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June 30, 2004

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RECEIVED

Ms. Marlene Dortch,
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

JUN 30 2004

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: *Ex Parte* Communication
Docket No. MB 03-15, Second Periodic Review of the Commission's
Rules and Policies Affecting the Conversion to Digital Television;
Docket No. MM 00-167, Children's Television Obligations of Digital
Television Broadcasters

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Monday, June 28, 2004, Dominic Perri, PSVratings, Inc. and Patricia Paoletta, counsel to PSVratings, Inc., met separately with Jordan Goldstein, advisor to Commissioner Copps, Stacy Robinson Fuller, advisor to Commissioner Abernathy, and Johanna Mikes Shelton, advisor to Commissioner Adelstein on the importance of requiring an open V-Chip in digital television sets to serve the public's interest in accessing objective and comprehensive ratings information on digital programming.

PSVratings, a ratings system independent of any programmer, does not critique or censor programming, but allows consumers to access ratings information on its website through a color-coded traffic light icon, thereby enabling consumers to make informed choices about entertainment content. The company provides a market-based solution consistent with the First Amendment. Companies and individual artists have the right to express themselves. The public also has a right to information that can help them determine the appropriateness of entertainment content for themselves, their children and their families, based upon their own individual standards.

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By providing such objective services to the market, PSVratings and other independent ratings systems allow the entertainment industry to focus on its primary mission -- providing entertainment. PSVratings and other independent systems can help broaden the market for content appropriate for individual consumers, based on their own or parents' preferences.

At each meeting, PSVratings took the opportunity to notify the Commissioners' advisors of the creation of the Coalition for Independent Ratings Services (CFIRS), of which PSVratings is a member (*see* www.independentratings.com). Coalition for Quality Children's Media/KIDS FIRST!, Grading the Movies, Critics, Inc./kids-in-mind.com, FamilyStyle Film Guide are also members of CFIRS, as noted in the attached press release on the formation of the Coalition.

PSVratings supports the Children's Media Policy Coalition's request that the Commission require an "open V-Chip" in DTV sets that supports access to multiple ratings systems, including those independent of the programmer such as the members of CFIRS.¹ PSVratings agrees with the Children's Media Policy Coalition that the Commission should "ensure that parents have access to the information they need to make appropriate viewing choices for their children" through use of innovative datacasting technologies and by "establishing an advisory committee to examine how to improve the ratings system".² PSVratings also supports the comments of the inventor of the V-Chip, Dr. Tim Collings, and other parties that have noted that current V-Chip technology is available to interoperate with several ratings systems.³

For purposes of better educating the public on the availability of independent ratings services, PSVratings suggested that the Commission's *Parents' Place* web page (*see*

¹ *See Testimony of Gloria Tristani, Representing the Public Interest, Public Airwaves Coalition and the Children's Media Policy Coalition, before the House Energy & Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Advancing the DTV Transition, at 7-9 (June 2, 2004); see also Children Now Spring 2004 Newsletter on Digital Television, www.childrennow.org; see also Comments of Children's Media Policy Coalition, In the Matter of Children's Television Obligations of Digital Television Broadcaster, MM Docket No. 00-167 (April 23, 2003) and Reply Comments, In the Matter of Second Periodic Review of the Commission's Rules and Policies Affecting the Conversion to Digital Television (MB Docket No. 03-15, RM 9832) and Children's Television Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters, MM Docket No. 00-167 (May 21, 2003). The Children's Media Policy Coalition is comprised of Children Now, the Center for Media Education, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists, American Psychological Association, Action Coalition for Media Education, Mediascope, The National Education Association, and The National PTA. See Comments of Children's Media Policy Coalition at 1.*

² *See Comments at 14-17 and Reply Comments at 3, respectively.*

³ *See Comments of Tim Collings, In re Second Periodic Review of the Commission Rules and Policies affecting the Conversion to Digital Television, MB Docket No. 03-15, RM 9832 (April 7, 2003) (noting at 4 "CEB12 recommends that "user setup tables and selections should take into account... the possibility that multiple ratings systems may be applicable to programs" but there [currently] is no requirement as to the number of RRTs (Rating Region Tables) that receivers should be able to process. A/65-B indicates in Section 6.9.4 that "Ratings may be given for any or all of the defined regions up to a maximum of 8 regions per event.").* See also *Children Now Spring 2004 Newsletter, at 3 (citing Kaiser Family Foundation, Rating Sex and Violence in the Media: Media Ratings and Proposals for Reform (Menlo Park: Kaiser Family Foundation 2002, at 27).*

<http://www.fcc.gov/parents/>) inform the public of such options by providing a link to CFIRS, at www.independentratings.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Paoletta', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patricia Paoletta

Attachments: CFIRS Press Release
PSVratings, Inc. materials

cc: Bryan Tramont
Jon Cody
Stacy Fuller
Jordan Goldstein
Johanna Shelton
Catherine Bohigian
Ken Ferree
Rick Chessen
Eloise Gore
Michael Lance
Mike Wallid-Kassem
Peter Corea

For Immediate Release
June 30, 2004

Contact: Steve Honig
Bender/Helper Impact
310-473-4147

**FIVE INDEPENDENT RATINGS GROUPS FORM JOINT COALITION
TO HELP PARENTS MAKE MORE INFORMED ENTERTAINMENT CHOICES
FOR THEIR CHILDREN**

**The Coalition For Independent Ratings Services Brings
Independent Ratings Industry Together To Advance Common Interests**

LOS ANGELES, June XX – Five ratings groups, independent from content producers, have formed a new organization to promote the use of independent ratings systems that help consumers make more informed decisions about their entertainment options. The Coalition For Independent Ratings Services (CFIRS) joins together PSVratings, Inc., Critics, Inc./kids-in-mind.com, Coalition for Quality Children's Media, FamilyStyle Film Guide and Grading the Movies in an effort to increase dialogue about the use of independent ratings systems within the public and political realm.

“In light of the ongoing debate over certain types of content, there is a clear need for the use of independent, objective ratings systems. Many consumers aren’t aware that systems independent from the studios, manufacturers and broadcasters exist,” said David G. Kinney, co-founder and CEO of PSVratings, Inc. “The goal of the Coalition is to make independent ratings available to more parents and other consumers, who will then be able to make more informed decisions for themselves and their children.”

The Coalition is undertaking a campaign to raise awareness of the availability and value of independent ratings systems among policymakers, consumers, content providers and exhibitors. “Independent ratings have emerged as a full-fledged industry,” said Kinney. “Changing times have created a distinct need for this, and the concept of independent ratings will not only serve consumers well, but also content providers, exhibitors and retailers.”

The newly-formed Coalition seeks to complement existing industry-backed ratings systems by providing greater detail that will assist in consumers making more informed decisions.

"I commend the efforts of the Coalition for Independent Ratings Services. Just as consumers have the right to check the nutrition labels on the food they give their kids, parents have the same right to check the content of the media they allow their children to watch. I have long advocated for an independent ratings system that will give parents the information that Hollywood won't," said Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS).

"Ratings are a critical tool for families interested in filtering out inappropriate or harmful media content from their children but they are often confusing and contradictory. I applaud the initiative of the Coalition for Independent Ratings Services in helping to generate new ideas and approaches so that we can improve these systems and have confidence that what we are using actually is working," said Representative Edward Markey (D-MA).

"I strongly support the efforts of the newly-formed Coalition For Independent Ratings Services. This coalition will be on the front line in our battle to empower parents and protect our children from the indecent content that is present in all forms of media," said Representative Joe Baca (D-CA).

About CFIRS Member Organizations

PSVratings, Inc. is a privately held corporation guided by the philosophy that "Just as companies and individual artists have the right to express themselves freely and without judgment, the public has a right to objective information that will enable them to make informed decisions about the media they consume." Founded in 1998, PSVratings prides itself on the first truly objective ratings system by employing proprietary technology to ensure that no human being can influence the rating of an individual media selection. PSVratings are generated from a database driven technology which currently features over 10,000,000 rule combinations overseen by an independent Standards Board comprised of expert psychologists, psychiatrists and educators in the area of Children and Media. The PSVratings system is universally applicable to film, music, print, video games, TV and the Internet and provides comprehensive, accurate and objective content information about the Profanity, Sex and Violence in media. Consumers may access the system at www.CurrentAttractions.com

Critics, Inc./kids-in-mind.com is the first company to create an independent movie rating system and started publishing parent's reviews on the America Online and Delphi networks in 1992, and since 1998 on the Internet at www.kids-in-mind.com. Currently it maintains the largest public database of content-specific movie reviews, providing parents with objective and complete information so that they can decide, based on their own value system, whether they consider a movie appropriate for their children to watch. Each movie is assigned three distinct ratings (Sex & Nudity, Violence & Gore and Profanity) on a scale of 0 to 10, and all potentially objectionable content is listed in comprehensive, clinical detail under each category. Not affiliated with any

political party, cultural movement or religious group, the only thing Critics Inc. advocates is responsible and engaged parenting.

Coalition for Quality Children's Media/KIDS FIRST! (CQCM) is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 whose mission is to: 1) Teach children critical viewing skills which enable them to make their own good media choices; and, 2) To increase the visibility and availability of quality children's programs. KIDS FIRST!®, a project of the CQCM evaluates, rates, and endorses children's feature films, videotapes, DVDs, software, audio recordings and television using a volunteer, community-based jury comprising child development professionals, teachers and parents as well as children from diverse geographic, socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

FamilyStyle Film Guide is a collection of content reviews generated by volunteer parents concerned about the entertainment being marketed to our families. The FamilyStyle Film Guide web site has been in operation since 1996 and contains content reviews for almost 6,000 movies. Easy-to-read charts provide information about the profanity, sex, nudity, violence, drug and alcohol use in movies and videos. These reviews supplement the MPAA rating system by providing additional details about potentially offensive content in movies without judging their artistic merits.

Grading the Movies began in 1993 as a newspaper column to provide parents with the information needed to make informed decisions about what movies would be appropriate for their children. Since then, Grading the Movies has been read in over 60 newspapers in the United States and Canada. Aside from the newspaper column, founder Rod Gustafson, along with two other reviewers, provides reviews for radio stations and a major Canadian television station. An Internet version, www.gradingthemovies.com, went live in 2000, Known for reviews that provide information about a movie's theme and content, along with ideas for family discussion, Grading the Movies has been recognized by media outlets like Yahoo!, The Boston Globe, and The Seattle Post-Intelligencer as a primary source for movie and media information from a parent's perspective.

More information about the Coalition for Independent Ratings Services is available at www.independentratings.org

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The PSVratings® Chart

The PSVratings standard is based upon scientific research relating to the effects of media on children. The standard utilizes more than 10 million rule combinations to analyze the levels of profanity, sex, and violence. This chart summarizes the categorization of those rules.

<p>P PROFANITY</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Profanity 	<p>P PROFANITY</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scatological Terms (references to excrement) or • Non-Profane Slang or • Non-Profane Religious Exclamations 	<p>P PROFANITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profane Slang (other than the f-word) or • Profane Religious Exclamations or • Profane References to Body Parts (other than c-words) or • Profane References to Bodily Functions 	<p>P PROFANITY</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obscene Slang or • Obscene References to Body Parts
<p>S SEX</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Sex • No Sexual Innuendo • No Nudity 	<p>S SEX</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Innuendo or • Double Entendres or • Mature Discussions about Sex or • Clinical Depictions of Nudity or • Sexual Slurs or • Sexual Harassment 	<p>S SEX</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nudity with no Sex or • Sex with no Nudity 	<p>S SEX</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit Depictions of Sex with Nudity
<p>V VIOLENCE</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Physical Violence • No Psychological Violence • No Emotional Violence • No Illegal Activity • No Substance Abuse • No Disrespectful Behavior 	<p>V VIOLENCE</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild Character Slurs or • Religious Slurs or • Non-life-threatening Physical Injuries with little or no Blood or Trauma or • Non-life-threatening Illegal Behavior or • Destruction of Property or • References to Illegal Drug Use or Alcohol Abuse or • Disrespectful Behavior or • Harassment or • Emotional Abuse or • Frightening Scenes or • Mature Discussions of Abandonment, Death, Terminal Illness, Divorce, etc. 	<p>V VIOLENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profane Character Slurs (fighting words) or • Racial Slurs or • Life-threatening Physical Injuries or • Depictions of Agonizing Pain or • Life-threatening Illegal Behavior or • Depictions of Illegal Drug Use or Alcohol Abuse or • Depictions of the Incitement of Violence or • Depictions of Death 	<p>V VIOLENCE</p> <p>Contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense, Graphic Depictions of Violence with Blood Spurling from Wounds and/or Bones Broken at Wrong Angle and/or Skin Charred (not soot) or Blistered or • Depictions of Rape with or without Nudity

Based on scientific research, PSVratings does not distinguish between violence played for laughs versus real violence.

The PSVratings® Process

Comprised of a five-step process, the PSVratings system is designed to ensure the objectivity and integrity of every rating. We are committed to establishing the PSVratings system as the most trusted source of entertainment content information for parents, caregivers and all consumers.

Step 1 - The Standards Board

- >> Jeanette Betancourt, Ed.D.
- >> Joanne Cantor, Ph.D.
- >> Ed Donnerstein, Ph.D.
- >> Stacy Smith, Ph.D.
- >> Vic Strasburger, M.D.
- >> Barbara Wilson, Ph.D.

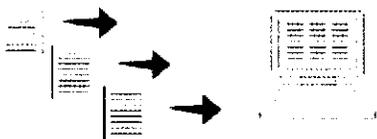
The PSVratings Standards Board is responsible for the development of the rules that form the foundation of the PSVratings system. This renowned group of experts ensures the integrity of the system by applying their knowledge and current research on the impact of media on children. The result is an objective and expert ratings standard independent of any commercial interest.

Step 2 - The Audit Process



We rigorously train our auditors to identify all instances of profanity, sex and violence without any judgment as to their suitability. Not only do they note the occurrence itself, but recognize relationship combinations for as many as 15 different character types (man, woman, teen, child, fantasy figure, role model, etc), the relationship(s) between the character types, the consequences of the occurrence and whether it is seen, heard or sensed.

Step 3 - Data Entry



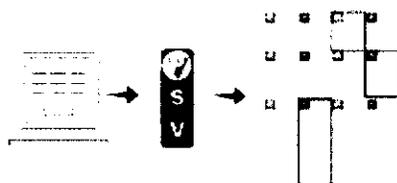
The results of the audit process are sent to the data entry department. Their role is to map all noted occurrences to one or more of the (currently) 3,375 rules in the PSVratings database. If no rule is both specific and appropriate to the occurrence, a new rule will be created and submitted to the PSVratings Standards Board for approval.

Step 4 - Data Integrity



To ensure data integrity, no PSVrating is generated until three audits of the title have been approved. Our proprietary ratings engine uses sophisticated metrics to analyze and compare the comprehensiveness and accuracy of each audit.

Step 5 - Generate A Rating



The final step of the process is for the proprietary PSVratings technology to generate a rating based upon a matching of the audit data with the rules of the PSVratings Standard. Displaying any combination of White, Green, and Red, the PSVratings traffic light symbol then serves as a reference to the PSVratings Chart (summarization of the rules) thus conveying an instant read of the Profanity, Sex and Violence content of any type of media.

Comparing the PSVratings® system and the MPAA ratings system

G - rated movies

<p>102 Dalmatians</p>  	<p>The Lion King</p>  	<p>Pokémon 4 Ever</p>  
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PG - rated movies

<p>Agent Cody Banks</p>  	<p>Jaws</p>  	<p>Spy Kids 2</p>  
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PG-13 - rated movies

<p>Legally Blonde</p>  	<p>John Q</p>  	<p>Minority Report</p>  
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R - rated movies

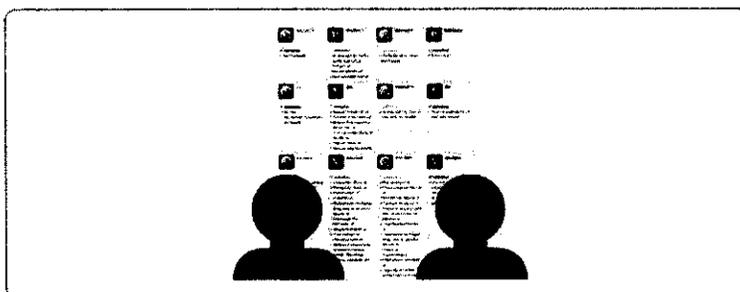
<p>Gangs of New York</p>  	<p>Panic Room</p>  	<p>The Guru</p>  
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Using PSVratings®: Easy as 1-2-3

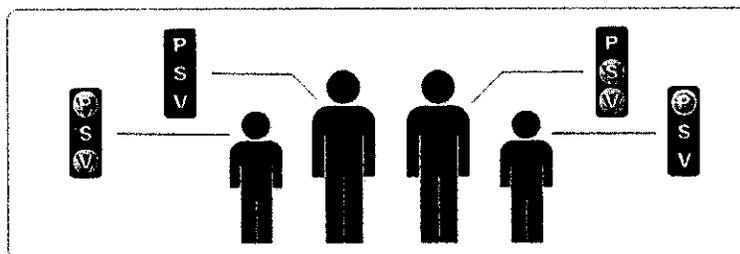
PSVratings provides a robust supplement to the existing industry ratings systems providing parents with exactly what they want: in-depth information about the Profanity, Sex and Violence content of media so that they can make informed decisions about the appropriateness of media based upon their own individual standards of suitability.

Using PSVratings is as easy as 1-2-3:

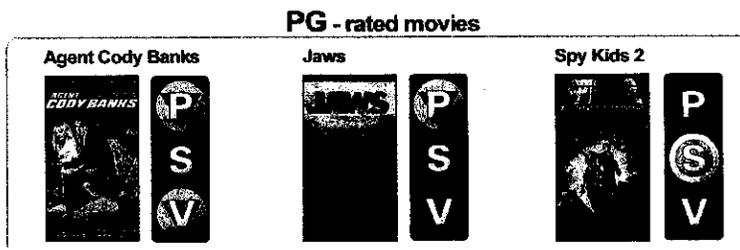
Step 1: Review the chart explaining the different colors and their meaning.



Step 2: Assign a color combination to each member of the family.



Step 3: Use the PSVrating to determine appropriate entertainment titles based upon your personal standards of suitability.



About PSVratings, Inc.

Just as companies and individual artists have the right to express themselves freely and without judgment, the public has a right to objective information that will enable them to make informed decisions about the media they consume. This belief is the basis of PSVratings, founded in 1998. The universal PSVratings system provides the first objective, content-based ratings system that can be used across all media including film, music, print, video games, TV and the Internet.

DAVID G. KINNEY

Chief Executive Officer

David G. Kinney brings over twenty years of corporate and entrepreneurial business success to the vision of Veritasiti Corporation, parent company to PSVratings, Inc. He conceived of the PSVratings system when he recognized a void in the marketplace to meet consumer demand for objective content information about entertainment products. PSVratings, Inc., along with the development of the Kinney Childhood Foundation, reflects his strong personal commitment to providing tools that empower parents, protect children, respect freedom of expression and serve a need in the marketplace. A former financial consultant for Merrill Lynch where he earned membership in the esteemed Merrill Lynch Executive's Club, Mr. Kinney is founder of food manufacturing company Mrs. Kinney's Kitchen, Inc. Mr. Kinney holds a BA in Economics from Harvard University where he lettered in football and achieved All-Ivy status in track.

FRANK J. RUSSO

Chief Financial Officer

Frank J. Russo brings over two decades of financial management experience to Veritasiti Corporation. Mr. Russo began his career with Smith Barney and Oppenheimer. Four years later, he established his own investment management firm, FJR Corporation. Mr. Russo has served as business development counsel and a board member for a host of small businesses assisting them in strategic planning and operational growth and development. As a parent of three children, Mr. Russo understands first-hand the value of empowering adults to make more informed media choices for their children based upon objective information. In his role at PSVratings, Inc., Mr. Russo guides the management team to accomplish this goal in both its financial and business development efforts. Mr. Russo holds a BA in Economics from Harvard University.

ROBERT BROWN

President, Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel

Robert Brown brings two decades of management, legal, technical and entrepreneurial experience to Veritasiti Corporation. Mr. Brown is former President of Blanket Software and Brown Consulting Group. Mr. Brown also brings extensive labor, corporate and government experience to the organization, with an emphasis on the entertainment industry, intellectual property and Internet marketing. Mr. Brown served as a Vice President of Operations and General Counsel for an Internet marketing consulting firm prior to serving as National Manager of Information Technology for AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists). Mr. Brown's expertise in privacy policies, online sweepstakes and adherence to legal issues relating to COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) and CARU (Children's Advertising Review Unit) as well as being a parent contribute to his understanding and appreciation for the objective information that PSVratings provides. Mr. Brown holds a BA from Arizona State University and a Law Degree from Whittier School of Law.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **The average American child is exposed to 6 hours and 45 minutes of media per day.** *(Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999)*
- **Children spend more time sitting in front of electronic screens than any other activity besides sleeping.** *(Annenberg Public Policy Center, 1999)*
- **Between 1989 and 1999, the amount of sexual content on prime-time television tripled.** *(Parents Television Council, 2000)*
- **A Federal Trade Commission study found that of 44 movies rated R for violence, 80% were targeted to children under 17. Marketing plans for 64% of these movies contained express statements that the film's target audience included children under 17.** *(Federal Trade Commission, 2000)*
- **72% of 15-17-year-olds think sex on television has influenced their peers "somewhat" or "a lot."** *(Kaiser Family Foundation, 2002)*
- **Teenagers who, at (mean) age 14, watched more than three hours a day of television were much more likely than those who watched less than one hour a day to commit subsequent acts of aggression against other people.** *(Johnson, 2002)*
- **In the top 50 highest grossing movies of 1998, there was an average of 46 acts of violence per film, 28 of them serious acts of violence.** *(Center for Media and Public Affairs, 1999)*
- **Five out of the ten most violent movies of 1998 received a PG-13 rating from the Motion Picture Association of America.** *(Center for Media and Public Affairs, 1999)*
- **31% of children surveyed (ages 10-17) report having seen a pornographic web site on the Internet.** *(National Public Radio, 2000)*
- **75% of concept music videos (those that told a story) involved sexual imagery and more than half involved violence — usually against women.** *(Pediatrics, 2001)*
- **The average children's animated feature film, 81 minutes long, contains 9.5 minutes of violence, or 11.8% of the average film's length. This has increased from 6 minutes of violence per film in 1940.** *(Yokota & Thompson, 2000)*
- **79% of video games rated "E" for "Everyone" contain violent content.** *(Children Now, 2001)*
- **80% of parents prefer a television rating system that identifies program content rather than the age group for which it is intended. 80% also want separate ratings for sex, violence and language content.** *(Parent Teacher Association, 1996)*

Leading Advocates Speak Out For PSVratings®

"The public can only benefit from the work of PSVratings and others to find consumer-friendly, easy-to-understand methods of alerting parents to controversial content. American families are looking for such tools for setting reasonable limits on the deluge of pop culture in the home."

Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA)
US House of Representatives

"I recommend PSVratings as an alternative to entertainment industry ratings systems for movies, television, music and video games."

Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson (D-36)
House of Representatives
Washington State Legislature

"PSVratings is a major breakthrough for concerned parents. Finally, we are no longer dependent on an outside organization to tell us what movies they feel are appropriate for our children. With PSVratings, we get information on the level of sex, violence, and profanity in each movie, and make our own decisions for our own family."

Becca Arnold Founder
Citizens for Responsible Media

"PSVratings is the only ratings system that makes sense. It is one uniform, consistent, scientific and fair system for all media. For years, parents have asked for help in finding quality media for their kids; and now here it is."

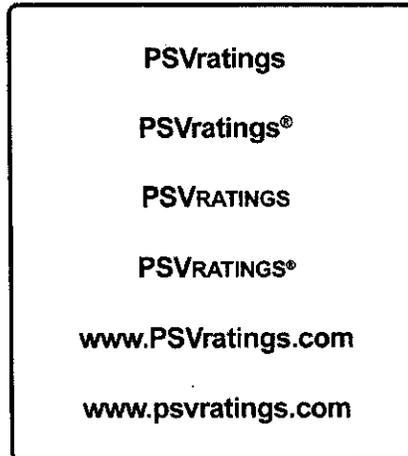
Victor Strasburger, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics, University of New Mexico
(PSVratings Standards Board Member)

"The PSVratings system has three great features: It's based on criteria developed by experts on media's effects on children; it provides the type of information parents are most interested in; and parents need to learn only one system for all media."

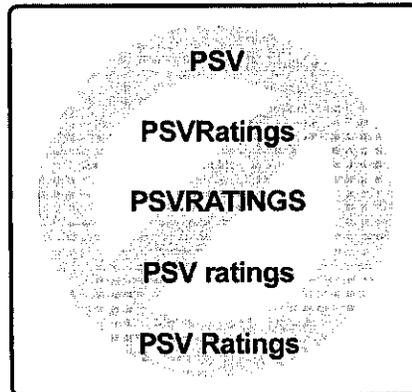
Joanne Cantor, Ph.D.
Professor Emerita
University of Wisconsin-Madison
author of *Mommy, I'm Scared: How TV and Movies Frighten Children
And What We Can Do to Protect Them.*
(PSVratings Standards Board Member)

Approved Uses of the PSVratings® Name

PSVratings, Inc. has made a substantial investment in the development and establishment of the PSVratings brand. In order to deliver a coherent message across all media, the following are approved executions:



Please **do not** use any of the following formats:



Please note that spaces between PSV & ratings as well as the use of PSV without 'ratings' and the capitalization of Ratings are all improper representations of the PSVratings brand.

We thank you for your attention to these details as we work to bring PSVratings to a worldwide audience.

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PSVratings® Guiding Principles

The PSVratings Standards Board is comprised of industry experts from numerous fields of child development. Dedicated to teaching the public about children and the media, we strive to improve the way children use the media. To accomplish this goal, we apply our respective research and experience to the underlying guiding principles of the PSVratings system.

PSVratings is a content-based ratings system designed to allow parents to make informed entertainment choices based upon their own personal standards of suitability. Thus, we offer a system that alerts parents to specified levels of profanity, sex and violence. *How these ratings are used is entirely up to you.*

WHITE level of the PSVratings system indicates no profanity, sex or violence contained in the programming.

GREEN level of the PSVratings system indicates a low or mild level of profanity, sex or violence, which may be objectionable to some, but based upon the available research, we do not consider harmful to children by placing them at risk of negative psychological or sociological outcomes.

YELLOW level of the PSVratings system indicates a moderate level of profanity, sex or violence, which based upon the available research, we consider to have the potential to be harmful to children by placing them at risk of negative psychological or sociological outcomes.

RED level of the PSVratings system indicates a high level of profanity, sex or violence, which based upon the available research, we consider to have significant potential to be harmful to children by placing them at risk of negative psychological or sociological outcomes.

Based on scientific research, PSVratings does not distinguish between violence played for laughs versus real violence.

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PSVratings® Standards Board

The PSVratings Standards Board is an independent division of PSVratings, Inc. Comprised of a diverse group of acknowledged leaders in various fields of child psychology, psychiatry, education, health and childhood development, the Board operates independently of any commercial interest of PSVratings, Inc. and is the sole arbiter of the PSVratings Standard.

The mission of the PSVratings Standards Board is the development of an objective and expert standard for the PSVratings content-based ratings system. Through its role in this process, the PSVratings Standards Board provides a foundation of knowledge that will inform generations of thought and action surrounding one of the most influential forces in human history: modern entertainment media.

2004 Standards Board Members

Jeanette Betancourt, Ed.D.
Assistant Vice President
Education and Research
Sesame Workshop
(Children's Television Workshop)

Joanne Cantor, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Communication Arts
University of Wisconsin – Madison

Ed Donnerstein, Ph.D.
Dean
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
University of Arizona

Stacy Smith, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Mass Communications
Annenberg School for Communication
University of Southern California

Vic Strasburger, M.D.
Professor
Department of Pediatrics
University of New Mexico

Barbara Wilson, Ph.D.
Professor and Head of Department
Speech Communication
University of Illinois – Urbana

Standards Board Member Bios

Jeanette Betancourt, Ed.D. is the Assistant Vice President, Education and Research for Sesame Workshop, a division of the Children's Television Workshop (CTW). In this role, she designs and implements national public awareness initiatives in the areas of education, parenting, literacy and health. She also establishes partnerships with national organizations in child care, bilingual and migrant education, advocacy and health programs. Dr. Betancourt earned her doctorate in special education from Teachers College at Columbia University as well as two Master's degrees – a Master of Science in Reading from St. John's University and a Master of Arts in Speech and Language Pathology from Hofstra University. Her focus of expertise ranges from early brain research and its impact for parents and early childhood professionals to early literacy and bilingual children.

Prior to her role at CTW, Dr. Betancourt was the Director of Project Visiones, part of the Professional Development and Educational Programs, Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College. There, she directed a vocational, bilingual early childhood teacher training program for Latino adults and developed curricula for early childhood teacher training. She has also been a member of a number of prestigious boards and committees such as the White House Sub-Committee on Hispanic Education; the Pfizer Health Journal Roundtable; the Child Care Reads Campaign; Corporation for Public Broadcasting Hispanic Outreach Committee; National Council of La Raza Early Childhood Initiative and the Children in a Diverse Society Committee.

Joanne Cantor, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is an internationally recognized expert on children and the mass media. Dr. Cantor received her B.A. at Cornell University and studied communications/psychology at the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and Indiana University. Her area of expertise is the effect of mass media, about which she has published more than 70 scholarly articles and chapters.

Since the early 1980's, her research has focused primarily on the effects of television on children, with major emphasis on children's emotional reactions to scenes involving violence and other disturbing images. This research, which is grounded in developmental psychology, has explored the types of mass media images and events that frighten children at different ages and the intervention/ coping strategies that are most effective for different age groups. Her book, *"Mommy, I'm Scared": How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do To Protect Them*, summarizes this research and its implications for a general audience.

Dr. Cantor's research has been funded by: The National Institute of Mental Health, The National Science Foundation and the H. F. Guggenheim Foundation. She has received numerous awards for her research from the International Communication Association, National Communication Association and National Association of Broadcasters.

Ed Donnerstein, Ph.D. is Professor of Communication and Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Arizona. Prior to his appointment in 2002, he was the Rupe Chair in the Social Effects of Mass Communication and Dean of Social Sciences at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A social psychologist, he received his Ph.D in psychology in 1972. He has held appointments at the University of Wisconsin, as well as visiting positions at the University of Lethbridge and Beijing University, China. His major research interests are in mass-media violence and mass media policy.

Dr. Donnerstein has published over 200 scientific articles in these general areas and serves on the editorial boards of a number of academic journals in both psychology and communication. He was a member of the American Psychological Association's Commission on Violence and Youth, and the APA Task Force on Television and Society. He recently served on a new Surgeon General panel on youth violence. He currently serves on the Advisory Council of the American Medical Association's violence prevention program, and is President of the International Society for Research on Aggression. In addition, he was primary research site director for the National Cable Television Association's \$3.5 million project on TV violence. He has made presentations dealing with the issues of mass media violence and policy at The International Conference on Standards in Screen Entertainment; The National Association of Attorneys General's Presidential Summit; The American Academy of Pediatrics and The World Summit on Television and Children in Sydney, Australia.

Stacey L. Smith, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Mass Communications at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California. She received her Ph.D. in Communication with an emphasis on Human Development in 1999 from the University of California-Santa Barbara.

Before joining USC, she served for three years on the faculty of the Department of Communications at Michigan State University. Her area of expertise is in children's cognitive and affective reactions to entertainment violence, with an emphasis on news violence. She is co-author of three book volumes of the *National Television Violence Study* (Sage Publications, 1997-1998) and has co-authored approximately two dozen book chapters on children's responses to the media in areas such as violence, sex, and advertising. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Journal of Communication*, *Media Psychology*, and *Communication Research*.

Vic Strasburger, M.D. is currently Chief of Adolescent Medicine, Professor of Pediatrics, and Professor of Family & Community Medicine at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He graduated from Yale College (summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa), where he studied fiction writing with Robert Penn Warren. He went to Harvard Medical School and did his pediatric residency at Children's Hospital in Seattle, Children's Hospital in Boston, and Paddington Green Children's Hospital in London. He completed an Adolescent Medicine Fellowship at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Strasburger has authored more than 120 articles and papers and 8 books on the subjects of adolescent medicine, and the effects of television on children and adolescents, including *Adolescent Medicine: a Practical Guide* and *Adolescents and the Media*. His most popular book is entitled, *Getting Your Kids to Say No In the 1990s When You Said Yes In The 1960s*. His current book is a textbook: *Children, Adolescents and the Media*. He has served as Chair of the AAP's Section on Adolescent Health, a member of the Committee on Communications, and a consultant to the National PTA and the AMA on children and the media. He has been featured on National Public Radio and in Newsweek and has appeared multiple times on "Oprah," "The Today Show" and "CBS This Morning." In 2000, Dr. Strasburger was honored by the American Academy of Pediatrics with the Adele Delenbaugh Hofmann Award, for Outstanding Lifetime Achievement in Adolescent Medicine and was the first recipient of the Holroyd-Sherry Award, given for media advocacy work.

Barbara J. Wilson, Ph.D. is a Professor and Head of the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She received her Ph.D. in communication with a minor in child development from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before joining the University of Illinois, she was on the faculty at the University of California, Santa Barbara for 12 years. Professor Wilson's area of expertise is the social and psychological effects of the mass media, particularly on children. She is co-author of *Children, Adolescents, and the Media* (Sage Publications, 2002) and three book volumes of the *National Television Violence Study* (Sage Publications, 1997-1998). In addition, Professor Wilson has published more than 50 scholarly articles and chapters on media effects and their implications for media policy.