

PRO CON

Should nudity be allowed on network TV?

Since its beginning, television has been a means of entertaining the public. It, like no other medium, can show a mirror image of society.



DAVE WINDER
Columnist



MELISSA MEGLIOLA
Columnist

Each season as the networks compete for higher Nielsen ratings, the level of gratuitous violence, language and sex scenes increases. The latest addition is nudity. The networks argue, as with the controversial detective show, "NYPD Blue," that the nudity is essential to a realistic depiction of American life.

Through drama and comedy programs, the viewer sees the triumphs and faults of the world they live in. Historically, this view has been highly censored though. Instead of getting anything close to real life, audiences got "Leave It to Beaver" and "Father Knows Best." I guess all the kids in those days thought their parents were weird if their dad didn't do everything in a three piece suit and their mother didn't sleep in a separate bed. There were few, if any, black or Hispanic characters, and even then most were not positive.

It wasn't until almost 30 years after TV began broadcasting that shows were finally being aired in which society's problems were being

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addressed. In the early '70s, "All in the Family" made history when a black George Jefferson moved next to the white bigot, Archie Bunker. Here was love, hate and respect in the same show.

Since then television has grown with programs such as "Good Times," "M.A.S.H.," "Hill Street Blues," "Roseanne" and "The Cosby Show." These shows, along with many others, have broadened people's perspectives of what society really is. Some were meant for the whole family, some were not.

Now a non-family show like the controversial "N.Y.P.D. Blue" is trying to push the envelope further by using curse words and some nude scenes. The show does not compare to a "Porky's" movie, but it is the first "R"-rated television show.

That does not mean that the show has no redeeming values, however. It shows common people in their everyday lives reacting to society. The cursing and nudity are never used as a sideshow; they just happen to be a part of the characters' routines. It is definitely not pornographic, and it adds to the story line by showing the viewer how these people live.

Still, people object to it because it airs on network television in the last hour of prime time when some children may be watching. What these objectors don't realize is that most of the kids who are still up could also turn the cable a couple of stations and see something much worse.

A new dawn of television broadcasting is coming, and it is programmed for mature audiences. They deal with adult subjects and have adult material. We should just be adult about it.

Dave Winder is a sophomore journalism major

Melissa Megliola is a senior industrial engineering major

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: find out what it means

Economic, social status key issues in gender equality

Imagine, if you will, a universe opposite of ours. A place where men hurry down the street to underpaid jobs, wearing push-up jock straps as a chorus of, "Hey, big fella, show us what ya got," rains down from female construction workers. Televisions blare commercials where sons say, "Dad, what do you do when you get that itchy feeling?" Outrageous? It's the kind of world women deal with every day.



LYNN BOOHER
Columnist

I recently went to a party where a young man informed me that women should be required to sign up for the draft if they want to be considered equal. Once this were law, he said, equality would be assured.

My initial reaction was one of frustration that anyone in modern society could be so simplistic in their ignorance. It did, however, provoke a lot of thought about just how far women are from gaining equality both socially and legally.

For any woman who is out in the real world, the huge discrepancy in pay between men and women for the same job is daunting. I have never understood why my mother gets paid less than the men who work under her, especially since she has more experience and puts considerably more time and effort into the job than some of them.

The trend of lower pay for females ex-

tends across all jobs, whether in government or in the private sector. The two exceptions are modeling and prostitution. Only government legislation insuring that both sexes receive equal pay for the same work can right this wrong.

In case anyone's noticed, pay discrepancies aren't the only problem for women in the work place. Getting respect from male coworkers is often a big hurdle.

It's ridiculous to assume that the reason there isn't an equal number of women political leaders or corporate executives is because there aren't enough qualified women to fill these positions. A more plausible reason is that it is difficult for qualified women to gain respect from men, and sometimes even from other women who may feel uncomfortable about another female passing them in a certain career or, in the case of politics, stepping out of the bounds of the traditional female role.

Luckily, sexual harassment is getting a lot of play in the media, but stopping harassment alone won't stop discrimination.

Socially, women don't have it much easier. A woman who shows strength and stands up for her rights often has to contend with unfounded name-calling, ranging from various forms of the word "lesbian" to just plain "bitch."

Television commercials promote the image of women as inferior, whether they're bimbos hanging onto men in beer commercials, models who want to please men in make-up commercials, or women who don't mind discussing their latest yeast infection or whether they douche on national TV. I have yet to see a comparable ad aimed at men.

Movies aren't any better. It's a much-hyped rarity to see male frontal nudity in a

film, but naked women in movies have been around longer than I have.

Children's toys are also outrageous. I'd love to see a G.I. Joe doll with the same monstrous proportions Barbie has. Girls are taught early on by their dolls and fashion magazines that they are expected to be thin and gorgeous.

What about women in athletics? High school girls are discouraged socially from playing sports other than volleyball or tennis because anything else is seen as "too manly."

Five-time Olympic gold medalist Bonnie Blair gets very little recognition from the press or the public for her achievements. One has to wonder what the difference would be if she looked like Cindy Crawford. Nancy Kerrigan certainly gets a lot more recognition than she would if she weren't beautiful. I heard one man lament that "the pretty one" had to be the one to get hurt.

Don't forget the "virgin-whore dichotomy" that exists in sexual standards, the fear of being attacked when alone anywhere, and many other pertinent concerns.

Where does all this leave society as a whole? Until more women speak out, the few who do will continue to be persecuted. Perhaps men who make arguments like "making the draft a requirement for women will make them equal" should reevaluate their motives. It seems that someone who was truly concerned with equal rights for both sexes would emphasize more important issues, like equal economic and social status.

Lynn Booher is a sophomore English and psychology major



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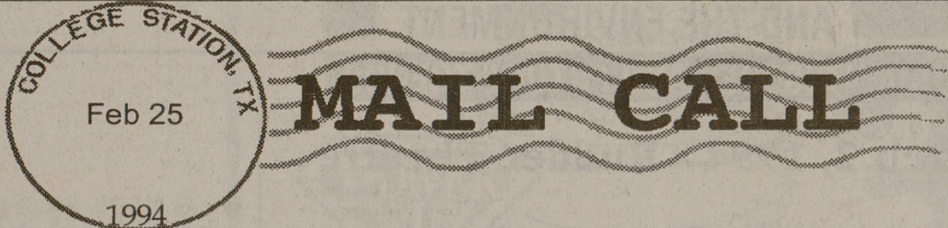
The lives of big-city cops probably do contain a certain amount of sexual activity. But do we really need to see the entire human body to understand what is happening under the sheets?

burg found them to have a distorted view of the occurrence of premarital and extramarital affairs.

Not only does nudity intensify the sexual references on television, it also sets the standard for the human body. When teenage girls see a nude woman on television, they immediately compare themselves to the actress on the screen, and many feel they don't measure up. Nudity on television only adds to the "need" for plastic surgery, unhealthy diets and eating disorders.

Obviously, nobody is forced to watch television. Anyone can change the channel after the first glimpse of an unnecessary nude scene. Theoretically, parents monitor what their children watch. But realistically, that job is very difficult. Most parents work and are not always home to monitor the television. And what about when children are playing with friends whose parents don't restrict television viewing?

By broadcasting nudity on television, the networks are placing a burden on their viewers. Because nudity adds nothing to a program that couldn't be achieved through suggestive yet unrevealing camera shots, the networks have sacrificed the interests of their viewers in a blatant ratings bid.



Aggie ring worth wait

I feel bad for Aggies that can't afford their senior rings. I feel bad for Aggies who will be seniors and have to wait another year (30 hours) to order their rings.

I do not feel bad for Aggies who have been enrolled for one year (30 hours) and want their rings - whether they are the class of '96 or transfer students.

The A&M ring is awarded for hours at A&M. Thirty hours is not enough, or sophomores would have rings.

It seems to me that transfer students are attending college for an education and/or a degree. If they are so desperate for a ring, they should wear their JC ring. And if they are so desperate for an A&M ring, then they should have started here at A&M.

The A&M ring is worth the wait; I am still waiting, and transfer students should wait, too.

Lisa K. Lattu
Class of '95

Something is rotten in state of Denmark

It is now possible to say there is no justice in the state of Texas. Never before in my lifetime have I seen or heard of such a blatant political misuse of judicial powers.

Kay Bailey Hutchison, Mike Tigar, Dick DeGuerin and the so-called judge who presided over this obviously unethical proceeding should be run out of this state.

First, let's consider the tremendous insult to the integrity of the good people of

Austin by claiming Hutchison could not get a fair and impartial hearing in our state's capitol. Then, let's consider the insult to the intelligence of all the people of the state of Texas whose tax dollars pay her salary.

What the people of Texas need to ask themselves is why a judge who has not sat on the bench or presided over a criminal case for 15 years was picked to preside over a case as important and controversial as this one!

Another question which must be addressed is why the judge refused to rule on evidence which was vital to the Travis County District Attorney's case when he had three weeks to do so.

At the very least, the refusal to make such a crucial ruling in a criminal case and then ordering the jury's decision without hearing any evidence or argument from either side, smacks of a sold-out judicial system that allows suppression of crucial evidence in a criminal court proceeding.

To me the answer is as plain as the nose on my face. The Dallas-Fort Worth area is Kay Bailey Hutchison's backyard. It is also the location of the largest group of her political supporters and allies.

There is a tangled web of political conspiracy being weaved in the state of Texas. But I say it is not by the Travis County District Attorney, as has been suggested, but rather it is being spun by Kay Bailey Hutchison.

If Hutchison is representative of what fiscal conservatism stands for, then it is time for not only all Texans, but all Americans to utilize their right to vote to cleanse not only the federal but state governments of these unethical parasites.

William H. Foster
Vidor, Texas

Umbrella theft last sign of corrupt world

I write this letter for two reasons. First, as a lost and found piece, and second as a warning to all students at Texas A&M of the kind of people that live among us.

OK, the story: on Feb. 21, I went to my 11:30 math class just as I always do except that I carried my trusty umbrella in one hand because that morning had been a little cloudy. I placed the umbrella in the corner of 107 Heldenfels and went on with a normal class. At the end, I put my notebook in my backpack and prepared to leave. I looked in the corner to notice that my umbrella had been stolen.

Now, I'm not going to go into some big soapbox about two-percenters, Aggie honor or which way Highway 6 actually runs. This has nothing to do with Aggies or being a true Aggie or whatever else people love to preach about. This has to do with the fact that there is a class of people out there that will actually steal your umbrella. I mean if I had left my watch or money in the corner, then I think I might deserve to have had them stolen. But an umbrella? What kind of world do we live in where a person can't feel safe propping their umbrella in a corner? Well, I guess I learned something.

So now you people have a right. This is not an "Aggie right." It's the right of every red-blooded umbrella owner. If you see someone with a black and white Wilson umbrella (the big golf kind), ask them where they got it. Ask them if they got it in Heldenfels. If so, then look them straight in the face and tell them that it's not theirs; it's Chad Hastings', and he wants it back.

And to the person who took it, if it was a simple mistake, fine. Just a simple apology and my umbrella is all I need. But if you actually intended to steal another human being's umbrella, I truly feel sorry for you. So enjoy the next southern Texas shower under the dry, comforting heaven that is my umbrella!

Chad Hastings
Class of '97

