

PRESS & MEDIA

Sex Without Consequences

"Sex in Primetime Television: 1979 Versus 1989" by Barry S. Sapolsky and Joseph O. Tabarlet, in *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (Fall 1991), Broadcast Education Assn., 1771 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Every couch potato knows that primetime television is full of sex. How full? To find out, Sapolsky and Tabarlet, both professors of communication at Florida State University, scrutinized a week's worth of 1989 primetime TV. Along with a team of graduate students, they hunted for instances of touching, kissing, hugging, and intercourse as well as sexual violence and sexual references. All told, they found that sex comes up once every four minutes during primetime. (Curiously, however, frequency tails off after 10 P.M.) A 1979 study, by contrast, found one sexual act or reference every five minutes.

To justify all of this on-screen steam, the networks assert that they are only reflecting society's shifting values. Critics, however, say that networks lure audiences with sex to gain higher ratings and more

ad revenue. Indeed, according to Sapolsky and Tabarlet, in 1989 the number one rated network, NBC, had the most sexual content (44 percent of all incidents). The number two network, ABC, came in at 41 percent. In 1979, NBC had the least amount of sex and was in last place, and ABC, with the most sex, was number one.

What bothers Sapolsky and Tabarlet most, however, is what has *not* changed on TV. Although the incidence of (and public concern over) teen pregnancies and dangerous sexual diseases has jumped, in 1989 only a tiny fraction (4.4 percent) of the networks' sexual material touched upon such issues. AIDS went completely unmentioned during the week under study. Television's celebration of sex without consequences, the authors say, reflects neither reality nor good sense.

Personals or Politics?

"Hip Weeklies are Hot!" by Ed Avis, in *The Quill* (Jan.-Feb. 1992), P.O. Box 77, Greencastle, Ind. 46135-0077.

The nation's daily newspapers are reporting the economic recession in their headlines and feeling it in their bottom lines. Advertising revenues have been shrinking; several dailies have folded. Meanwhile, reports Avis, associate editor of the *Quill*, free "alternative" weeklies are thriving.

From Phoenix to Boston, the alternatives have targeted the lucrative 18- to 34-year-old market "by doing what alternatives do best: keeping a skeptical eye on the establishment... providing comprehensive arts and entertainment coverage, concentrating on local issues, and serving heavy doses of wit and sarcasm." They also have succeeded in matching their audience to a strong advertising base of small merchants. Classified ads are an important source of revenue (and reader interest), especially personal ads that many innovative weeklies have tied into telephone voice

Too short, too quiet, too... not cool, and not rich. Now you know what the catch is. But if you can look beyond those shortcomings, you would find a warm, wonderful, sincere, caring human being with lots of love to share. This SBM professional, 33, 5ft.6in., 140lbs., is seeking a SF, 21-35, who still believes in love and enjoys dancing, theatre, music and nature. ☎ 58315.

ARE YOU A SINGLE FEMALE, (black or white, 5-35, intelligent, affectionate, athletic, slender, non-smoking, perhaps a little shy, w a good sense of humor and no dependents) interested in developing a lasting, monogamous relationship? I am a tall, good-looking SWM (6ft.1in., 185lbs., blue eyes, salt and pepper hair, 45, athletic body, creative mind, financially secure w own business) who loves music—jazz, blues, classical as opposed to top-40 and rap—skiing in the winter, loafing by the water in summer, foreign films, ethnic cuisine, champagne, reading, romance, quiet intimate evenings. ☎ 58345.

SBM, 39, businessman, educated, 5ft.9in., very handsome, very healthy, open-minded, enjoys biking, travel, tennis, progressive rock and jazz, classical music, seeking SF, 25-39, with similar interests for friendship, travel and whatever develops. ☎ 59182.

3, no children, successful professional, traditional values, many interests. '8-28 (any...)

ISO SBF. SWM, blue eyes, a would like to be married and... You're at least 5'10" a non-smoker who to music.

Sensitive Latin SWM, romantic, dependable and woman, 20-30, caring relationship or relationship.

WM 41, 5ft. 10in., spectacled, interested in plump, hair. Pursue should at least be of nationality.

SBM, twenty, 5ft.11in., more at local univer likes lunch-hour beer guitar/piano concert event. SBF, 18-25, games people, druggies please.

SWM, mid 30's, music (rock, folk, etc.)

In search of profits: Personal ads are a big money-maker for alternative newspapers.