

# Media Giants Glorify Violence

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**By Jeffrey M. McCall**

GREENCASTLE, Ind.—The nation struggles with how to address the presence of violence in the culture. Rightfully, people discuss gun laws, policing and mental-health support. Citizens are protesting and gathering at government buildings to demand action.

As the opponents of violence activate, they should make sure to demonstrate in front of the big corporate media towers in which decisions are made to saturate American culture with violent content.

The big media industry has fattened itself financially by infusing entertainment, and even news content, with gratuitous, sensational, and gross violence.

Broadcast television, cable channels, movies, video games and websites deluge society with images of blood and gore, much of it dispensed with no socially redeeming message.

## **Spread the blame around**

Violence has been monetized and legitimized by greedy media producers who have figured out that audiences will always stop to gawk at the carnage.

- Sure, viewers share the blame for being unaware of the dangers of absorbing mediated violence. More viewers should simply reject content that floods society with weapons and blood.
- However, the corporations that profit from the violence have shown no cultural leadership and are happy to appeal to the lowest common denominator.
- The media industry refuses to invest financially or culturally in more-responsible program content because that takes effort and creativity. It is cheaper simply to pollute the nation’s collective psyche with explosions, torture, dismemberment and psychopathic behavior. Worse yet, the violence is often carried out by characters who are portrayed as somehow heroic.

## **Media affect the culture**

It has been said a society defines itself by the stories it tells.

The video/film industry now creates most of society’s stories. The media serve as culture creators. Sadly, the media overwhelm the roles of family, school and church in the lives of many people, particularly young Americans.

The cumulative effects of consuming pathologic and violent content must be seriously considered. The "entertainment" industry would have us believe that mediated garbage is just innocuous visual noise.

Media executives deny the negative influences of their own programming, but the question is not whether mediated messages affect culture, rather it is how and how much.

Advertisers wouldn't spend billions on television advertising if viewers couldn't be influenced through the messaging of electronic media.

### **Not excusing personal responsibility**

None of this discussion is to suggest that watching a movie or playing a violent video game prompts someone to go on a shooting rampage.

The creation of a society, however, in which violence surrounds impressionable minds must raise concerns.

People without more-suitable influences in their lives become encircled by a warped, media-generated, value-less world.

### **Reporting the violence**

Television news coverage of real-life violence is delivered in an emotion-driven, exploitive fashion that helps shock the nation, but insufficiently informs the nation.

Local newscasts fill up to a third of air time with shootings and other "cop shop" news, absent context or solutions.

The major networks and cable channels came out in force to cover the tragic shootings in Florida with saturation, emotive coverage designed to jolt viewers. Mass shootings are horrendous and shake the nation to its core.

The network and cable news channels, however, use such events to establish their breaking news brands and profile news personalities.

Grief-stricken families and student survivors were used as props in the news coverage. News of tragic events such as what happened in Parkland, Fla., do, of course, need comprehensive coverage.

### **Sea of violence**

The networks' overdone and misguided coverage, however, rhetorically signals to unstable people that they can, indeed, become relevant and the focus of entire networks.

Activists who seek to reduce violence in society should consider that fixing gun laws and mental health procedures could be of limited consequence if the culture continues to swim in a sea of mediated violence.

### **Media giants**

That violent culture is fueled by media giants such as Viacom, Comcast, Disney, Fox Entertainment and Time Warner. These corporations have glorified

violence across multiple media platforms and made tons of money in doing so.

In the wake of the Florida shooting, various corporations have severed ties with the National Rifle Association.

These corporations should also commit to withdrawing commercials from television channels that program violent shows that create cultural chaos.

Indeed, it will take a multifaceted and prolonged effort to fix the nation's cultural ills.

Concerned citizens must hold media corporations accountable for the role those media dispensers have played in creating violent culture. It's time to paint the placards and schedule the demonstrations in front of those media corporate headquarters.