



Comments on the Release of *Teen Sexual Exploitation: TV's Newest Target*

By Tim Winter, President of the Parents Television Council

Good day to everyone from Los Angeles. Thank you for joining us.

My name is Tim Winter and I am president of the Parents Television Council. The PTC is a non-partisan, non-profit grassroots organization whose mission is to protect children and families from graphic sex, violence and profanity in entertainment.

The PTC goes about its work through a combination of education and advocacy programs. Our research department, led by a Ph.D. in psychology and staffed by trained entertainment research analysts, records and analyzes all primetime broadcast television programming. They note every instance of sex, violence and profanity – as well as every advertiser – into a proprietary computer database called the Entertainment Tracking System, or ETS.

ETS allows us to provide helpful data on our website for free so that parents can make more informed media consumption choices for their families.

In addition to providing our advocacy efforts with empirical data of what is airing on the publicly-owned airwaves, the data also provide us an opportunity to report on content trends. And today we are releasing a new report, entitled *TV's Newest Target: Teen Sexual Exploitation – The Prevalence and Trivialization of Teen Sexual Exploitation on Primetime TV*.

This is the third report by the PTC that touches on the issue of the entertainment media's sexualization of young girls. Concerned by the growing volume and degree of sexualization we're seeing, late last year the PTC launched a new project called 4 Every Girl. The mission of 4 Every Girl is to combat the sexualization of girls by advocating for a media environment where young girls are honored, valued and represented by healthy, respectful images. If you have not yet done so, I urge you to go to www.4EveryGirl.com and learn more about this project.

I would like to dedicate my opening remarks today to a facility here in Los Angeles called Stuart House. I was unaware of the existence of Stuart House until this morning, when I read the front page article in today's Los Angeles Times. I would also like to thank the other participants on today's call: Dr. Delman Coates, Dr. Meg Meeker, and Holly Austin Smith.

In the year 2012, television advertisers spent 76 Billion Dollars in the United States. The sole purpose of spending each and every one of those 76 Billion Dollars was to change the behavior of the viewer. The ability to change the behavior of the viewer doesn't stop when the commercial is over and the program

resumes. More than a thousand research studies confirm what parents instinctively know to be true: children are impacted by the entertainment content they consume.

Today's report is intended to shed light on a new and very troubling trend we're seeing: There is a growing amount of primetime television programming that is sexually exploitative; and much of that content is being used as a punch line to a joke.

PTC researchers adopted the UN Secretary-General's definition of "sexual exploitation", and applied it to four weeks of original programming that aired on the five major primetime broadcast television networks.

Study results revealed that out of 238 scripted episodes which aired during the study period, 150 episodes (63%) contained sexual content in scenes that were associated with females and 33% of the episodes contained sexual content that rose to the level of sexual exploitation.

The likelihood that sexual exploitation would be considered humorous increased to 43% when the sexual exploitation involved underage female characters. Topics that targeted underage girls and were presented as humorous included: sexual violence, sex trafficking, sexual harassment, pornography, and stripping.

- Although an adult female character was more likely to have sexualizing dialogue or depictions in their scenes, the likelihood that a scene would include sexual exploitation was higher if the female characters were young adults or younger.
- The likelihood that a scene would include sexual exploitation was highest when the female characters were underage.
- Sexually exploitative topics targeting underage girls were more likely to be humorous (42.85%) compared to adult women (33.02%).
- Topics that targeted underage girls and were presented as jokes included: Sexual violence (child molestation), sex trafficking, sexual harassment, pornography, and stripping.
- Pornography (66%) and stripping (65%) were the 2 forms of exploitation most likely to be written into the scripts as punch lines.
- Sexually exploitative content was typically presented in the form of dialogue rather than depictions. However, the dialogue was significantly more crude and explicit than the depictions.

Today the Parents Television Council publicly asks, "when is it appropriate to laugh at the sexual exploitation of a child?" How are our children and our society being impacted by entertainment content that utilizes sexual exploitation as humor?

We hope this report stirs an urgent dialog on this question, and we hope it brings light to those who are on the battlefield fighting the real-life sexualization – and sexual exploitation – of children.

Thank you.