

# The Alarming Family Hour

...No Place for Children



**A content analysis of sex, foul language and violence during network television's Family Hour**

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**Aubree Bowling**  
Senior Entertainment Analyst

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**Josh Shirlen,**  
**Katherine Kuhn,**  
**Keith White**  
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Research Associate

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**Larry Irvin**  
Development Associate

**Melissa Guzman**  
Development Assistant

**Jane Dean**  
Office & Graphics Administrator

---

**PTC'S HOLLYWOOD HEADQUARTERS**  
707 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 2075  
Los Angeles, CA 90017 • (213) 629-9255  
[www.ParentsTV.org](http://www.ParentsTV.org)®

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	5
Background .....	6
Study Parameters & Methodology ...	7
Results:	
A) Inappropriate Content in the Family Hour: Overview ...	8
B) Changes in Family Hour Content Since the 2000-2001 TV Season .....	8
C) Worst Network.....	9
D) Language .....	10
E) Sexual Content .....	11
F) Violence .....	13
G) Reruns.....	14
Conclusion.....	17
Appendix Tables.....	18
About the PTC.....	20

## FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

**Kelly Oliver or Megan Franko**  
**CRC Public Relations**  
**(703) 683-5004**



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# The Alarming Family Hour: NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SEX, FOUL LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE  
DURING NETWORK TELEVISION'S FAMILY HOUR

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traditionally known as the Family Hour, the first hour of prime time was once a place for programming the whole family could enjoy. Television broadcasters, exercising their corporate responsibility to act in the public interest, reserved adult-themed shows for later in the evening when the youngest viewers were likely to be asleep.

In recent years, however, the broadcast networks have pushed more and more adult-oriented programming to the early hours of the evening.

This Special Report constitutes the PTC's sixth analysis of Family Hour programming. The study sample included all entertainment programs originally airing on the six major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, CW, and My Network TV) in the Family Hour during three separate two-week periods of the 2006-2007 television season: November 2-15, 2006; February 1-14, 2007; and April 26-May 9, 2007.

The Family Hour time slot includes programs with a start time between 8 and 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and between 7 and 9 p.m. on Sundays, in the Eastern time zone (7 to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday in the Central time zone).

Reruns were analyzed separately. Many of the programs that were rebroadcast during the family hour normally occupy a later time slot on the broadcast schedule and are intended for adult audiences. Thus, by airing them during the Family Hour, the networks are introducing young audiences to high levels of mature content.

### AT A GLANCE

- ✓ There were 2246 instances of violent, profane and sexual content in 180 hours of original Family Hour programming, or 12.48 instances per television hour.
- ✓ One instance of objectionable content occurs every 3.5 minutes of non-commercial airtime, on average.
- ✓ Only 10.6% of the 208 episodes were free of any violent and sexual content and foul language.
- ✓ Since 2000-2001, violent content during the Family Hour has increased by 52.4%.
- ✓ Since 2000-2001, sexual content has increased by 22.1%.
- ✓ The Fox network was the overall worst offender, with 20.78 instances of objectionable content per hour.

### Major Findings:

#### Overall Content

- In 180 hours of original programming, there were 2246 instances of objectionable violent, profane and sexual content, for an average of 12.48 instances per television hour, or one instance every 4.8 minutes.
- Since the average hour of prime-time broadcast television contains about 43 minutes of non-commercial programming, one instance of objectionable content occurs every 3.5 minutes of non-commercial airtime, on average.
- Only 10.6% of the 208 episodes were free of any violent and sexual content and foul language.
- CW was the cleanest network overall with 9.44 instances of objectionable content per hour.
- Fox was the worst network overall with 20.78 instances of objectionable content per hour.

- The only shows with no objectionable content were game shows/reality competitions: *Deal or No Deal* (NBC), *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* (Fox), *Identity* (NBC), and *Grease: You're the One That I Want* (NBC).
- *American Dad* (Fox), with 52 instances of objectionable content per hour, was the worst series of the Family Hour.

### **Foul Language**

- There were 815 uses of foul language, or 4.53 per hour.
- More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all programs airing in the Family Hour (76.4%) contained foul language.
- MyNetworkTV had the highest frequency of foul language with 5.58 instances per hour.
- The program with the highest rate of foul language was *My Name is Earl* (NBC) with 16.33 instances per hour.

### **Sexual Content**

- There were 677 sexual scenes or spoken sexual references, an average of 3.76 per hour.
- Well over half of all programs (54.8%) contained sexual content.
- Since 2000-2001, the amount of sexual content during the Family Hour has increased by 22.1%.
- CBS experienced the largest increase in sexual content since 2000-2001, from 0.34 to 2.31 instances per hour – a 579% increase.
- ABC had the most sexual content with 5.97 instances per hour.
- *The War at Home* (Fox) had the highest frequency of sexual content of any program with 33 instances per hour.

### **Violence**

- There were 754 violent acts and images, or 4.19 per hour.
- Nearly half of all programs (46.2%) contained violent content.
- Since 2000-2001, violent content has increased by 52.4%.

- Fox experienced the largest increase in violent content, going from 2.16 instances per hour in 2000-2001 to 11.37 per hour in 2006-2007 – a 426% increase.
- Fox was also the worst network for violence, with 11.37 instances per hour.
- *24* (Fox) was the most violent non-animated series, with 28 instances of violence per hour.

### **Reruns**

- In the three two-week periods, the networks aired 37.5 hours of reruns during the Family Hour containing an average of 19.76 instances of objectionable content per hour – 58% more per hour than in original Family Hour programming.
- Reruns contained 80% higher rates of sexual content per hour than did original programming.
- Reruns contained over twice as much violence per hour as original programs.

At the time of our last comprehensive study of early evening programming in 2001, the PTC joined a bipartisan coalition in the U.S. Congress to call on the broadcast television industry to self-regulate in order to preserve at least one hour each night of family-friendly television. The initial response was somewhat encouraging, with advertisers and some of the networks announcing efforts to clean up the Family Hour.

Unfortunately that initial encouragement was short-lived. In the past six years, the Family Hour has become even more hostile to children and families. There is no safe haven for children on nightly broadcast television.

We found that the Family Hour has become increasingly laced with sex and violence. Along with scheduling adult-themed shows like *Bones* and *Desire* for the Family Hour, we also found the networks taking graphic and explicit shows that had originally run in later timeslots, like *Grey's Anatomy* and *C.S.I.*, and re-airing them during the Family Hour.

The American public is overwhelmingly concerned. In a March 2007 Zogby Poll, 79% of respondents agreed that there is too much sex, violence and coarse language on television. Other

surveys have shown that parents are so fed up that they would welcome more government regulation to rein-in television content. However, through responsible self-regulation, the entertainment industry might eliminate the need for further legislative or regulatory action.

The broadcast networks, who are given access to a public resource, i.e. the broadcast airwaves, need to fulfill their public interest obligation by bringing back the Family Hour.

Advertisers need to do more to support positive, family-friendly programming during the early evening, committing their advertising dollars to clean shows, and exerting economic pressure on the broadcast networks to provide more Family Friendly programming during the first hour of prime time.

The industry must provide parents with a meaningful ratings system, one that is accurate, consistent, and transparent and will adequately warn parents about potentially offensive content. This is especially important during the first hour of prime time when you have the largest number of children in the television viewing audience.

Parents who are concerned about TV's influence on impressionable children cannot just passively accept the current state of broadcast television. They must actively oppose the broadcast networks' efforts to obliterate decency standards by pressuring their local broadcast affiliates to refuse to air programs containing high levels of inappropriate sex, violence and profanity during the Family Hour and by pressuring the advertisers to stop underwriting offensive Family Hour content.

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**Because our children are watching.**<sup>®</sup>



# The Alarming Family Hour: NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN

BY AUBREE BOWLING, PTC SENIOR ENTERTAINMENT ANALYST • SEPTEMBER 5, 2007

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## I. Introduction

As every parent of a young child knows, the material broadcast over the television airwaves has become increasingly inappropriate for young viewers. With prime time television exhibiting ever higher numbers of violent acts, sexual encounters, and offensive language, even the earliest hour of prime time has become unsafe for children.

Traditionally known as the Family Hour, the 8 p.m. time slot was once a place for programming the whole family could enjoy. Prior to the 1990s, television broadcasters reserved adult-themed shows for later in the evening when the youngest viewers were likely to be asleep. In the past decade, however, the broadcast networks pushed more and more adult-oriented programming to the early hours of the evening. 1980s family fare such as *The Cosby Show* and *Family Ties* gave way to mature-themed series such as *Melrose Place* and *Friends*. As shown in the Parents Television Council's previous studies of television content between 1999 and 2001, the Family Hour became increasingly lewd, profane and violent by the turn of the decade. Things are no better today. The steady stream of violence and death, sexual innuendo and crass words continue unabated.

This Special Report provides statistics and examples characterizing the current state of the Family Hour (8 p.m. Eastern / 7 p.m. Central) timeslot on the six major broadcast networks. It is based on content analysis of programming that aired in the past year.

In the past six years, the Family Hour has become even more hostile to children and families. The Family Hour has become increasingly laced with sex and violence. Along with adult-themed shows like *Bones* and *Desire* airing originally during the Family Hour, the networks are taking shows originally scheduled for later timeslots, like *Grey's Anatomy* and *C.S.I.*, and re-airing them during the Family Hour. While mild expletives like "damn" and "crap"

are declining in use, broadcasters are increasing the frequency of harsher language obscured by bleeps or partial editing (doubling, for instance, the number of bleeped or partially-bleeped utterances of "fuck" and "shit"). Perhaps most troubling, some of the most offensive content -- such as references to anal sex -- can be found in animated programs popular with young viewers.

Though more and more evening programming is unsuitable for children, data from Nielsen reveals that over ten million children are in front of the television in the early evening, and many of them are seeing raunchy shows. For example, according to Nielsen Media Research, on Sunday, November 12, at 8:30 p.m., over 2 million children were in the viewing audience for an episode of the animated program *American Dad* on Fox which contained 37 instances of violence, foul language and sexual content in a show less than 30 minutes long.

Parents, who are immediately responsible for the welfare of their own children, can no longer count on the Family Hour to provide a safe haven. They are deeply concerned about the offensive content they are now seeing on prime time television. They cannot rely on a deeply-flawed content ratings system to help them monitor what their children watch (see PTC's earlier study, *The Ratings Sham II: TV Executives Still Hiding Behind a System That Doesn't Work*, released April 16, 2007).

For example, an especially troubling network decision led to mature, adult-oriented programming airing recently on MyNetworkTV (MNTV) at 8 p.m. on August 1, 2007 (outside our study period). The violent, sexually charged adult cable drama *Damages* from the FX cable network was re-aired in the Family Hour on MNTV (MNTV and the FX cable network are both owned by News Corporation, which also owns the Fox Broadcast Network.). This episode of *Damages* had aired on FX with a TV-MA rating (and content descriptors S and L) and contained multiple

uses of the word “shit” as well as scenes of sex and violence. When the same episode aired on MNTV, it was rated only TV-14 (with V, L, and S content descriptors). The graphic sexual scene from the FX airing was reduced by 25 seconds, but the nature of the content was essentially unchanged. Similarly, a scene of a woman discovering her dead dog’s body and later, a murdered man covered in blood was shortened slightly but remained essentially the same as the FX version. Not only did *Damages* air at 8 p.m., but it was scheduled at the last minute, no doubt catching many parents off-guard.

Every parent who has ever been stunned to hear their child utter a four letter word, been asked by their first grader to explain graphic sexual slang heard on a sitcom, or has comforted a child scared by graphic televised violence and death scenes knows that something has gone wrong.

## II. Background

According to a 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation report, young people ages 8 to 18 spend an average of three hours each day watching television. Millions of them are viewing during prime time hours, especially during the early evening. In fact, according to a 1999 Nielsen report, even younger children ages 2 to 11 spend much more time viewing television during prime time hours than they do on Saturday mornings and after school.

And what they are seeing is troubling. As revealed in this and earlier studies of program content, the Family Hour is not a place for wholesome entertainment, but rather it is an unwelcome opportunity for children to be exposed to a host of offensive and even harmful material – from ugly and degrading language, to graphic and disturbing scenes of violence, to depictions and descriptions of adult sexual behaviors, including some that many adults would find offensive.

The American public is overwhelmingly concerned about this trend, as shown in surveys of parents and the public at large. In a March, 2007 Zogby Poll, 79% of Americans agreed that there is too much sex, violence and coarse language on television. Other surveys have shown that parents

would welcome more government regulation to rein in television content. However, through responsible self-regulation, the entertainment industry might eliminate the need for further legislative or regulatory action.

It has been done before. The National Association of Broadcasters Code of Conduct, first created in 1952, was a voluntary agreement that included provisions for maintaining standards of decency on the broadcast airwaves, and acknowledged the importance of considering when children are most likely to be watching. This effort to deliver programming suitable for the entire family demonstrated corporate concern for family life and acknowledged the unique public interest responsibilities incumbent upon broadcasters. Providing suitable Family Hour programming enabled families to spend quality time together, enjoying entertainment, without embarrassing parents or upsetting and harming their children.

When the Code was scrapped 25 years ago on unrelated antitrust grounds, the Family Hour was abandoned, and the networks started introducing more and more shows with mature content into the earliest hours of prime time.

At an August 1, 2001 national press conference, PTC released its last comprehensive study of Family Hour programming. The study revealed just how raunchy early-evening programming had become. Material related to oral sex, masturbation, and pornography -- which not so long ago would never have appeared even later in prime time -- had spread into the early evening when millions of children were still in front of the television.

Senators Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), both PTC Advisory Board Members, launched an effort to bring back the traditional Family Hour. Others followed suit. In October, 2001, Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ) was joined by 28 other members of Congress in an open letter to the broadcast networks. “We are deeply concerned about the coarsening of popular culture, and the potential risks it poses to our nation’s children,” the lawmakers wrote, followed by a call for the voluntary restoration of the Family Hour.

The PTC appealed to advertisers to stop underwriting adult-oriented programming during the Family Hour. An open letter to the television network presidents asked them to set aside one hour a night

for family-friendly entertainment, concluding with an appeal to the presidents:

*Safeguarding the Family Hour cannot be compelled; rather, we appeal to your corporate conscience to reconsider the decision to allow this important public trust to disintegrate. Bringing back the Family Hour would show parents that their concerns are understood, and that the welfare of families will, if for just an hour, be promoted and protected. We therefore ask you to reinstate this voluntary covenant with American families.*

The efforts seemingly paid off. The press took notice, and the industry took some first steps in the right direction. For the 2002 fall television season, ABC announced the launch of an 8 p.m. programming block catering to families called the "Happy Hour." The WB network retained family-oriented shows for the fall season and began developing new ones. Many large corporations became eager to support more family-friendly programming.

This new study, PTC's first comprehensive examination of Family Hour programming since 2001, will reveal whether or not broadcasters have cleaned up their act.

### **III. Study Parameters and Methodology:**

For this analysis, the PTC reviewed all entertainment programs originally airing on the six major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, CW, and MyNetworkTV) in the Family Hour during three separate two-week periods of the 2006-2007 television season: November 2-15, 2006; February 1-14, 2007; and April 26-May 9, 2007. These three periods were selected from the three most recent television "sweeps" periods, and were chosen because sweeps periods contain a high proportion of new and original network programs, relative to the amount of repeat programming. This sample allowed for a thorough, comprehensive assessment of original Family Hour television content.

Family Hour programming is defined as including any program with a start time between 8 and 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and between 7 and 9 p.m. on Sundays, in the Eastern time zone (7 to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday in the Central time zone). All programs were analyzed in their entirety, even in the few cases where a lengthy show extended past 9 p.m. (Eastern).

The sample included 208 aired episodes from 54 television series and four specials, for a total of 180 hours of original Family Hour programming. Tallied separately and not included in the major findings section of this study were 37.5 hours of reruns airing during the Family Hour. Findings from the analysis of reruns are presented in a special section of this report.

All programming was recorded and then viewed by trained content analysts. For each scene within a program, the analyst coded every instance of foul language, violence, and sexual content. Foul language was coded for specific words uttered in programming and certain related euphemisms – such as the word "screw" when used as a euphemism for "fuck." Also coded were bleeped and otherwise obscured language, including words that were partially obscured but identifiable, as well as words that were bleeped but could not be definitively determined by context or lip-reading.

Analysts recorded all incidents of verbal and visual sexual material, including sexual references; anatomical references in a sexual context; allusions to specific sex acts like anal, oral, and kinky or fetishistic behavior; visual depictions of sex acts; sexually suggestive gestures; strippers; suggestive dancing; nudity and various forms of implied or pixilated nudity.

Various forms of violent content were monitored, including person-on-person violence, self-inflicted violence, and general mayhem (explosions, car crashes, fires, etc.). Analysts tracked deaths and injuries, displays of blood as a result of violence, gun threats, medical violence such as surgeries and autopsies, fantasy and supernatural violence, as well as graphic descriptions of violence and verbal threats.

## IV. Results

### A. Inappropriate Content in the Family Hour – OVERVIEW

This analysis comprised 208 episodes for a total of 180 hours of original programming containing 2,246 instances of objectionable violent, profane and sexual content, or 12.48 instances per television hour. Thus, on average one such instance occurred every 4.8 minutes. Since the average hour of prime-time broadcast television contains about 43 minutes of non-commercial programming, this indicates that content inappropriate for children occurs about once for every 3.5 minutes of non-commercial airtime.

Overall, only 10.6% of the 208 episodes were free of violent and sexual content and foul language. In fact, only four series out of 54 that aired original episodes had no foul language, sexual content, or violence. 76.4% of episodes contained foul language, 54.8% contained sexual content, and 46.2% contained violent content.

- In 117 hours of scripted programming, 50 hours of unscripted programming, and 13 hours of game shows, there were:
  - ✓ 815 uses of foul language, or 4.53 per hour;
  - ✓ 677 sexual scenes or spoken sexual references, or 3.76 per hour;
  - ✓ 754 instances of violence, or 4.19 per hour.
- The cleanest network overall was CW with 9.44 instances of objectionable content per hour.
- The worst network overall was Fox with 20.78 instances of objectionable content per hour.
- Scripted television was by far the most offensive overall and in each of the three content areas, with 16.68 incidents of overall foul content per hour, compared to 0.31 per hour for game shows and 5.82 per hour for unscripted programs.
- *Deal or No Deal* (NBC), *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* (Fox), *Identity* (NBC), and *Grease: You're the One That I Want* (NBC) all contained no offensive content.

**TABLE 1**

**Family Hour Original Programming, 2006-2007**

**Number of Incidents of Sexual Content, Foul Language and Violence**

Language	815
Sex	677
Violence	754
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,246</b>

- *7th Heaven* (CW) was the cleanest scripted series overall with 1.75 instances of objectionable content per hour.
- *American Dad* (Fox) had the highest frequency of offensive content with 52 instances per hour.

### B. Changes in Family Hour Content Since the 2000-2001 TV Season

In 2001, the Parents Television Council released its last Special Report analyzing Family Hour programming. That study, based on the first two weeks of the November 2000, February 2001, and May 2001 sweeps periods, found per-hour rates of sexual content at 3.08 and violence at 2.75. Foul language, including the words "hell," "damn," and "crap," occurred at rates of 6.07 times per hour.

Between 2000-2001 and 2006-2007, the incidence of sexual content increased by 22.1% (to 3.76 per hour) while violent content increased by 52.4% (to 4.19 per hour). Meanwhile, the incidence of foul language, though still disturbingly high in the Family Hour, actually decreased by 25.4% from the earlier time period (to 4.53 incidents per hour). However, that decline obscures some interesting changes which are explained further below. Overall, the rate of objectionable content increased by 4.9% from 11.90 incidents per hour to 12.48 incidents per hour.

**TABLE 2****Changes in Family Hour Content since 2000-01****Average Number of Incidents Per Hour of Sexual Content, Foul Language and Violence**

	2000-2001 Incidents per hour	2006-2007 Incidents per hour	Percentage Change
Sex	3.08	3.76	22.1
Violence	2.75	4.19	52.4
Language	6.07	4.53	-25.4
Total	11.90	12.48	4.9

**C. Worst Network**

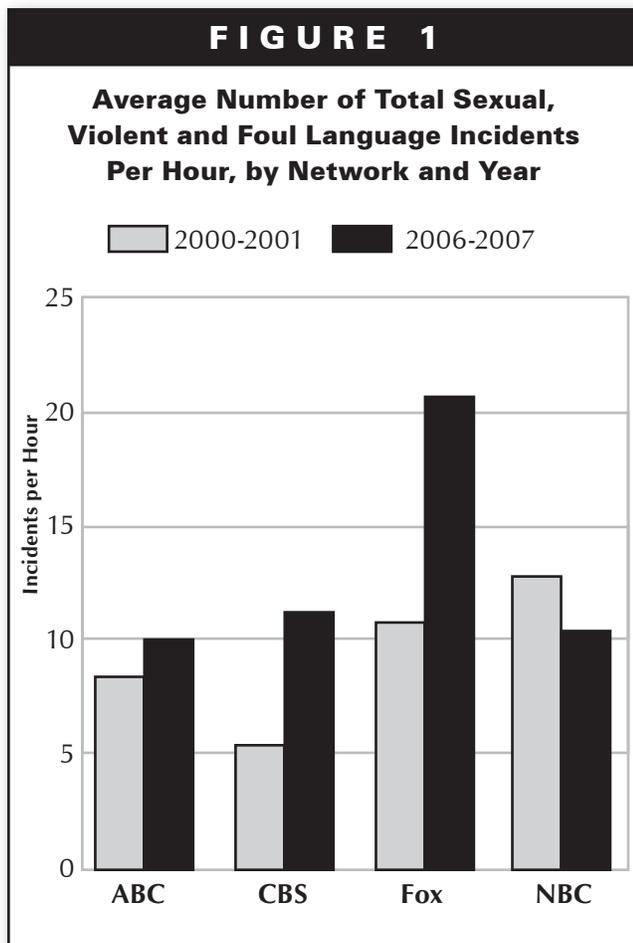
Overall, Fox is the most offensive network during the Family Hour. In spite of having one of TV's most popular family television shows, *American Idol*, on their schedule, Fox remains the network with the most violence and most overall offensive content.

**TABLE 3****Average Number of Incidents Per Hour of Sexual Content, Foul Language and Violence**

	PROGRAM HOURS	INCIDENTS PER HOUR			Total
		Language	Sex	Violence	
Fox	33.5	4.18	5.22	11.37	20.78
CBS	32.0	4.88	2.31	4.56	11.75
MyNetworkTV	24.0	5.58	2.92	3.00	11.50
NBC	25.0	5.52	3.76	1.08	10.36
ABC	37.0	3.49	5.97	0.54	10.00
CW	28.5	4.14	1.51	3.79	9.44
all original programs	180.0	4.53	3.76	4.19	12.48

The other five broadcast networks had between 9.44 and 11.75 incidents of offensive content per hour and Fox had a whopping 20.78 per hour -- roughly twice as much as the other networks.

Figure 1 shows the change in the amount of objectionable content between 2001 and 2007 for the four broadcast networks that existed during both time periods, revealing increases on three of the four networks (ABC, CBS, and Fox). Only NBC exhibits a decrease. A closer examination of the changes over time in each content category (language, sexual content, and violence) for each network is shown in the Appendix (Table A), and reveals that the bulk of the degradation of the Family Hour is due to increased sexual and violent content now aired in the early evening by Fox and CBS, with per-hour levels of both types of content more than doubling on both networks. Sexual content on CBS increased from 0.34 per hour to 2.31 per hour, a 579% increase. Violent content on Fox increased from 2.16 per hour to 11.37 per hour, a 426% increase.



## D. Language

Whether written into a piece of scripted dialogue or uttered in a moment of aggravation on a reality program, foul language is found on almost every series airing during the Family Hour. The inappropriate language observed during Family Hour programming included the following words:

- ass
- bastard
- bitch
- crap
- damn
- dick
- douche/douche bag
- hell
- ho/whore
- jackass
- piss
- slut
- son of a bitch
- suck

Also aired were words like “screw” and other euphemisms for “fuck,” and foul language that had been bleeped or otherwise obscured, including bleeped versions of:

- ass
- asshole
- bitch
- dick
- fuck
- goddamn
- shit

and words that were bleeped but could not be definitively determined by context or lip-reading.

- There were 815 uses of foul language, or 4.53 per hour.
- 159 of 208 episodes contained foul language, or 76.4%.
- ABC averaged the least foul language during the Family Hour with 3.49 instances per hour.
- MyNetworkTV had the highest per-hour average with 5.58.

- *America's Funniest Home Videos* (ABC), *Grease: You're the One That I Want* (NBC), *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?* (Fox), *Vanished* (Fox), *Deal or No Deal* (NBC), and *Identity* (NBC) had no foul language.
- *Vanished* (Fox) was the cleanest scripted series, with no foul language.
- *My Name is Earl* (NBC) had the most foul language with 16.33 instances per hour.
- Scripted programming had 5.32 incidents of foul language per hour, while game shows had only 0.08 and unscripted shows had 3.82.

Though the incidence of foul language decreased by 25.4% overall, careful examination of the patterns reveals other interesting changes. In both the current study and the 2000-2001 study, analysts separated foul language into two categories – 1) the “minor” swear words “hell,” “damn,” and “crap,” and 2) all other swear words. Broken into these categories, the data show that the use of “hell,” “damn,” and “crap” decreased substantially since the earlier study, while utterances of other foul language declined much less – about 3%. So, while usage rates of the word “crap” declined by more than half, for example, the word “bitch” was heard much more often (58%) than before. More information on the average numbers per hour is shown in the Appendix.

The use of many of the stronger words and bleeping of certain words has increased since the 2000-2001 study. The total number of bleeped words per hour increased by 40%. On its face, this might appear to be a welcome trend – if bleeping is being used more often to obscure words that were formerly aired unedited. However, that does not appear to be the case. Rather than bleeping out formerly aired words like “damn,” the bleeping has been used on language like “fuck” and “shit” which formerly did not air at all. Per-hour rates of bleeped “fuck” nearly doubled (93% increase) while rates of bleeped “shit” increased more than fourfold. Also notable is that some words such as “slut” and “whore” that had been bleeped in 2000-2001 aired unedited, though seldom, in the most recent period. So, despite the welcome overall decrease in foul language per hour, trends in the frequency of stronger language and permissiveness of certain types of sexual insults warrant careful monitoring.

## **FOUL LANGUAGE EXAMPLES:**

A groom talks about his fiancée's plans for a male stripper at her bachelorette party.

Rich: “He can shake his [bleeped ‘dick’] all he wants in her face.”

***America's Trashiest Weddings*** — MyNetworkTV, 5/1/07

Catalina: “I scrub toilets all day and at night I dance for drunk losers who flick nickels at my ass.”

***My Name is Earl*** — NBC, 11/9/06

Cecile: “[Muted ‘fucking’] ugly, mother [muted ‘fucking’] Sheree? I can't even stand to look at her. I [muted ‘fucking’] hate her. I'm not going to [muted ‘fucking’] kiss ass, [muted ‘fuck’] that.”

***Beauty and the Geek*** — CW, 2/14/07

Herc: “Well, the poor bastard has Lou Gering's disease.”

Jason tells Herc that he thinks Lyla might be sleeping with his best friend.

Herc: “You're going to look that son of a bitch in the eye and you [will] see what is up.”

***Friday Night Lights*** — NBC, 11/14/06

Nicole: “Because I was kind of a bitch that night? Not a raging bitch, not a bitch in general, just a bitch that night?”

***The Class*** — CBS, 2/12/07

## **E. Sexual Content**

Content analysis revealed that sexual content was frequent and diverse. Prime-time soap operas and sitcoms led the way with their scripted innuendo and sexual encounters. Viewers were exposed to visual depictions and verbal references to sexual content including partial nudity and pixelated nudity, adultery, oral sex, masturbation, pornography, anal sex, incest, and homosexuality.

- There were 677 sexual scenes or spoken sexual references, or 3.76 per hour.
- Since 2000-2001, the incidence of sexual content has increased by 22.1%.

- 114 of 208 episodes contained sexual content, or 54.8%.
- CW had the least sexual content with 1.51 instances per hour.
- ABC had the most sexual content with 5.97 instances per hour.
- *Deal or No Deal* (NBC), *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* (Fox), *Identity* (NBC), *Grease: You're the One That I Want* (NBC), *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* (ABC), *The Amazing Race: All Stars* (CBS), *Survivor: Fiji* (CBS), *The Amazing Race 10* (CBS), *Beauty and the Geek* (CW), *24* (Fox), *American Idol* (Fox), *Nanny 911* (Fox), *Standoff* (Fox), *The Biggest Loser* (NBC) all had no sexual content.
- *24* (Fox) and *Standoff* (Fox) were the cleanest scripted series, with no sexual content.
- *The War at Home* (Fox) had the most sexual content with 33 instances per hour.
- Scripted television had 5.13 instances of sexual content per hour, game shows had 0.23, and unscripted shows had 1.48 per hour.

### **SEXUAL CONTENT EXAMPLES:**

An apparently incestuous relationship:

Aaron sits on the beach, contemplating his past with Brooke, a lover he was recently informed is his sister. His memories play out in flashbacks. Aaron wakes up in his bed. Brooke walks in wearing only her bra and panties in an open robe. Another of the memories depicts Aaron and Brooke passionately kissing, and Aaron kissing Brooke's body.

Though these lovers are not actually siblings, the scenes in this episode imply that they are.

***Wicked Wicked Games*** — MyNetworkTV, 2/13/07

Lyrics from a song about a political group:

"We like each other's butts! And big old spending cuts."

"We like to pack fudge and heat!"

***American Dad*** — Fox, 11/5/06

Wilhelmina: "Ah, Fabia. Silly, little, delusional Fabia. I'm sure you and your little bitch will

look fabulous in anything. Look at that face. It is flawless. My God it is flawless, who did your eyes, Shapiro?"

Fabia: "Fabia's had no work done!"

Wilhelmina: "Please, there's enough left over skin from your surgeries to make a bed for my cat."

Fabia: "For your information, this no surgery. This duck sauce."

Wilhelmina: "Excuse me?"

Fabia: "The sauce from a man duck. That make the baby duck. I had a doctor, a doctor Wong on Spring Street. He give me the injection into my face, and poof – 10 years gone. And you could look 65 again."

Wilhelmina: "Well as lovely as that sounds, I'm a few years away from having a duck quack off in my face."

***Ugly Betty*** — ABC, 2/1/07

Toby walks in and sees Michael with his arm inserted down the front of his pants and his finger sticking up and out through his fly. Michael then makes his finger go limp as if it were his penis losing its erection.

Michael asks Toby where he has been and to prove that he wasn't the parking lot flasher. He yells, "Let's see your penis!"

***The Office*** — NBC, 5/3/07

Kat and her boyfriend, Benjamin, are outside of Ellie's apartment kissing. When they finish, Kat says, "Let's go." Benjamin then starts adjusting his pants. Kat says,

Kat: "You need a minute?" (She motions towards his crotch or pants pocket area.)

Benjamin: "That was my cell phone."

Kat: "Oh. Well I'm kind of embarrassed for what I was doing to it. Might have just made a call."

***The Class*** — CBS, 2/5/07

Cully and Erika are in bed together. She's only wearing panties and a bra; he's shirtless. He gets on top of her and is kissing her. She wraps her legs around him and there are close-ups of him rubbing her bare legs and of their bodies grinding together.

***Desire*** — MyNetworkTV, 11/7/06

Mike, a teenager, is visiting the priest he thinks might have hit on him. He is wearing his basketball jersey and is trying to get Father Connelly to hit on him again.

Mike: "Hey Father Connelly. How's it going?"

Priest: "I'm sorry, you're, uh?"

Mike: "Mike, I met you the other day at the youth group. I think you called me a 'sweet, handsome, young man.'"

Priest: "Oh yes. I remember you now. What can I do for you Mike?"

Mike: "Well I was just shooting hoops on your court and I thought I would just pop by and see how you were doing."

Priest: "I'm fine."

Mike: "Yes. Yes you are."

***The War at Home*** — Fox, 2/1/07

## F. Violence

Violent content, particularly the most graphic depictions, tends to be concentrated in certain types of programs. While reality shows, game shows, and sitcoms tend to have very little graphic violence, crime dramas and prime-time soaps do contain considerable violent content, even during the Family Hour.

- There were 754 instances of violence, or 4.19 per hour.
- Since 2000-2001, violent content has increased by 52.4%.
- 96 of 208 episodes contained violent content, or 46.2%.
- ABC had the least amount of violence with 0.54 instances per hour.
- Fox had the most violence with 11.37 instances per hour.
- *Deal or No Deal* (NBC), *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* (Fox), *Identity* (NBC), *Grease: You're the One That I Want* (NBC), *Wife Swap* (NBC), *The Amazing Race: All Stars* (CBS), *Survivor: Fiji* (CBS), *The Amazing Race 10* (CBS), *American*

*Idol* (Fox), *The Biggest Loser* (NBC), *How I Met Your Mother* (CBS), *The Class* (CBS), *The New Adventures of Old Christine* (CBS), *7th Heaven* (CW), *America's Next Top Model* (CW), *Gilmore Girls* (CW), *Till Death* (Fox), *1 vs. 100* (NBC), and *Thank God You're Here* (NBC) all had no violence

- *How I Met Your Mother* (CBS), *The Class* (CBS), *The New Adventures of Old Christine* (CBS), *7th Heaven* (CW), *Gilmore Girls* (CW), and *Till Death* (Fox) were the cleanest scripted series, with no violence.
- *24* (Fox) was the worst series for non-animated violence with 28 instances per hour.
- *The Simpsons* (Fox) had 30 instances of animated violence per hour.
- Scripted programs had 6.22 instances of violence per hour, game shows had none and unscripted shows averaged less than one instance per hour.

### VIOLENCE EXAMPLES:

Booth and Brennan come into a room to look at a dead man. He has been decomposing for several weeks. Flies buzz around his body. There is blood on his shirt and his face has rotted beyond recognition.

***Bones*** — Fox, 2/14/07

A man holds Sarah hostage in a hotel room and tortures her. He threatens her with a hot iron and also repeatedly holds her head under water, partially drowning her each time.

***Prison Break*** — Fox, 11/13/06

A man holds Morris's head underwater in a tub. When Morris's head is pulled out of the water, blood can be seen on his undershirt. A bloody wound can be seen on his neck.

...

Fayed grabs a drill and goes over to Morris.

Fayed: "Your time is up!"

Fayed begins to drill into Morris. Blood is shown spattering on the faces of the men who are watching. Morris screams in agony and falls to

the floor. The floor has a puddle of blood on it where he was standing.

Fayed: "I will use this all over your body until you die of shock or blood loss. Then I will just find someone else to do what I need. Do you understand?"

...He then walks over to Morris and presses the button on the drill.

Morris whimpers in pain as Fayed brings the drill closer to him.

**24** — Fox, 2/12/07

A man is golfing when his club sets off a land mine and causes a giant explosion. In the following scene showing the aftermath, human entrails are on the golf course. The man's dead body is lying face down.

**NCIS** — CBS, 11/7/06

There is a firefight between the townspeople of New Bern and Jericho. There is intense gunfire until Johnston arrives with the tank. The tank scares away the citizens of New Bern and the tank fires a bomb into the New Bern area. Everyone from Jericho cheers.

Eric notices that Johnston has been shot in the chest and is bleeding.

**Jericho** — CBS 5/9/07

Chloe is with her boyfriend watching a movie.

They suddenly hear a loud bang. They run into the lobby of the house. There is an elevator there.

They see that the elevator door is not closing all the way. They look down and see a woman's leg is stuck in the door.

They open the door and there is a woman lying on the elevator floor. There is a large pool of blood underneath her. The puddle is getting bigger, which means she was shot just seconds before. There is a gun near the woman's head.

**Smallville** — CW, 5/3/07

A traffic controller is shot. He falls to the floor and there is blood coming out from his neck where he has been shot.

**Standoff** — Fox, 11/7/06

## G. Reruns

During the study period, five of the six broadcast networks aired rerun programming, totaling 37.5 hours. Sometimes, networks choose to re-air during the Family Hour adult-themed programming that had originally aired later in the evening, thus exposing young viewers to programs and content originally intended for mature audiences. These reruns were analyzed separately in order to determine whether the content of rebroadcasts differed from original Family Hour programming.

The examination of reruns was performed using program content taken from the original airdate for each episode. Content was analyzed using the same procedures used for the original programming, with the following results:

- Rerun programming contained 19.76 instances of objectionable content per hour, 58% more than original programming.
- Sexual content occurred at 6.75 instances per hour in reruns, dramatically higher (80%) than the 3.76 in original programming.
- Violent material was also much higher (115%) at 9.01 instances per hour versus 4.19 per hour in original programming.
- 4.0 instances of foul language was used per hour in the reruns, slightly less (11%) than the 4.5 per hour found in the original programming.
- When rebroadcasts and original programming are combined, the rates of foul language, sexual content, and violence were 4.44, 4.28, and 5.02 incidents per hour, respectively.
- The total number of instances of objectionable content on all networks combined is 13.73 per hour when reruns are included, versus 12.48 for original programming only.
- ABC's 13.4 sexual incidents per hour in reruns caused the greatest percentage increase (31.3%) to 7.8 instances per hour overall.
- ABC's 7.0 violent incidents per hour in reruns caused the greatest percentage increase (303.7%) to a still relatively low 2.2 instances per hour overall.
- 95% of the total rerun hours were aired by ABC, CBS, Fox and the CW network.

**TABLE 4****Rerun Programming in the Family Hour****Average Number of Incidents Per Hour of Sexual Content, Foul Language and Violence**

	INCIDENTS PER HOUR			
	Language	Sex	Violence	Total
<b><u>ORIGINAL Programs</u></b>	4.53	3.76	4.19	12.48
ABC originals	3.49	5.97	0.54	10.00
CBS originals	4.88	2.31	4.56	11.75
CW originals	4.14	1.51	3.79	9.44
Fox originals	4.18	5.22	11.37	20.78
MNTV originals	5.58	2.92	3.00	11.50
NBC originals	5.52	3.76	1.08	10.36
<b><u>RERUN Programs</u></b>	4.00	6.75	9.01	19.76
ABC reruns	4.72	13.36	7.04	25.12
CBS reruns	3.14	2.00	21.14	26.29
CW reruns	1.54	2.62	4.00	8.15
Fox reruns	5.58	5.79	8.00	19.37
MNTV reruns	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NBC reruns	3.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
<b><u>ALL Programs</u></b>	4.44	4.28	5.02	13.73
ABC all programs	3.80	7.84	2.18	13.82
CBS all programs	4.56	2.26	7.54	14.36
CW all programs	3.66	1.71	3.83	9.20
Fox all programs	4.49	5.35	10.63	20.47
MNTV all programs	5.58	2.92	3.00	11.50
NBC all programs	5.33	3.48	1.00	9.81

The impact of rerun programming is perhaps best illustrated by the violent content on the CBS network. CBS ran 32 hours of original episodes during the Family Hour study period, and only seven hours of reruns. Only 15 of the new episodes (40%) that aired during the study period had any violent content at all. Yet, all 7 of the reruns during CBS's Family Hour contained violent content, ranging from 12 to 40 instances of violence per hour. There were more violent acts and depictions in the seven hours of reruns (148) than in all 32 hours of new programming (146). This huge concentration of violence in the Family Hour could be reduced dramatically if CBS and other networks were more diligent about keeping their most objectionable programming in the later timeslots where they belong.

ABC, meanwhile, dramatically increased the amount of child-unfriendly content by airing over 25 incidents of foul language, sexual content and violence per hour in rerun programs – pushing the network from the 2nd cleanest content overall to the 4th cleanest of six networks when reruns are included. ABC could be applauded for the low level of violence in original Family Hour programs, were it not for their choice to air programs such as *Grey's Anatomy* in the early evening, thus providing families with over 7 violent acts and over 13 sexual incidents per hour in reruns.

### **Examples from Reruns**

#### **SEXUAL CONTENT EXAMPLES:**

The fifteen year old patient confesses to Cameron that she had sex with her father, but says that she seduced him.

Girl: "He's not a bad person, I seduced him."

Cameron: "You're the child, he's the adult. He has the responsibility"

Girl: "I got him drunk, I had to get him drunk, I wanted to have sex with him."

Cameron: "You're sexually attracted to your father?"

Girl: "No, but by sleeping with him, now he lets me do whatever I want. I also slept with my photographer, my financial manager, and my tutor... come on, we all do it."

Cameron: "No, we don't. After your father slept with you, you were traumatized."

Girl: "My dad was last."

The doctors later discover that the same patient has testicles that never descended and actually is a hermaphrodite. House informs her bluntly. Both she and her father are outraged and say that it must be a joke. House says it is not a joke, but that calling her father a "homo" would be a joke (because he had engaged in intercourse with her). The girl jumps out of bed and takes off her robe. Standing naked in front of House she insists that she is a girl.

House: "Put your clothes on, we're going to cut your balls off, and it'll be fine."

**House** — original airdate 2/20/06 at 8 p.m., re-aired 5/7/07, Fox

Meredith and her friends talk about the fact that Larry is having an affair with his assistant and perhaps his medical condition is his punishment. Christina reminds Meredith that she and Derek are still unscathed after their affair while Derek was still married.

Meredith: "Talk about divine retribution."

Izzie: "What?"

Meredith: "He sleeps with his assistant and a carnivorous fish lodges itself in his penis. That's instant karma if I've ever seen it."

Christina: "Yeah well Derek wasn't struck by lightning and neither were you."

Meredith: "Addison showed up. I had months of pain and self loathing. Crazy ranting mother and a near drowning off of the side of a dock. It's certainly no fish in my hoo-hoo but it's certainly not an easy ride."

Christina: "Yeah well I've cheated on my boyfriends and I'm fine. Am I the only one?"

**Grey's Anatomy** — original airdate 4/26/07 9 p.m., re-aired 4/27/07, ABC

## **VIOLENCE EXAMPLES:**

In the coroner's lab, medical examiner Al is shown holding a portion of Tim's vertebrae. He has blood all over his hands. He pops the bullet out from in between the bones. He then shows Gil, a crime scene investigator, the heart and describes the path of the bullet through the heart tissue. Gil picks up the heart while Al talks about it. A graphic internal picture shows the bullet passing through the heart and lodging in the spine. Gil asks about the gunshot to the head and Al shows him the brain. Gil picks it up and holds the brain in his hand and pokes his finger in the bullet hole.

**C.S.I.** — original airdate 1/26/06 9 p.m. rerun on 4/28/07, CBS

A flashback shows Lucas, a young teen, holding a nail gun on his mother, Brenda, after he overheard her trying to pay Lamplly to kill Gary. Brenda screams that Lucas has to kill her to stop her from killing Gary. Lucas shoots Brenda once in the chest and then a few more times until the woman falls and dies. Blood pours from Brenda's wounds and Lucas looks devastated by what he has done.

**C.S.I. Miami** — original airdate 11/14/05 10 p.m., rerun on 2/3/07, CBS

One reason the levels of sex, language, and violence are so high during the Family Hour is the scheduling choices made by the networks. The networks choose to re-air some of their most sexual and violent programming from later timeslots again during Family Hour timeslots – *C.S.I.*, *C.S.I.: Miami*, *C.S.I.: New York*, *Criminal Minds*, and *Cold Case* (CBS), and *Grey's Anatomy* (ABC). Perhaps more confounding is the placement of their cleaner shows. For example, on both November 2 and November 9, 2006, NBC aired the adult-oriented and sometimes-racy sitcoms *My Name is Earl* and *The Office* at 8:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., followed at 9:00 p.m. by the completely clean *Deal or No Deal*. Instead of protecting families by flipping these timeslots, NBC ignored the millions of children in the Family Hour audience. Similarly, in both February and May sweeps study period Wednesdays, Fox aired the violent and dark series *Bones* at 8:00 p.m. and the wildly popular talent show *American Idol* at 9:00 p.m. *American Idol* has no sexual content or violence and only very minor language issues.

## V. Conclusion

The data collected for this study demonstrate that the Family Hour is unsafe, and is becoming increasingly hostile to children and family audiences over time.

Analysis of 180 hours of original programming and 37.5 hours of reruns reveals that the problem of unsuitable content in the early evening continues unabated. With over 12 instances of inappropriate content every television hour, resulting in one event every 3.5 minutes of non-commercial programming, and even more when reruns are included, the situation demands a remedy.

Though broadcasters claim that they care about the concerns of parents, and are working to help parents control their televisions, their actions do not demonstrate such concern. Though they have pledged their dedication to upholding broadcast standards, their legal departments have filed lawsuits seeking to allow them to air expletives any time, day or night. Meanwhile, they race against one another in search of “edgier” material to air – and while programming later in prime time becomes raunchier, more and more seeps, or is pushed, into the Family Hour. Though they have promoted multi-million dollar campaigns to highlight parental controls based on content ratings and the V-chip, parents have found such tools useless. As shown in previously published Parents Television Council studies, the TV ratings are confusing to parents and are applied inconsistently by the networks. Truly, the fox is guarding the henhouse.

Parents may feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the media messages bombarding their children, even in the traditional Family Hour. But

parents need to know that they are not helpless. Something can be done.

Advertisers need to do more to support positive, family-friendly programming during the early evening, committing their advertising dollars to clean shows, and exerting economic pressure on the broadcast networks to provide more Family Friendly programming during the first hour of prime time.

The industry must provide parents with a meaningful ratings system, one that is accurate, consistent, and transparent and will adequately warn parents about potentially offensive content. This is especially important during the first hour of prime time when you have the largest number of children in the television viewing audience.

Parents who are concerned about TV’s influence on impressionable children cannot just passively accept the current state of broadcast television. They must actively oppose the broadcast networks’ efforts to obliterate decency standards by pressuring their local broadcast affiliates to refuse to air programs containing high levels of inappropriate sex, violence and profanity during the Family Hour and by pressuring the advertisers to stop underwriting offensive Family Hour content.

Finally, the broadcast networks, who are given access to a public resource, i.e. the broadcast airwaves, need to fulfill their public interest obligation by bringing back the Family Hour, because our children are watching.

---

*The Alarming Family Hour: No Place for Children* was researched and written by Aubree Bowling, PTC Senior Entertainment Analyst

**APPENDIX TABLE A****Network Content and Changes Since 2000-2001**

	2000-2001 Incidents per hour				2006-2007 Incidents per hour				Percent Change			
	Language*	Language	Sex	Violence	Language*	Language	Sex	Violence	Language*	Language	Sex	Violence
All original programming	2.57	6.07	3.08	2.75	2.48	4.53	3.76	4.19	-3.5	-25.4	22.1	52.4
ABC	1.55	3.10	4.83	0.28	2.05	3.49	5.97	0.54	32.5	12.6	23.7	93.1
CBS	1.14	3.48	0.34	1.74	2.63	4.88	2.31	4.56	130.3	40.2	580.1	162.2
FOX	3.54	6.97	2.05	2.16	2.35	4.18	5.22	11.37	-33.6	-40.0	154.8	426.5
NBC	2.24	5.76	5.73	1.15	2.60	5.52	3.76	1.08	16.1	-4.2	-34.4	-6.1
UPN	5.59	13.64	3.55	8.97								
WB	1.71	4.26	3.12	2.68								
CW	2.35	4.14	1.51	3.79								
MyTV	2.96	5.58	2.92	3.00								

\* Language calculated without the words "hell," "damn," and "crap."

**APPENDIX TABLE B****Changes in Family Hour Language Since 2000-01**

	2000-2001 Incidents per hour	2006-2007 Incidents per hour	Percentage change
With H/D/C*	6.07	4.53	-25.4
Without H/D/C*	2.57	2.48	-3.5

\*H/D/C = the words "Hell," "Damn," and "Crap"

**APPENDIX TABLE C****Frequency of Foul Language  
Family Hour — Original Programming**

	Incidents	Per Hour
hell	195	1.08
ass	134	0.74
damn	134	0.74
bitch	46	0.26
crap	40	0.22
son of a bitch	29	0.16
piss	26	0.14
suck	22	0.12
screw	21	0.12
bastard	16	0.09
euphemism for fuck	16	0.09
ho/whore	8	0.04
slut	5	0.03
jackass	3	0.02
douche/douche bag	2	0.01
dick	1	0.01
.....		
bleep (unknown)	54	0.30
bleeped fuck	30	0.17
bleeped shit	15	0.08
pixelated/obscured mouth	9	0.05
bleeped ass	4	0.02
bleeped cocksucker	1	0.01
bleeped goddamn	1	0.01
bleeped bitch	1	0.01
bleeped dick	1	0.01
bleeped asshole	1	0.01
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>4.53</b>

## ABOUT THE PTC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PARENTS TELEVISION COUNCIL™**

**WEST COAST HEADQUARTERS  
707 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 2075  
Los Angeles, California 90017  
(213) 629-9255**

**EAST COAST OFFICE  
325 South Patrick Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
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