfriends	15	11	11		16		68		3	8	7			2
Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour	72	39	6	6	1	34	3	104	2	37		4		2

TABLE II

Starsky and Hutch, 8:00 PM Saturday

Table includes weeks from September 24, 1977 to November 26, 1977
 (Some weeks not represented because the program was not shown)

		September 24, 1977	October 15, 1977	October 22, 1977	October 29, 1977	November 19, 1977	November 26, 1977	Total of all weeks by categ.
Acts of Physical Violence	Fighting, Beating, Kicking Shoving, Choking	4	3	1	3	4	2	17
	Cruelty							
	Rape, Kidnap, Hostage		1	1	2			4
Results of Phy Vio.	Attacked, Wounded	2					3	5
	Killed		2			1	1	4
Weapons used or threatened	Guns	1	3	1	3	3	5	16
	Knives	3	1			1		5
	Others, Cars, Bombs, etc.	1	2		2	1		6
Violence to Property	Arson							
	Crashes				1			1
	Theft					1		1
	Vandalism							
Vio. of Laws by Law Enfor Personnel	Searches w/o warrant, il- legal entry, prop. seizure			1	1			2
	Arrested, not informed of rights, coerced testimony							
	Traffic safety laws violated		3	1	4	2	1	11

TABLE III

Kojak, 9:00 PM Sunday

Table includes weeks from October 16, 1977 to November 20, 1977

		October 16, 1977	October 23, 1977	October 30, 1977	November 6, 1977	November 13, 1977	November 20, 1977	Total of all weeks by categ.
Acts of Physical Violence	Fighting, Beating, Kicking, Shoving, Choking	2		1	2	1		5
	Cruelty							
Results of Phy. Violence	Rape, Kidnap, Hostage	2			2		1	5
	Attacked, Wounded			1	1			2
Weapons used or Threatened	Killed	2	3			3	1	9
	Guns	4	5	2	10	4	6	31
	Knives			1				1
Violence to Property	Others, Cars, Bombs, etc		1	1	2	1		4
	Arson							
	Crashes				1			1
	Theft			1				1
Vio. of laws by Law Enf. Personnel	Vandalism						2	2
	Searches w/o warrants, il- legal entry, prop. seizure				1			1
	Arrested, not informed of rights, coerced testimony							
	Traffic safety laws violated						1	1

TABLE IV

The All New Superfriends Hour, 7:00 AM Saturday
Table includes weeks from October 22, 1977 to November 26, 1977

		October 22, 1977	October 29, 1977	November 5, 1977	November 12, 1977	November 19, 1977	November 26, 1977	Total of all weeks by categ.
Acts of Physical Violence	Fighting, Beating, Kicking, Shoving, Choking	1	6	2		4	4	15
	Cruelty							
	Rape, Kidnap, Hostage	1	3		3	3	1	11
Results of Phy Viol	Attached, Wounded					6		6
	Killed							
Weapons used or Threatened	Guns	4				12		16
	Knives							
	Others, Cars, Bombs, etc.	1	16	28	10	9	4	68
Violence to Property	Arson							
	Crashes		1	1		1		3
	Theft		4				4	8
	Vandalism						7	7
Vio of Laws by Law Enfor Personnel	Searches w/o warrants, il- legal entry, prop. seizure							
	Arrested, not informed of rights, coerced testimony							
	Traffic safety laws violated		2			2		2

TABLE V

The Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour, 7:30 AM Saturday
 Table includes weeks from October 29, 1977 to November 26, 1977

		October 29, 1977	November 5, 1977	November 12, 1977	*November 19, 1977	*November 26, 1977	Total of all weeks by categ.
Acts of Physical Violence	Fighting, Beating, Kicking Shoving, Choking	5	13	17	23	14	72
	Cruelty				12	27	39
	Rape, Kidnap, Hostage	1			5		6
Results of Phy. Vio.	Attacked, Wounded		8	8	42	19	77
	Killed				1		1
Weapons used or Threatened	Guns	1	7	5	7	14	34
	Knives				1	2	3
	Others, Cars, Bombs, etc.	14	12	26	27	25	104
Violence by Law Enforcement Personnel	Arson		2				2
	Crashes	8	12	6	4	7	37
	Theft						
	Vandalism	1			3		4
Vio. of laws by Law Enfor Personnel	Searches w/o warrants, il- legal entry, prop. seizure						
	Arrested, not informed of rights, coerced testimony						
	Traffic safety laws Violated	2					2

*On these two consecutive weeks, the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour was shown from 8:00 AM - 9:30 AM instead of during the usual one-hour time slot of 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM.

CHAPTER V

Summary and Conclusions

It is evident after reviewing the literature that many people believe that present television programming is too violent. It is also evident that of the many studies and research being completed on this topic, most seem to indicate that a heavy viewing diet of violence may have an adverse effect upon the viewer, particularly the young viewer. Though the evidence is becoming stronger in support of this contention, television programming has not changed in any dramatic manner. With the amount of pressure being put on the major networks the question becomes: Why haven't they changed their programming to reduce or eliminate violent activity? The answer: they have changed some of their programs, however, not enough to reduce the violence level substantially from what it has been. Part of the problem may be the lack of agreement as to what is good or bad or too violent in television programming. It has been suggested by at least one unidentified network executive that the reason there isn't better television viewing for children is that better viewing would automatically mean more viewing which may add to the controversy of the impact of television on young viewers.³⁴

Perhaps the reason television hasn't changed much is that the average viewer continues to watch whatever happens to be on, even if it contains high levels of violence. Another theory as to the poor quality of television programming has to do with the parents responsibilities. This was mentioned briefly in Chapter II

of this paper. In an article from Media and Methods, October 1977, "Unplug the Book, Not the Set," England criticizes a book recently published by Viking Press called The Plug - In Drug. The book was authored by Marie Winn.³⁵ Winn blames a great deal of what children watch on television on their parents. Too many parents, Winn claims use television as a drug to keep their children preoccupied and out of their hair. Winn sees very little positive attributes concerning television and seems to be blaming most of the current ills of our society on too much television viewing. England, takes exception to what Winn has written claiming it is shallow and inconclusive in its findings.³⁶

This writer takes the position that Too Many parents have abrogated their responsibilities to their children by allowing them to watch whatever they want. As a result, they often do watch programs of a poor quality. Perhaps when the average viewer begins to control what their children watch and turn off programs with a high level of violence, the networks will change their format.

No one would deny that television has had a very pervasive effect on all our lives. Yet no one has developed any evidence to conclusively suggest just what effect television may have on behavior.

Television may have some very positive effects on social behavior. Certainly, in recent years there have been some very laudable efforts on the part of the television industry to upgrade the quality of television programming.

It would be unfair to conclude that all television programming is too violent. However, perhaps it would be fair to conclude that the children's cartoons reviewed contained a high level of violent activity.

This study concluded that the Bugs Bunny Roadrunner Hour had the most number of violent acts. The All New Superfriends was second on the list. Kojak and Starsky and Hutch were ranked third and fourth respectively.

A great deal more research and studies will be necessary before any conclusive judgements can be made about violence in television programming.

It is hoped that this survey has made a worthwhile contribution of research to a subject that has become an important social issue.

FOOTNOTES

¹"What T.V. Does to Kids," Newsweek, Feb. 21, 1977, pp. 62-65.

²"Did T.V. Make Him Do It?" Time, October 10, 1977

Pg. 87-88.

³Ibid.

⁴Kimmel, Carol. "Are Parents Getting the Message?"

Parents Magazine, March, 1977, Volume LII, p. 29.

⁵"What T.V. Does to Kids," Water, Harry, Newsweek
February 21, 1977. Volume LXXXIX, Pg. 62.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Comstock, George A., "New Research on Media Content and Control," Television and Social Behavior, A Technical Report to the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, Volume 1, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, 1972, p. 6.

⁸Kaye, Evelyn, "First Do Not Harm," The Family Guide to Children's Television, Pantheon Books, New York, 1974, p. 64.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.p. 65

¹²Gerbner, George, "Measuring the Climate of Fear,"
American Medical News, December 13, 1976, P. 2.

¹³Ibid. P. 8.

¹⁴Gerbner, George, "Violence in Television Drama: Trends and Symbolic Functions," Television and Social Behavior,

A Technical Report to the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, Volume 1, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, 1972, P. 34.

¹⁵Johnson, Nicholas, How to Talk Back to Your Television, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1970, P. 38.

¹⁶Ibid. P. 37.

¹⁷Ibid. P. 37-41.

¹⁸Comstock, Surgeon General's Report, P. 6.

¹⁹Osborn Keith and Osborn, Janie D., "Television Violence Revisited," Il. Education Digest, Volume 43, September, 1977, P. 38.

²⁰Gergner, George, "Measuring the Climate of Fear, American Medical News, December 13, 1976, P. 8.

²¹Nielsen Television 1977," A.C. Nielsen Company, Northbrook, Ill. 1977, P. 5, 9.

²²Drabman, Ronald, and Thomas, Margaret Hanratty, "T.V. Aggression Teaches Apathy," Psychology Today, Vol. 10, November, 1976, P. 36-37.

²³Ibid. P. 36-37.

²⁴Gerbner, George and Gross, Larry, "The Scary World of T.V.'s Heavy Viewer," Psychology Today, Volume 9, P. 41-45.

²⁵Elmendorf, Thomas, "Violence on T.V." The Effects on Children, Vital Speeches, Speech delivered before house subcommittee on communication, Vol. XXXXII, October, 1976, PP 764-766.

²⁶Ibid. pp. 764-767.

²⁷Ibid. pp. 764-766.

²⁸Ibid. pp. 764-766

²⁹"Clamor Against T.V. Violence Gets Results: Protect
Against Advertisers," Il. Businessweek, January 10, 1977, pp. 68-69.

³⁰Ibid. pp. 68-69.

³¹Ibid. pp. 68-69.

³²Newsweek, February 21, 1977, pp. 62-65.

³³"Did T.V. Make Him Do It?" Time, October 10, 1977
pp. 87-88.

³⁴England, David. "Unplug the Book, Not The Set,"
Media and Methods, October, 1977, Volume 14, No. 2, pp. 68-72.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

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Section 1, P. 3.

APPENDIX

WISCONSIN PTA

The following questions are to be answered following the program. They are reflective questions about the quality of the violence and the consequences of violence.

1. In general, were the initiators of the violence
 - (a) rewarded
 - (b) punished
 - (c) no action
 - (d) don't know
2. In general, what were the consequences of the violence to the victims?
 - (a) physical injury
 - (b) property loss
 - (c) psychological injury
 - (d) social injury
 - (e) other
3. Were these consequences treated in a realistic manner?
 - (a) pain was expressed
 - (b) actual property loss was shown
 - (c) grief was expressed
 - (d) none
 - (e) other
4. Were the violent episodes necessary for the story's development?
 - (a) formed a key part
 - (b) Caused excitement only
 - (c) added interest only
 - (d) not necessary
5. Were there attempts to solve conflicts by
 - (a) negotiation
 - (b) discussion
 - (c) compromise
 - (d) other
6. Were the "good guys" initiators of any of the violent incidents?
 - (a) none
 - (b) one - three
 - (c) four - six
 - (d) over seven

INDIVIDUAL MONITORING FORM

You are now involved with over 6 million PTA members and their families in an attempt to improve television programming. This change will take place if you and your family inform the television stations of your concerns about the quality of television programming. Your help is essential.

- Look over this form - before the program you are monitoring begins. Advertisements begin immediately following station identification announcement before the program begins.
 - Mark the violent incidents as they occur during the program.
 - Total the incidents by category at the completion of the program.
 - Answer the questions on the back of the form.
 - WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR LOCAL STATION sharing your thoughts about the program you have just monitored. Be specific:
 - cite the particular aspects of the program you found offensive or worthwhile.
 - include the ages of your children, and whether you consider this program appropriate for their viewing.
- Be suggestive: give examples of what you would like to see on television.
- Ask that your letter be placed in the station's public file.
- SEND COPIES OF YOUR LETTER TO:
 1. The station's Network
 2. The major advertisers on the program
 3. The FCC
 4. Your local PTA Unit (for the PTA file)

PTA UNIT: _____

Program: _____ Date: _____

Network: _____ Station: _____ Time: _____ Day: _____

My Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____
 Ages of Children: _____

ADVERTISERS: List all from time of station announcement immediately before the program begins to the next station announcement following the program.

BEFORE: _____

DURING: _____

AFTER: _____

Refer to "Guide to Prime Time Advertisers" for the addresses of major national advertisers.

Record as VIOLENCE all incidents in which one human or human-like character (1) hurts another human, human-like character, or property.
 (2) forces action on threat of being hurt or killed.

We are also concerned about violation of laws by those persons engaged in the detection and arrest of law-breakers.

	# of Incidents Tally Score: <u>///</u> //	Total
<u>ACTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</u>		
Fighting, Beating, Kicking, Shoving, Choking	_____	_____
Cruelty	_____	_____
Rape, Hostage, Kidnap	_____	_____
<u>RESULTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</u>		
Attacked, Wounded	_____	_____
Killed	_____	_____
<u>WEAPONS USED OR THREATENED</u>		
Guns	_____	_____
Knives	_____	_____
Other - Cars, Bombs, etc.	_____	_____
<u>VIOLENCE TO PROPERTY</u>		
Arson	_____	_____
Crashes	_____	_____
Theft	_____	_____
Vandalism	_____	_____
<u>VIOLATION OF LAWS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL</u>		
Searches without warrants; illegal entry/property seizure	_____	_____
Arrested not informed of rights; coerced testimony	_____	_____
Traffic Safety Laws Violated	_____	_____

Each of the above categories should remain separate. Please do not add totals together.