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PRIMETIME CRIME:

DEVIANCE AND FAMILY IN AMERICAN TELEVISION FROM THE 1950's TO TODAY

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present research is to look at popular media as a way to interpret cultural understandings of the relationship between crime and the family. An understanding of the complex and dynamic interplay between crime and family in primetime media is predicated upon recognition of the massive impact that the media in general has on American society. To learn about the ways in which American culture explains and understands crime, I looked at 39 of the most popular crime series ranging from the 1950's until today. In all, this study explored depictions of deviance in 167 television episodes. I used both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the ways that family was used as a method of contextualizing criminal behavior. The study yielded four areas in which crime and family intersected to create an image of deviance: appearance of criminals' families, family responses to deviant behavior, family as an explanation of deviance, and family violence in television.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present research is to look at popular media as a way to interpret cultural understandings of crime and criminal behavior as it pertains to family. I watched crime shows in an effort to learn about the role of family in crime dramas on television and to explore the cultural understandings of the relationship between crime and the family.

Media is the lens through which nearly every aspect of American social life is viewed (Brown, 2003, p. 1). Our lives are saturated with numerous forms of media, ranging from newspapers to radio to television. Television has functioned as a fundamental component of American lives for over half a century (Schwartz, 1999b; Stark, 1987). Estimates from 1975 suggest that as many as 96 percent of American homes have at least one television set (Hartnagel, Teevan, & McIntyre, 1975). Now, instead of having just one TV, many families own multiple TV sets. In most American homes, a television is on for at least seven hours each day, and thus demonstrates the prevalence and consistency of its presence (Linzer Schwartz & Greenfield Matzkin, 1999). Additionally, daily routines have altered considerably in response to the prevalence and accessibility of television; since its advent, people sleep an average of one less hour each night (Winick cited in Linzer Schwartz & Greenfield Matzkin, 1999).

TV "… has become the primary interpreter of American life and history, and the principal socializing institution in the United States" (Carter and Adler (1974) cited in Taylor & Dozier, 1983, p. 107). See also (Ewen, 1988; Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2001). As such, television functions as both a stimulus for behavior and as a

socializing agent of behavior because people mimic what they see on TV (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1986). One reason that television is so powerful is that it is, on some level, constantly teaching audiences about society, even when they are not aware that they are learning from it (Haney & Manzolati, 1977). Given the pervasive nature of TV in our society, it is important to understand how the pedagogical nature of television media frames the social discourses surrounding the issues presented to the public.

The characters and images on television depict what may be interpreted as the values and norms of American culture (Hess & Grant, 1983). There has been a great deal of theoretical research on the ways in which media effects society, and likewise, how cultural changes influence the media. One reason for this is a desire to understand the discourses that structure our understanding of the impact that television has on society and vice versa. "It is very difficult to comment on… the media without considering its ramifications and its effects on…the viewers or listeners. In short, the ripple effect of the media can be endless" (Schwartz, 1999b, p. 2). Reflective theorists argue that television mirrors what happens in society (Dominick, 1973). The emergent message from scholarly dialogue about the relationship between television and culture is a general understanding that, on some level, popular ideas and ideals are reflected in the media, while what is dominant in the media tends to also influence societal realities.

One of the many ways that widespread social attitudes and opinions are created is through their presentation in the media (Schwartz, 1999a). In this way, perceptions about reality are socially created. Social constructivists argue that the

process of “claims-making” structures what people think and believe about social problems (Berns, 2004). In the case of crime, the mass media serves as the “claims-maker,” and the public conception of crime is generated from the ways that TV shows depict deviant behavior. Not only is the space between fact and fiction difficult to locate, but also much of what is being served as fact is a fiction created by the media elite: “Often it is not professional psychologists who are teaching the public about these important topics, but rather Hollywood writers… functioning as ‘therapists without training’ for the public, presenting scenarios and psychological conclusions that are sometimes incorrect or even harmful to viewers” (Sheras & Koch-Sheras, 1999, p. 53).

Fiction has been a part of entertainment culture since the beginning of time, with myth-writers serving as answerers of the unanswerable. Myths function as a means to aid us to forget difficult times by creating a more pleasant world. They express peoples’ fears, desires, and hopes (Pitta, 1999). The concern that arises from an analysis of crime media as being a form of mythology is that popular understandings of crime are based in fiction as opposed to in reality. In this scenario, human consumers function as un-analytical observers:

> We are educated, from infancy, to *look*, we are not encouraged to see and interpret simultaneously. Our eyes imbibe images, with little critical resistance, as if they offer an ordained glimpse of some distant, yet accessible *reality*. It rarely occurs to us, as we pass through the perpetual corridors of visual representation, that… ‘every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing.’(Ewen, 1988, p. 156)

Our “seeing” and “not seeing” of a particular event is determined in large part by on the way that the media frames the problems of crime.

Media framing is a process by which the media packages information before presenting it to audiences (Berns, 2004; Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2001). Frames determine the way that reality is experienced. They give both words and concepts to allow us to understand events. Additionally, they can function to highlight specific areas of interest or concern. The public tends to be largely unaware of the ways that ideas have been pre-packaged for widespread consumption and understanding. The public then applies these notions, supplied by the media, to their everyday lives and understanding of overall cultural reality.

Each television genre lends itself to asking different questions about the nature of society (Stark, 1987). The genre shapes the questions and social commentary that can be extracted from viewing such shows. Crime shows, as a result of their focus on deviance and immorality in society, allow for the study of who and what is considered to be deviant. In the portrayal of a television show's offender and his or her misdeeds, many shows reveal the operation of both mitigating and aggravating factors for criminality as they try to present deviance in a way that is understandable to audiences (Carney, 2001; Haney, 2005).

"Violence is as American as cherry pie," (Rap Brown cited in Taylor & Dozier, 1983, p. 108) and is a behavior Americans have participated in and perseverated over throughout our history (Felson, 1996; Taylor & Dozier, 1983). American history is taught, in large part, by recollecting instances of crime and violence in our past (Taylor & Dozier, 1983). America's crime-centric focus has not subsided over time; modern news media is consistently dominated with stories about violent crime, and entertainment-media shares a similar focus. In this way, crime can

be seen as a basis for American entertainment as well as a reality of American life (Brown, 2003; Mason, 2003; Stark, 1987; Taylor & Dozier, 1983). In entertainment media, series consistently depict “bad guys” and illegal behavior. Because these shows disseminate their stories to all types of audiences and because television messages have a profound influence on American thought and conception of reality, the messages taught by crime shows need to be better understood academically.

Crime television has had remarkable staying power. In American popular culture, these types of programs date back to the beginning of broadcast television, and continue to grow today(Stark, 1987). In the 1994-1995 television season, 67 percent of primetime shows on the major networks depicted violent acts. Of those violent depictions, remorse, criticism, or penalty for violence were *not* depicted in nearly 75 percent of the scenes (Linzer Schwartz & Greenfield Matzkin, 1999). The amount of violence on network television has continued to rise throughout the 90’s and early 2000’s. Today, not only do we have a multitude of crime shows, but the dramas hold such enormous appeal that many popular shows have their own spin-off series as well (See for example: Law and Order). These shows are a large part of popular American television culture. Crime shows, throughout the decades since their inception, reflect the values, assumptions, and beliefs of the American public.

Crime shows are a crucial means by which American society gains an understanding of violence and criminal behavior (Haney & Manzolati, 1977). Dowler and colleagues (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006) suggest that the presentation of crime and justice in these shows is falsely perceived to be “realistic,” thus making it difficult for viewers to determine accurately the line between fiction and reality. Such

shows function as a form of “infotainment;” a stylized form of entertainment that masquerades as realistic and informative (Surette in Dowler, et al., 2006). In the past 200 years, the media (news and entertainment) has transformed public understandings of and relationships to crime from first-hand knowledge to a sensationalized image that is an amalgamation of real life experience and media. This confusion between fact and fiction has led us to a point where it is difficult to separate out various influences of our beliefs about crime in order to see how our specific attitudes and ideas were created (Dowler, et al., 2006).

Society uses crime shows not only to identify what types of corruption plague our culture, but also as a means to understand how and why these crimes occur. TV becomes a realistic portrayal through which audiences get what they experience as a factual portal into the world of crime and deviance. These depictions allow us to consume images of crimes that typically occur privately and behind closed doors (Sacco, 1995). The basic format of a crime show is as follows; a crime (usually violent) is discovered; law enforcement agents are informed and work to determine what happened; they follow the clues to the criminal and apprehend the perpetrator. This depiction of criminals as being always punished gives us a false sense of security that criminals are apprehended and justice is always served. Additionally, it allows us to believe that we have a better understanding of crime and criminal behavior than we actually do.

The crimes depicted on TV crime shows are presented to viewers as isolated, or unique, events that are largely unrelated the viewers’ actual lives. Specifically, the crime on TV serves the aforementioned purpose of inaccurately informing viewers

about what crime is and what it looks like. It does so in such a way that makes these viewers feel distant from criminal activity and behavior (Carney, 2001).

This perception that television events occur in isolation from real life has fostered a society in which “Individuals have become more concerned with the identification and satisfaction of their personal needs than developing a sense of cooperation or community with others” (Sheras & Koch-Sheras, 1999, p. 72). The presentation of crime in the media has encouraged individuals in Western countries to perceive themselves to be more individualistic and less related to the circumstances of others. Crime TV does not display the social, economic, and environmental conditions that, in reality, are often critical impetuses for the occurrence of specific crimes. It also fails to depict a realistic development of individuals into criminals. Instead, viewers are provided with examples that attribute crime as being personal and individualistic. By this presentation, society is blameless and it is the individual perpetrator’s fault and inherent “badness” that are implicated as the factors that cause crime (Carney, 2001). In addition to locating criminal blame in specific perpetrators, individuals who engage in criminal behavior are presented as if they exist in a social environment that is foreign to that of the viewer. In this way, crime television instills a false sense of comfort for the viewer that criminals will be caught and brought to justice.

The depiction of crime on mainstream TV is dangerously misleading. Actual crime has attributes and causes that critically differ from those which are suggested in crime dramas, and real-life crime statistics are not presented accurately in the crime that is viewed on television (Sacco, 1995). What we see on television are violent

crimes against individual citizens, where motives are easily understandable. We also see that crime happens behind closed doors (Dominick, 1973; Sacco, 1995). Unavoidably attached to the notion that "… the ever-popular police shows are becoming more and more graphic in their depiction of violence" (Pitta, 1999, pp. 141-142) is the assumption that violent crime in reality is also becoming more frequent.

The interrelationship between television and real life is crucial. Reflective theorists would argue that TV depictions of American society mirror what actually exists in our culture. By extension, the tremendous importance granted to both crime and family in television programming is indicative of American interest in these subjects. For much of society, television functions as a compass to guide social behavior. As such, the family depicted on television operates not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a teaching tool for what family should look like: "From the 1950's and 1960's television explosion and its role models, the baby boomers and their parents got the blueprint for how families should behave" (Pitta, 1999, p. 138). We enlist images from the Brady's to the Cleavers to the Camden's as a guide for what family ought to look like. When considering the following – that the focus of crime drama on criminality and who is deviant, that family presentations are prevalent, and that TV has the ability to serve as a prototype for real-life behavior – it is essential to analyze the depiction of families (particular those of criminals) in TV crime drama.

The depiction of family in crime drama is notably different from the idealized family portrayed in many other drama and comedy shows. Because much of TV crime happens just out of view and is discovered after the fact, the catching of a

criminal gives us a glimpse into the private lives of deviants. This potential for television to privilege private and usually unseen behavior calls for analysis of the ways in which private lives influence criminality. One main aspect of private life is family life. This paper will explore the ways that family life influences and helps to contextualize crime and criminal behavior in primetime dramas.

Another way in which crime and family interact on television is when crime occurs *within* the family. Instances of family violence harshly contradict the "perfect" model of family often depicted on TV, such as the Cleavers, or the Brady's. In this dimension, crime TV's presentation is arguably more indicative of real life. History and family studies professor Stephanie Coontz (1992) claims that in the 40 years between 1939 and 1969, no articles about family violence were published and wife-beating was not even considered a crime (cited in Pitta, 1999, p. 139), but this (and other related) behaviors occurred namelessly in society. Because family violence was a private issue that lacked the social vocabulary and space for discourse, it was not a topic that could be presented on television (Pitta, 1999). The term "domestic violence" was introduced to society in the 1970's, and since then, it has become a colloquial aspect of our cultural lexicon and understanding. It is therefore possible to talk about domestic violence in a social context. Accordingly, the family dynamics that contribute to and occur in situations of family violence, both on television and in everyday life, are now subjects that must be better understood.

An understanding of the complex and dynamic interplay between crime and family in primetime media is predicated upon recognition of the massive impact that the media in general has on American society. My paper will analyze the specific

impact that the depictions of crime and family have on cultural understandings of deviance. The reason this is important will be explained in the following literature review, which explores the impact that media has on American life by identifying the ways in which television functions as an indicator of societal goals and norms.

The foundation of this paper is based on the fact that television generates, shapes, and defines the way that the social world is perceived. Societal focus on, and value of, television has led to a reality that is socially constructed. The generation and creation of knowledge relates to crime in that crime is a main aspect of life that is constantly explored in television. The ways in which issues of deviance are constructed by the media is thus paramount to acknowledging how crime is framed around certain terms by including some ideas while excluding others. Moreover, this framing of social issues leads to an understanding of how crime is understood by television audiences.

I will then identify previous research that speaks to the social representations of both crime and family in the media. Because crime shows have the unique position of defining for audiences what deviance is, they are a good vantage point to look at the preexisting assumptions society has about crime. They are an even better medium to look at how crime and family weave in and around one another to create a multifarious fabric of social rules, assumptions, and expectations. The present study seeks to explain cultural understandings of deviance by detailing (1) the role of family in crime dramas and (2) the cultural understandings that result from the ways in which the relationship between crime and the family is depicted in crime dramas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following is an overview of the existing literature that serves as the background and foundation for my study. I will begin by considering the ways that media affects society, and then look at the specifics of how television images of both crime and family come together to paint a broader picture of who criminals are and the context surrounding their illegal behaviors. Specifically, I will begin by giving an overview of the influence of media in our society not only as an important cultural outlet, but also as an indicator of American goals and social norms. I will then look at social construction and social representation theories, as well as framing, as ways that the media influence popular notions of reality. Next, I look at the specific messages that individual television genres teach us. From there, I will look more specifically at images of both crime and of family in American television, as well as images of crime within the family.

Importance of Media

Media is currently an integral part of our society. As a function of technological advancements, modern media can disseminate ideas, customs, and knowledge across a wide variety of cultures and locations in a very short amount of time(Giles, 2003). The influence of media is strongly associated with two cultural advancements: mass communication and technology.

Mass communication itself has only been possible since the advent of printing and the discovery of electricity (Giles, 2003). Giddens (1991) explains that the "mediatization of identity" progressed from "…'news by ship,' to print, telegraph and wireless communications, to the electronic age" (cited in Brown, 2003, p. 8). The

defining aspect of mass communication is predicated on the idea that it is widely available and utilized by much of society.

Media was unable to incur such noticeable influences over society until the capacity of technology and electronics expanded over the second half of the twentieth century (Brown, 2003). Mass media, one form of mass communication, takes place at the intersection between communication, culture, and technology (Giles, 2003). For the purposes of this study, I explore only one element of media, that of television, as a way to examine and better understand society.

Mass media is a vital part of life in modern western society (Giles, 2003; Hartnagel, et al., 1975; Schwartz, 1999b). Harris (1999) claims that in the United States, 98 percent of homes have at least one television set, and 96 percent of homes have video recorders (cited in Giles, 2003). Some studies claim that Americans have more TV sets than toilets (Bushman (1995) cited in Giles, 2003; Hess & Grant, 1983). People watch TV for an average of 7 hours a day (Hartnagel, et al., 1975; Schwartz, 1999b). By the time a child reaches 15 years of age, they have likely spent more time watching television than they have spent in a classroom. For many, the time we spend in school can never equal the amount of time invested in viewing television screen (Hess & Grant, 1983). Additionally, an average American will have spent more time in front of a television screen during their lifetime than they will have spent with their parents (Stark, 1987). In adulthood, Americans spend roughly 40 percent of their leisure time engulfed in television images (Hess & Grant, 1983). Despite the many differences among people, this form of media is one very powerful constant that is available for consumption by nearly everyone in the United States.

It is nearly impossible to deny the profound influence that mass media has on virtually every community on earth (Giles, 2003). In Western civilization, media dominates much of our social conversation, either directly, or through references to TV shows, discussion of celebrities and gossip. Our knowledge of news and current events, popular music, and even sports is largely dictated by what we hear from the media (Giles, 2003). At dinner parties, rooms full of "… near-strangers [are] able to discuss an enormous breadth of topics in intimate detail, requiring a degree of shared cultural knowledge that would have astonished past generations" (Giles, 2003, p. 2).

Because it is nearly unavoidable, TV has become the strongest socialization agent in modern society (Hess & Grant, 1983; Skill, Wallace, & Cassata, 1990; Stark, 1987; Taylor & Dozier, 1983). Through television, we learn to understand and interpret the world around us. Gitlin explains that, "…television entertainment… [is] the most pervasive and (in the living room sense) *familiar* of our cultural sites" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 253). The mass media exposes us to the social institutions that exist in society and suggests how we should relate to them. As such, television shapes our perceptions of the social reality of the world (Taylor & Dozier, 1983), while at the same time modeling the general expectations for our own behavior and that of others (Elasmar, Hasegawa, & Brain, 1999). Professor Steven Stark of Harvard Law School notes that in American culture, TV is the most important genesis for ideas, second only to interpersonal contact (Stark, 1987). Stark claims: "With television – or any art – the most meaningful path open to analysis is often to look speculatively at … the show" (Stark, 1987, p. 4). To learn about the media, we must observe and analyze it.

In studying the content and messages of this all-important form of media, we can learn a great deal about an American society that lives and breathes media culture.

TV as an Indicator of Societal Goals and Norms

Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote of television: "TV more than any other medium gives models to the American people – models for life as it is, or should, or can be lived" (Mead, 1978, p. 12). Mead comments on the power of television to indicate how life is, or at least, ought to be. In this sense, television becomes not only a form of entertainment, but also a representation and instruction manual of the American way of life. Audiences rely on the information they receive from television to make inferences about normal human behavior (Blackman & Hornstein, 1977). Not only does television reflect contemporary standards of social behaviors, but it also has the ability to generate and change these standards as well (Hess & Grant, 1983; Stark, 1987). Presently, media analysts believe that art imitates life, which in turn imitates art. It is accepted that TV reflects that which exists in real life, and that in simultaneous processes society molds itself in part based on how television depicts society.

The reflective theory of television broadcasting argues that TV mirrors what is actually present in society (Dominick, 1973). Studying media content, reflective theorists argue, allows us to identify some of the norms and values that underlie our culture (Dominick, 1973; Stark, 1987). Taylor and Dozier believe that "TV uncritically reflects the social structure of society in its selection and presentation of characters… but it also reinforces the notion that there is a fixed order in society" (Taylor & Dozier, 1983, p. 109). They posit that the representations of characters and

events on television mirror people's actions and beliefs in real life as well. Monaco (1981) and Barnouw (1970) claim that the TV elite are aware of this societal assumption. They believe that TV series' claim to portray the actual workings of real societal institutions and to reflect accurately common cultural attitudes, values, and beliefs (cited in Taylor & Dozier, 1983). Sociologist Todd Gitlin claims that not only does TV reflect societal goals and norms, but that content changes on television broadcasts are largely due to changes in social values and sensibilities (Gitlin, 1979). Television then reinforces these new mores as it reflects them across the screen and into viewers' homes. According to this view, the ideas and ideologies supported in modern media are reflective of the beliefs of broader society.

At the same time as television is the mirror of social discourse, it also shapes it. A knowledge transmission interpretation of media effects argues that influences from television can impact our behavior in real life (Berkowitz, 1984). Gitlin believes that "Television messages are integrated into the dominant system of discourse and the prevailing structures of labor, consumption, and politics" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 251). He claims that changes in cultural mores gives rise to new genres of television and new formulas for representing the world (Gitlin, 1979). "Commercial culture does not *manufacture* ideology; it *relays* and *reproduces* and *processes* and *packages* and *focuses* ideology that is constantly arising both from social elites and from active social groups and movements throughout the society" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 253). Social Psychologist, Leonard Berkowitz maintains that television influences "… arise largely through a permission-giving (or disinhibitory) process. People in the audience are supposedly disposed to engage in some antisocial behavior but are reluctant to do

so until the media tells them, directly or indirectly, that the behavior is permissible or even profitable" (Berkowitz, 1984, p. 415). According to this theory, society mirrors what it sees on television, and propagates those discourses across American life.

The social cues that are either reflected in the media or constructed by them act as behavioral guides for the people who consume them. "The seductively realistic portrayals of family life in the media may be the basis for our most common and pervasive conceptions and beliefs about what is natural and what is right" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1980, p. 3). We see images on TV, and evaluate ourselves on the basis of what we see. We then want to be like the characters either because we admire them, or because we believe that those images are what we should strive to be like.

Social Construction and Social Representation Theory

Serge Moscovici, one of the founders of social representation theory, studies the ways that language, culture, and social representations color the way people understand the world. He explains that we come to understand our world as a community, where ideas are publicly constructed and then become the discourse through which everyone understands them (Moscovici, 1984). Moscovici claims that representations are both conventionalistic and prescriptive. As a means of conventionalizing objects, people, and events, Moscovici says that we use words to give meaning and provide heuristics for people, places, and things. The prescriptive function of representations is to provide us with a collective thought from past experiences, traditions, and classifications. Moscovici explains that this prescriptive force "decrees what we should think" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 9). Representations are

created, then change, and then have the power to change other representations. Through this process, our beliefs about the world are adjusted and changed based on a process of presentation and re-presentation of values. Images and realities are constructed and then mirrored back upon themselves (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999).

Social constructionism examines the way perspectives on social problems are "…created, how they are disseminated, and how they influence public debate… Social constructionism assumes that what people believe and think about social problems has been constructed through claims-making" (Berns, 2004). The act of simply making claims is enough to render those ideas as part of the social reality of the times. Gamson, et al. (1992)argue that the public is unable to understand the difference between constructions as interpretations and constructions as reality. Social psychologist and scholar Kurt Lewin posits that the difference between interpretation and reality is largely moot, as "Reality for the individual is, to a high degree, determined by what is socially accepted as reality" (Lewin, 1948, p. 57). Lewin comments on the profound ability for the constructed to become the basis for social reality and discourse.

Social Construction in Television

Popular views that are repeated in the media imbibe a taken-for-granted status in cultural ideology (Sacco, 1995). The persistence of many representations of life and society on television "… contribute most to an individual's media-influenced perception of social reality" (Gerbner et. al (1980) cited in Skill, et al., 1990, p. 140). The repetition of certain ideas and discourses in television "… often produce[s] exaggerated estimates of the prevalence of the witnessed behavior in society (perhaps

through the operation of the availability heuristic) and may even, in the case of antisocial conduct, lead to an indifference toward this type of behavior" (Berkowitz, 1984, p. 410). Especially regarding television, the expression and repetition of common ideas has the effect of validating them as reality, leading the audience to conclude that what they see is essentially true and that shows "tell it like it is" (Barnouw (1970) cited in Taylor & Dozier, 1983, p. 110).

One reason for this is that TV viewers see television as an extension of real life. Adults and children alike have difficulty separating fact from fiction in television portrayals of people and institutions (Taylor & Dozier, 1983). "We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it" (Gamson, et al., 1992, p. 374). Many television viewers experience source confusion, where they forget where they learned information, and treat is as fact. This is dangerous when television is the source that provides audiences with "facts" about social situations (Berns, 2004). In a world dominated by television, media messages provide us not only with images to interpret the world, but also with lessons about values, ideologies, and beliefs (Gamson, et al., 1992). We are then unable to separate the influences of television from other inputs that frame our understanding of the world, thereby leading us to mistakenly interpret TV messages as accurate depictions of real life.

The constructed reality of television has the ability to affect us in different settings. We are more emotionally invested in, and think more critically about, the

images we consume when they are witnessed in groups than when we observe them on our own (Gitlin, 1979). As it relates to sports media, “In semi-public situations like barrooms, audiences are more likely to see through the trivialization and ignorance and-in ‘para-social interaction’-to tell the announcers off. But in the privacy of living rooms, the announcers’ framing probably penetrates farther into the collective definition of an event” (Gitlin, 1979, p. 259). Thus, it is through interaction with others, not through the television screen alone, that we are able to identify the constructed image for what it is: a representation.

In today’s world, there is little question that television creates a socially constructed reality. There is some contention, however, as to who is responsible for the creation of those representations and what their motives are. Gamson claims that the ever increasing monopoly of the media results in an inevitably narrowing scope of information and imagery that is available to the consuming society(Gamson, et al., 1992). This view holds media elite accountable and responsible for the ideas they broadcasts. Kellner contends that social reality is constructed less through an all-powerful media elite, but more so by an amalgamation of social and political forces: “The hegemony model of culture and the media reveals dominant ideological formations and discourses as a shifting terrain of consensus, struggle, and compromise rather than as an instrument of a monolithic, unidimensional ideology that is forced on the underlying population from above by a unified ruling class” (Kellner (1990) cited in Gamson, et al., 1992, p. 381). This view cites other cultural forces – like political activists – in addition to media powerhouses, as being responsible for the messages television propagates. Both Gamson et al. and Kellner’s

beliefs rely on the notion that the reasons why, and ways in which, ideas are constructed has an effect on the impact and interpretation of those messages.

Framing

One way that social reality is constructed is through the use of frames. A frame functions as a "… central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols" (Gamson, et al., 1992, p. 384). Essentially, a frame is a way of looking at and understanding an event, experience, or social issue based on how it is portrayed by the media, the public, politicians, activists, or anyone else. Frames form the latent structure of society. In everyday life, people use frames to make sense of their experiences (Berns, 2004; Gamson, et al., 1992). They help us to organize events, ideas, and thoughts, making them something that can be talked about and made operational in our lives.

There are two ways to look at how framing works for us. One way is that we each have the power to frame the events and experiences of our lives (Gamson, et al., 1992). This way of thinking about framing allows for individual agency in defining our own worlds. The other way is to view a frame as being a structure imposed upon our experiences by the external world (Gamson, et al., 1992).

Almost any situation or social problem can be framed in a number of different ways. In the case of domestic violence, for example, one frame may blame the victim ("Why didn't she leave?"). Another frame may blame the abuser ("What's wrong with him? If only he would stop drinking, this problem wouldn't exist"). Yet another still may blame society ("Why don't we have laws that can more appropriately deal with cases of domestic violence?"). These frames then imply and demand that we

assume different causal attributions and potential solutions to the problem (Gusfield; Schneider cited in Sacco, 1995).

Framing in the Media

Television is one arena in which frames are produced and presented to the masses. When analyzing media sources, it is important to keep in mind that news and media events come to us pre-processed and pre-organized. We do not consume such images in raw form (Gamson, et al., 1992). Rather, the people who sit down and create the shows that audiences consume have a certain frame that they ascribe to and will often imbed that angle into their work. Because of this, "Within the formula of a program, a specific slant often pushes through, registering a certain position on a particular public issue" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 261). In studying media sources, it is necessary to keep in mind the various objectives, biases, and opinions that the media supports in the production of their work.

TV shapes social problems into sellable stories that will increase viewership of magazines, books, movies, and TV shows (Berns, 2004). They are in the business of turning social problems into an entertainment source rather than an educational tool. As a powerful socializing agent, the hegemonic framework of the media "bounds and narrows the range of actual and potential contending world views. Hegemony is an historical process in which one picture of the world is systematically preferred over others" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 257). Because of the mass appeal of television, the world picture conveyed through TV images can dominate social discourses.

Research about media frames indicates that in most situations, an extremely limited number of frames (usually one) dominate a whole field, while any other possible frames are ignored (Berns, 2004). Because of this, "The media become, 'a site on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality'" (Gurevitch & Levy (1985) cited in Gamson, et al., 1992, p. 385). Nancy Berns argues that the media has a power to shape the way that people think about society and social problems. She goes on to claim that in many situations, people actually *experience* social problems through the media (Berns, 2004).

One example of this is in our conception of child sexual abuse. The stigma associated with child abuse is such that we rarely hear about it in everyday life. Instead, most of American society understands child abuse through what they have heard on television or in the newspapers. For the most part, we do not know firsthand about the traumatizing effects of child abuse. Nonetheless, we may believe that we comprehend the depth and breadth of the problem based on our familiarity with TV stories about abuse. If television framed adults having sexual relationships with children as another type of love that was natural and beautiful, we might have slightly less negative views about adults who sleep with children.

What we see in the media becomes common knowledge for how we think about certain issues. "Major social conflicts are transported *into* the cultural system, where the hegemonic process frames them, form and content both, into compatibility with dominant systems of meaning" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 264). As we forget where we

heard certain information, we tend to confuse stories with facts and uncritically accept the dominant meanings the media provides us with (Berns, 2004).

As it relates to crime, the media plays a big role in constructing how we look at social issues. The frames that media sources use to describe criminal acts and events provide us with the imagery and information that becomes public opinion (Howitt, 1998). When the media does a successful job of constructing an issue, "A consensus emerges regarding what kinds of public issues private troubles represent" (Gusfield (1989) cited in Sacco, 1995, p. 154). As it relates to domestic violence and other forms of victimization, framing the problem in a light that blames the victim is a common media practice. Blaming the victim is a process of defensive attribution whereby people blame victims of violence as a way to preserve their view of the world as fundamentally just (Lerner (1976) cited in Tulloch & Tulloch, 1992).

Television Genres and their Cultural Implications

Television is a form of entertainment, but more importantly, it is a form of business. The business of TV is guided primarily by the profit-seeking attitudes of producers and the media elite. The byproduct of such a system is that media professionals must keep up with popular interests of the consumers. Todd Gitlin, sociologist and cultural commentator on mass media, claims that this creates a system where "Shows are made by guessing at audience desires and tolerances, and finding ways to speak to them that perpetuate the going system" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 263). The making of television shows becomes a process in which networks have a vested interest in producing programs that will get the largest audience – and thereby the largest group of spenders. To do this, broadcasting elites must keep their fingers on

the pulse of popular culture in order to keep track of popular tastes from one minute to the next (Gitlin, 1979; Stark, 1987). Audience tastes are then translated into different types of television shows, and new genres – categories of television shows characterized by similar style or ideas – are born out of public interest and appeal.

The way that the TV industry works is by supplying audiences with the types of programming that they enjoy consuming. In a world where audience interest is fluid, favored genres change significantly over time, and we see many different types of television shows each season. These range from romance to western, to comedy, to drama, to reality, to crime shows. One reason for this variety of programming is that television attempts to provide us with programming that will have the widest appeal, bring in the largest audiences, and make the biggest profit (Stark, 1987). As cultural norms change, so too do the genres that are in vogue.

Crime as a Genre

As an entertainment genre, crime dramas trace their roots back to the "pulp" magazines and dime store novels of the nineteenth century (Stark, 1987). Glorified crime-fighters – detectives, cowboys, and private-eyes – easily grabbed public attention and captivated us first through "pulp," radio, and, more recently through, television (Stark, 1987). In the print media, detective stories were replaced in 1902 by the rise in popularity of Western literature, which was joined in the 1920's by stories of relentless private-eyes (Stark, 1987). As radio media took off in the 1930's, Dick Tracy and Sherlock Holmes jumped from the pages of popular print novels and were vividly transformed into radio characters. The popularity of radio and the media

fascination with crime in the period ranging from 1930 to 1950 mirrored what would later happen in television (Stark, 1987).

The advent of television crime shows inversely affected the popularity of radio crime programming, and the invention of TV led to the demise of the radio crime entertainment (Stark, 1987). Television crime captured public interest in 1951 with *Dragnet*, the "first great crime hit" (Stark, 1987, p. 9). Since that time, more than 500 primetime television crime series have crossed the airwaves (Stark, 1987). Stark contends that crime shows are second only to situation comedies as the most popular genre in television history (Stark, 1987). Crime as a genre became an unstoppable force from the beginning of television history.

For at least the past 40 years, violent TV shows have been more popular than nonviolent ones (Andison, 1977). The media obsession with violent television mirrors a broader American fixation on deviance and disorder (Stark, 1987). Prior to the 1960's, Westerns were the primary example of violence and law enforcement in television. As the '60s progressed, however, the Western became too removed from peoples' normal experiences in life to serve as the primary source of law enforcement information (Stark, 1987; Taylor & Dozier, 1983). As Westerns became largely extinct in the mid-1960's, a newer type of crime show emerged where crime-fighters represented every type of social and racial group, all working towards the common goal of protecting society from violence (Taylor & Dozier, 1983). More recent crime shows depict "police stories, with cops surmounting humanist illusions to draw thin blue lines against anachro-criminal barbarism, [and] afford a variety of official ways of coping with 'the social issue'" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 257). As a genre, crime dramas

allow the viewing public to learn about violence without necessarily experiencing it firsthand.

Changes to society's morals and social climate not only influence what people are interested in seeing, but also in what is produced. Within the field of crime television, there have been many changes in the types of crimes and violence that are aired. These changes occur in accordance with public interest and popularity. Much as changing social values and public awareness steered us away from the Western, so too did cultural ideology steer us toward the types of violence that were acceptable to be portrayed on television, as well as the way in which deviance was portrayed. "Changes in mores relating to public discussion of sex and violence have allowed respectable media outlets to report crimes that would have previously been seen as taboo and to do so as a level of detail that would once have been considered lurid" (Sacco, 1995, p. 145). While it was once considered racy and sexually explicit to show the women in *Charlie's Angels* jiggling in tiny outfits, or Sgt. Pepper Anderson, of *Police Woman*, undercover as a prostitute, in contemporary shows like *Law and Order: SVU* and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigators*, it is nearly impossible to find a crime show that fails to show a scantily clad woman or a gruesome murder in every episode. At this juncture in history, crime shows reflect much of the ideology of American culture.

Crime in the Media

Ferrell and Websdale developed the theory of cultural criminology, which looks at the ways that criminal and cultural processes converge in present-day social life. The concept of cultural criminology "… references the increasing analytic

attention that many criminologists now give to popular culture constructions, and especially mass media constructions, of crime and crime control" (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 3). The field has expanded in recent years as sociologists and criminologists alike have sought to bring cultural and media analysis into the more traditional field of criminology (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999). "With its focus on representation, image, and style, cultural criminology incorporates not only the insights of cultural studies, but the intellectual reorientation afforded by postmodernism" (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 4). Cultural criminologists seek to acknowledge and understand the interactions between criminals, agents of control, media producers, and the public, as they work together to construct the meaning of crime (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999).

There is a reciprocal relationship between the world of crime and crime control and the world of media, where each relies on the other for legitimacy (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999; Haney, 2005). Media institutions regularly get their initial information from the courts and policing agencies. They then present that information to the public, thereby contributing to the political and social agendas regarding crime. "In a relatively nonconspiratorial but nonetheless powerful fashion, media and criminal justice organizations thus coordinate their day-to-day operations, and cooperate in constructing circumscribed understandings of crime" (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 9). The crime-filled world that we see on television has been created from the interplay of real life crime and the media world. Yet the criminal world we see on television "… is not so much fictional as fake" (Gitlin, 1979, p. 262). The selectivity that media outlets use in deciding what content to broadcast results in

a filtering of violent media towards the sensationalistic and grotesque (Dowler, et al., 2006).

Postman argues that the media pushes its own images and agendas through its constructs of crime as a means of entertainment (Postman, 1986, cited in Ferrell & Websdale, 1999). He goes on to claim that our obsession with crime shows and with viewing violence on television is a way in which the America as a culture is "… amusing our self [*sic*] to death" (Postman (1986) cited in Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 11). The over-representation of crime in American news and media has led the American public to think that crime and violence occur more often in real life than they actually do(Haney, 2005; Stark, 1987). More than half of the major characters, and about one third of *all* the characters shown in primetime network television are involved in violent interactions (Bushman, 1995). This gross over-representation of violence in the media influences the social and experienced reality of crime, deviance, and crime control (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999; Stark, 1987). Our interest in crime media, coupled with the prevalence of crime in everyday society, has created the conditions that make deviance a large part of the fabric of American culture (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999; Stark, 1987).

We are, as Professor of Criminality, Richard Sparks claims, "'entertaining the crisis'" (Sparks, 1995, cited in Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 11) of American criminality. Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti claim that the inability of the American public to discern the difference between fictional television stories and the reality of real life crime often leads audiences to "accept crime drama as crime reality" (Dowler, et al., 2006, p. 838). The fact that many shows are intended to portray

"realistic" crimes, or use stories straight from news headlines, makes the distinction between fact and fiction even harder to locate (Dowler, et al., 2006). "Slippage between the 'true story' and the fictionalized account reveals how entertainment genres rely on actual events for legitimacy but reshape the narrative in ways that limit rather than enlarge discussion about power and violence" (Kozol, 1995, p. 663). Media images of crime and violence drastically color our ideas of who or what a criminal is (Haney, 2005; Stark, 1987).

One of the main concerns about the plethora of violence that appears on our TV screens is about the influence and effect it has on the American public. There is both a scholarly and a public debate about whether TV causes people to behave violently or whether TV just reflects the violent world in which we live (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961; Taylor & Dozier, 1983). It is difficult to accurately disentangle the effects of media on violence, and vice versa, because a multitude of variables contribute to our public behavior. It is unclear exactly what people take away as the message from violent television. What producers must remember is that even if they have a specific intention with their programming, audiences "recontextualize, remake, and even reverse" the meanings of these images as they incorporate them into their everyday lives (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 12). Because television is such an influential socializing force in society, the lessons that it teaches audiences about real issues like crime take on extreme importance in our application of these ideas in everyday life.

Crime Programs Influence on Crime Knowledge

While there is disagreement about what effects watching violence on television has on a person's own behaviors, it is more likely that violence in the media affects how we think about crime and our beliefs about our own safety:

> TV violence influences behavior in an indirect fashion, through its impact on learned values and attitudes or through a more general impression that is communicated about the nature of social reality. Values and attitudes or perceptions of the world may be substantially affected by television programming which may, in turn, influence behavior. (Hartnagel, et al., 1975, p. 348)

Hartnagel suggests that violence on TV may make us believe that the real world is impacted and afflicted by violence in the same way that the television world is. This amalgamation of first-hand crime knowledge with television crime exposure necessitates further study of the influence of television on social thought.

One consequence of the crime-filled primetime lineup is that it suggests to audiences that the world is inherently a violent place. The barrage of crime available in television programming desensitizes viewers to the point that they begin to perceive violence as normal (Berkowitz, 1984; Hartnagel, et al., 1975; Heath, Kruttschnitt, & Ward, 1986; Stark, 1987). This over-representation of crime has the potential to make individuals feel that they must be constantly prepared to confront violence in real life (Berkowitz, 1984; Hartnagel, et al., 1975). Violence on television can also lead people to believe that there are circumstances in which violence is an acceptable and effective means for resolving disputes. If people truly ascribe to this idea, it may express itself in the actual use of violence as a way to solve conflict (Berkowitz, 1984; Hartnagel, et al., 1975).

Some media psychologists also posit that the preponderance of crime media affects viewers' perception of the amount of actual crime that takes place in the United States. Hartnagel and colleagues suggest that viewers' level of fear and anxiety in the world may be heightened by the proportionally large instances of crime on television. In contrast, Taylor's study of respondents in cities on the East and West Coasts identifies how instances of crime in the media influenced respondents estimates about the prevalence of crime in their neighborhood, but had no effect on their judgment of their personal vulnerability and susceptibility to crime (Berkowitz, 1984).

Family in Television

Like crime, family also plays an important role in TV. As one of the most basic units of human interaction, is depicted in almost all television genres, including crime shows. TV families act in ways that inherently make sense to audiences. We treat the characters, relationships, and events as authentic (Lewis (1991) cited in Douglas, 1996). The actions of TV families serve as an example of American social behavior. Since the inception of TV, television has been a model for how families ought to behave (Pitta, 1999). When analyzing the depictions of family on TV, two main models emerge: one is the traditional, intact family – the prototypical family that American consumers ought to strive for, and the other is the troubled family which we should avoid at all costs.

Reverend Jerry Falwell claims that "In the American tradition – the sanctity of the family, the husband, wife, legally married relationship – is unquestionably the cornerstone of this republic " (Falwell, 1981, p. 152). While some may dismiss

Falwell's opinions, it is certainly true that he speaks for a large portion of particular regions of the country about beliefs concerning family. Since the 1940's, the American media has relied on narratives of family and domesticity to promote these national ideals (Kozol, 1995). Skill and colleagues found that over 65% of intact TV families were oriented around the nuclear family unit (Skill, et al., 1990). Throughout television history, we have seen a constant parade of idealized TV families – from the Brady's of the late 1960's; the Partridge family of the '70s; *The Cosby Show's* Huxtables in the '80s; the Tanner family from *Full House* in the early '90s; even *7th Heaven's* Camden family of early 2000's. With each passing decade, the image of the perfect family unit, that goes through trials and tribulations but always ends up closer than ever, has remained constant and available on the television screen. Television families such as these show us that the ideal family "operates with teamwork and reciprocity, with parents giving reassurance, sons seeking it, and daughters reasoning and suggesting actions" (Skill, et al., 1990, p. 160).

In this framework of thinking about family, financial status is not one of the top predictors of happiness. Thomas and Callahan found in their 1982 study that in the television portrayal of the family, relative poverty was correlated to happier families. The affluence of the families on *Desperate Housewives* seems to do little to create happy and stable lives, whereas the more modest means of the Conners from *Roseanne* ultimately has a much less negative impact on their lives. On television, working class families were the most likely to fit into the stereotypically happy family ideal (Thomas & Callahan, 1982).

In direct contrast to the intact family is the problem-filled family. Examples of this type of family are increasing in frequency on television (See for example: *Desperate Housewives*, *Family Guy*, and *The Simpsons*). In recent years, the television family has grown smaller, less stable, and more fragmented than in previous eras (Chesebro (1979) cited in Skill, et al., 1990). Signs of a problem family "… would be marked by relative inability to establish and maintain supportive and satisfying relationships, maintain family stability and family status, manage conflict, socialize children, or manage the daily routine" (Douglas, 1996, p. 680). As with media images of crime, media images of family also shape our understanding of what a family "should" look like. Whether we ascribe to the notion of the intact family, or to the problem family, the medium of television gives us a snapshot of what family "looks" like that may or may not be accurate and indicative of reality.

Crime and Family

Not every family functions as successfully as many of the idealized TV families of the '70's and '80's imply. Many families experience violence and crime both in the outside world and within their own homes. The term, "battered woman," was coined in the mid-1970's. This new phrase allowed for the introduction of spousal abuse into the realm of public awareness (Berns, 2004; Blackman, 1990; Kozol, 1995; Walker, 1979). By giving it a public name, there was finally a collective awareness and public acknowledgement of this social problem. Once people had a common language to use when talking about domestic violence, public discussion, academic research, and media attention of the issue all increased (Berns, 2004). The field of "family violence," specifically, began with the study of physical aggression

towards children and has since expanded to include studies of violence towards wives, siblings, parents, and the elderly. More recently, it has expanded even further to include studies of neglect, sexual assault of children, and psychological abuse of both children and partners (Straus, 1992). The types of family violence that this study explores can be described using many different names: domestic violence, family violence, intra-family violence, partner abuse, spousal abuse, and wife beating are just a few of the most common terms. Additionally, other types of family abuse include child abuse, abuse of elders, and sibling abuse (Berns, 2004, p. 20).

Society has an extremely difficult time understanding and coming to terms with family violence in part because the concept of family violence contradicts dominant social narratives of family. We want to see the home as a loving place where parents are caring and live to fulfill their children's best interest, and where families need and deserve privacy, and are allowed and entitled to be autonomous (Blackman, 1990). Yet in many homes, this image of the perfect family is merely an unattainable ideal on their television screen. It is difficult to integrate what we know about violence with what we know about family. "As a by-product of the attempt to understand how there could be both love and violence between family members, we now know that there is an inherently high level of conflict built into the basic family structure" (Straus, 1992, p. 216).

Family violence is not as uncommon as many would want to believe. Upwards of 1.8 million women are severely assaulted by their husbands each year. This translates into the beating of one woman roughly every 18 seconds (National Family Violence Surveys cited in Locke & Richman, 1999; Straus, 1992). Violence

is not directed solely at women. Sociologist Murray Straus explains that women are equally as violent as men in domestic relationships, but because of their relative size and strength differences, females' acts of aggression tend to be less physically damaging than those of males (Straus, 1992).

There has been exponential growth in the amount of research done on all types of family violence since the 1970's. This increase in the amount of family violence depicted on TV continues in spite of evidence that such violent acts are actually decreasing in frequency in the US. This growth "… exemplifies the social construction of a social problem in response to changes in American society and American sociology" (Sacco, 1995; Straus, 1992, p. 214). The increase in instances of violence on television plays into an understanding that it is individual behavior that brings about abuse, rather than overall social forces. In reality, the preponderance of the literature indicates that physical abuse is caused more by social arrangements than by individual psychopathologies (Straus, 1992). Domestic violence can be connected to economic status, gender discrimination both inside and outside of the workplace, childcare (or lack thereof), and housing, but is not limited to just those factors (Berns, 2004).

In her research on people's attitudes towards domestic violence, Nancy Berns has found that most people consider family life a private matter and are willing to tolerate some abusive behavior by men against the female partners (Berns, 2004). Although most people would agree that domestic violence is not "right," many people still believe that there are certain "private" circumstances in which abuse is justified (Berns, 2004).

Just as spousal abuse is tolerated under some circumstances, so too is violence against children. Some people believe that “Implicit cultural norms … make the marriage license a hitting license, just as being a parent is a license to spank – to hit children”(Straus, 1992, p. 220). See also: (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Kozol, 1995; Straus, 1976). Strauss claims that up to 90 percent of parents use spanking or other forms of corporal punishment as a means of correcting misbehavior, and that virtually everyone in American society experiences it as either victim or administrator of such punishment (Straus, 1992). Greven (1991)asserts that because many Americans believe in the acceptability and appropriateness of hitting children “when necessary,” hitting becomes internalized as part of both American psyche and culture (cited in Straus, 1992).

Due, in part, to this subtle acceptance of violence within families, domestic violence between spouses has been framed much more as a problem of the victim than as a problem of the abuser, the family, or of society’s failing to protect its own (Berns, 2004). The private nature of family violence makes many women feel that prevention is impossible. The question frequently asked about victims, “Why does she stay?,” expresses the inherent blame of the victim and places the woman in the position of responsibility for her own misery. This framing suggests that if only she would do something about it, she could end her family’s problems (Blackman, 1990).

In the rare instance when people do not encourage a woman to leave a violent home, they often suggest she should do all she can to end the violence that others subject her to: “Demanding that women in abusive situations try to appease the aggressor and maintain the family, prioritizes male needs and family intactness over

female protection" (Tulloch & Tulloch, 1992, p. 64). American socialization practices, with their inherent sex biases, tend to minimize the visibility of violence within the home in that they promote intact families over victim safety.

Family Violence in Television

The invisibility of family violence in the real world is mimicked and exaggerated on television. Dominick's study showed 7% of crime victims on television were victimized by members of their own family. At the time of his study, real life crime statistics indicated that as many as 25-30% of violent crimes occurred within a family context (Dominick, 1973). In all, the media promotes and cultivates the impression that marriage is a very safe state of existence (Skill, et al., 1990). In their media analysis, Skill and colleagues found that married women were the least likely to be involved in violence on television (Skill, et al., 1990). When women are involved in television violence, it often comes in the form of women being abusive towards their spouses. On TV, violence by wives tends to be in the form of stereotypical slapping or plate throwing stimulated by anger at their spouses' actions – both are treated as if they are of little or no consequence for the recipient (Straus, 1992). Why is it that TV is full of violent imagery, yet such a small number of those depictions show family violence? Tulloch and Tulloch believe that this type of violence has a stronger emotional impact on audiences. "Violence within the home is a potent stimulus with a personal impact that far exceeds the trigger-happy violence of war movies" (Tulloch & Tulloch, 1992, p. 67). It is not that we do not like to see violence and gore on television, it is just that we don't like to think of those images as invading the idealized grounds of the American family.

Conclusion

Taking into account the above information about the importance of media in society and the specifics about messages of deviance within the family on television, I embarked on my present study to look further into how it is that family and violence are interconnected in popular media. My goal is to build upon the previous literature to better understand how family is used to contextualize crime and deviance in television.

What follows is a content analysis of television crime shows that aired between the 1949-1950 and the 2008-2009 television seasons. I looked specifically at the appearance of criminal's families, family responses to deviance, family as an explanation for deviance, and family violence in television.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Selection

In order to see how violence has been depicted and contextualized since the 1950's, I focused my sample on crime shows that were popular during their initial airdates. The more popular a show was, the more people viewed the messages of that particular show. Because part of the aim of studying crime in the media is to see what television shows teach to society, the sample consisted of only shows that were watched most often, and therefore had the greatest ability to influence popular opinion and culture.

The primary criterion for selection for the study was that the show was a "crime drama." For the purposes of this study, I defined a crime drama as a television drama that focuses on the occurrence of crime and the solving thereof. So, for example, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigators* is a part of my sample, whereas *Prison Break*, which focuses on deviants after they have been caught and put in the criminal justice system, is not. Specifications include a focus on the crime-solving aspect of deviant behaviors. Because I am mainly interested in the commission of the crime, I excluded shows where the main focus was in a courtroom or on some other aspect of the legal process. This specification excluded shows like *Boston Legal*, *The Practice*, and *Judging Amy*.

The second condition for inclusion in the sample was that the recurring lead characters in the shows all work in the criminal apprehension field (e.g., detectives, police officers, crime scene investigators). This choice enabled me to see a wide array

of criminals, as most episodes within a given series focus on new crimes in each episode.

A third criterion was that all shows in the sample must be dramas that focus primarily on civilian crime. My aim in using this measure was to avoid niche markets or genres that may have different messages or goals. I eliminated all western shows - like *Davy Crockett*, and *Walker, Texas Ranger*– and science fiction shows – like *Superman*, *Spiderman*, and *Heroes*, as well as all shows where the focus is on military, navy, or air force crime – like *JAG*, *NCIS*, and *M*A*S*H*. I hypothesized that shows in a more specified genre give a much narrower view of criminals. Not only do these shows limit the types of criminals to be depicted, but also their observable differences from popular society would make the types of crimes and criminals less recognizable and relatable to audiences. For this same reason, science fiction shows were also eliminated from the sample because, by definition, they stray from the norms of reality.

The final criterion for being defined as a crime drama was that the programs had to be primarily based in fiction. I used only shows where the writers invented the stories. For the purposes of this study, all reality and reality-based shows, like *Cops*, were eliminated. Dragnet and Dragnet ’67 were the exceptions to this rule. These stories were highly fictionalized accounts of real life crime from across the country. In the case of Dragnet and Dragnet ’67, there was only a hazy distinction between the real and the fictional. I included these two shows because of their undeniable popularity and because they were produced before the beginnings of the current reality TV age.

To define a "popular" show, I used three main criteria. The first was that the show had to have been originally aired on one of the major networks. For the period from 1949-2000, these networks were ABC, NBC, and CBS. In the years from 2000-2008, FOX was included as one of the major networks, because it had reached similar levels of recognition and acclaim as the other three. The purpose of limiting the sample to these networks is that they were unarguably the most available shows on television. I chose not to include any shows that aired on cable because I wanted to use only programming that was immediately available to all TV owners at the time of the initial broadcast.

The second criterion to define popularity was that the show had to appear in the top ratings for the decade it aired in. This insured that I used only shows that reached a large audience. To determine ratings, I used rating websites that formed their lists based on Nielsen Media Research.[1] Using the previously stated definition of "crime drama" as my criterion for including a show, I identified all crime dramas that appeared in the top 20 most watched shows of each given year.[2] It was difficult to find a top 20 shows list for the years between 2003 and 2008, and thus, I used a list of the most popular dramas of the 2000's and extracted the crime shows from that list.

Finally, to be included in my sample, a program had to be accessible on DVD. Presumably shows that had a lasting impact on society are those most likely to be put on DVD for audience consumption after the original airdate. I used Netflix as a

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[1] Nielsen ratings are private, and as such, not available to the public without membership. Because of this, I visited websites that cited Nielsen research in their lists of top rated shows.

[2] For the 1949-1950 television year, the ranking list only included the top 10 shows, as opposed to all other years where the top 20 were taken into account.

means for obtaining my samples. Netflix, the world's largest online DVD rental service, serves more than 10 million customers monthly.[i] I chose to use this form of media rental under the assumption that it was one of the easiest and most reliable ways to see which shows are available and popular on DVD. Given my criteria, I selected 39 series for my sample (See Table 1).

Finally, as time constraints made it impossible to view every episode of every season of every show, I began my research by watching the first disk of the first season of each series. I chose this criterion based on the assumption that the initial episodes would attempt to provide a wide range of crime topics as well as supply the necessary background information to understand the show. This resulted in a sample of 167 different television episodes.

Procedures

Once I generated my sample list, I began watching shows. I started by watching and taking notes on first-run and rerun crime shows that I recorded on my DVR in September and October of 2008. These notes laid the foundation for the way I catalogued my observations and conducted my research for the rest of the series.

I then acquired the DVDs from Netflix. I began watching shows from the 2000's. I watched the series one at a time, and only went on to the next DVD after I'd completed all the episodes on the previous disk. After roughly three quarters of the 2000's shows, I switched to watching shows from the 1990's. I worked backwards by decade until I had completed all the shows from the 1950's, and then I returned to the final shows from the 2000's as a way of re-introducing myself to the differing portrayal of crime in more recent shows.

Series Sampled	
Series Name	**Series Air Dates**
Baretta	1975-1978
Bones	2005-present
Cagney and Lacey	1982-1988
Cannon	1971-1976
Charlie's Angels	1976-1981
CHiPs	1977-1983
Criminal Minds	2005-present
Crossing Jordan	2001-2007
CSI: Crime Scene Investigators	2000-present
CSI: Miami	2002-present
CSI: NY	2004-present
Diagnosis Murder	1993-2001
Dragnet	1951-1959
Dragnet '67	1967-1970
Hawaii Five-O	1968-1980
Homicide: Life on the Street	1993-1999
Hunter	1984-1991
Ironside	1967-1975
Kojak	1973-1978
Law and Order	1990-present
Law and Order: Criminal Intent	2001-present
Law and Order: SVU	1999-present
Magnum P.I.	1980-1988
Man Against Crime	1949-1956
Martin Kane, Private Eye	1949-1954
Matlock	1986-1995
Miami Vice	1984-1988
Murder She Wrote	1984-1996
NYPD Blue	1993-2005
Perry Mason	1957-1966
Police Woman	1974-1978
Starsky and Hutch	1975-1979
S.W.A.T.	1975-1976
The Fall Guy	1981-1986
The Man from U.N.C.L.E.	1964-1968
The Rockford Files	1974-1980
The Rookies	1972-1976
The Untouchables	1959-1962
Without a Trace	2002-present

Table 1. Overview of sample series. N = 39.

During this process, I took notes as I watched each show. I chose not to use a coding schema during my observation period because I did not want to limit myself by trying to fit what I saw into preexisting codes. I conducted my research using Glaser and Strauss' (1967) idea of "theory as process," where theory is conceived of as a constantly changing and growing entity rather than as a product that is well defined from the beginning. In choosing not to force my data into specific codes from the beginning, I allowed for new and emergent conceptualizations that Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain are paramount to grounded theory. This theory stresses the notion that the typical data collection method of coding first and analyzing data second does not allow for the redesigning and addition of new conceptual ideas (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

My notes included general summaries of the plot as well as images of deviance. I focused on in depth descriptions of deviant characters: race, gender, economic status, physical appearance, etc. I also noted explanations of criminal behavior, making sure to focus on instances of family and the families' relationship to the criminal or the crime committed.

To check reliability, I created a focus group made up of research assistants from Professor Sarah Carney's Children's Media Analysis lab. I conducted these focus groups early on in the data collection process so as to ensure reliability in data collection from the beginning of the process. After watching episodes with other students, I compared my notes with theirs to ensure that we had made similar observations and interpreted the same messages from the shows. The focus groups yielded results similar to my own on the bases of main themes and messages. There

was high consistency among reviewers about message content. The main areas where research assistant observations differed from my own were in the specific details and observations they made about plot and character summaries. I was able to use their observation styles as a way of broadening my own range of observation throughout the rest of my data collection. Research assistants also helped me to develop a better sense of codes and themes to look for in conducting further research.

Coding

After the completion of my data collection, I generated a coding schema based on the themes and ideas present in the series. The primary codes for data collection included: series title; episode title; year of production; race of the criminal(s); gender of the criminal(s); socioeconomic status of the criminal(s); whether the crime committed was violent; description of the victim – if any existed; whether motive for the deviance was explained, and if so, what it was; whether the criminal's family was shown or referenced in the episode; if mitigating factors were explained as a cause of the crime, and what they were; whether family was cited as a mitigating factor; if family was included in the motive; if there were any depictions of intra-family or domestic violence; any instances where violent behavior was accepted or condoned by characters other than the criminal; the criminal's fate (e.g., death by law enforcement officer, incarceration, escape from custody, evading apprehension); and whether friends and family were aware of the criminal's behavior or if they were surprised to hear their loved one was deviant.

In order to assign socioeconomic status for my coding schema, I used a number of indicators within each show. First and foremost was if any characters

verbally referenced their socioeconomic status. This was comprised mostly of instances where a character talked about being poor, or when other characters talked about their immense wealth. I also used indicators within the home (when available) to determine a criminal's class level. Specifically, things like having a maid or a butler, having a large house, having ornate furnishing like chandeliers, and having nicer cars, were all taken as signs of being from an upper class background. Likewise, having a perfectly adequate home, appearing to be able to have food on the table, having a decent job or a newer car were all seen as signs of being in the middle class category. For the lower class category, I noted verbal indicators of poverty, as well as characters' physical appearance like having torn or tattered clothes, being unkempt and dirty, not having a home, or having one that was falling apart.

I created a chronologically arranged spreadsheet of all of the shows after the completion of data collection. I then went back through my notes and observations from each show and filled in the appropriate codes for each show. Not every code was relevant to each show, but even the absence of information was noted and considered valuable information to evaluate further.

Analysis

Several themes emerged across the codes that became interesting areas for further exploration, namely: the overall visibility of criminals' families; the ability or inability of criminals' families to recognize their loved ones as deviant; familial feelings of pride or shock when confronted with a loved one's deviance; differences in the frequencies of family visibility of female versus male criminals; differences in the frequencies of Black versus White criminals' families; and the emergence and

depiction of domestic violence in television families. Based on these themes, I recoded the data. In doing this, I was able to identify specific trends for each coding category. I looked both for persistent themes, like the typical race and sex of criminals, as well as themes that have changed over time. Using this information, I catalogued instances and specific numbers of events to identify any trends that exist in the television shows.

With the more objective data from the “Inclusion of Criminal’s Family” section, I used SPSS to create a secondary table. This table included series title, decade, race of criminal, sex of criminal, socioeconomic status of criminal, and whether their family was shown and/or mentioned during the course of the show. Using this information, I ran descriptive statistics on those categories to calculate frequencies and correlations and to calculate the Chi-Square value to ensure that the results obtained were not the product of chance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A content analysis of the 167 shows viewed for this study yielded many instances of deviance and criminality. Many of these criminals were shown with, or talking about, members of their family. The following section will explore the ways that television shows from the 1950's to today depict and explain criminality with a specific focus on the deviant's families. First, I will look at instances where criminal's families are included in storylines as a means of understanding family make up. This section looks at specific demographic characteristics and their effects on criminal's family visibility. Second, I will explore familial responses to deviance. Reactions to deviance allow audiences to gain insight into how they are supposed to think about violence and criminality. Third, I will look at the ways that the shows explain criminal behavior as a function of family make up and within the context of the family. Audiences may use explanations of criminal behavior to base their ideas of justified and unjustified motives for crime. Finally, I will look at intra-family violence in television. Family violence serves as one model for how we treat people that we are supposed to love. The incongruence between love and violence is such that family violence is not well understood by much of society. In attempting to better understand the ways that families on television are shown to be cruel to one another, I hope to shed light on popular beliefs and stereotypes about family violence.

Inclusion of Criminal's Family

One way to understand how deviance is explained and contextualized by a criminal's family is to look at the ways and instances in which the family is included within an episode. In the 167 episodes used as data in this study, there were 314

criminals.[ii] Of those, 47.7% had no family shown or mentioned, 44.8% had their family shown, 5.5% talked about family members that never appeared as characters in the show, and 1.9% referenced a family that was not their biological family (e.g., "street family," mob family, or close friends that were considered uncles) (See Figure 1). For the purposes of future calculations in this study, family shown, family mentioned but not shown, and non-biological family have been combined into one broader category of visibility of a loved one. I believe that all three of these categories are indicative of a familial, or family-like, mechanism of support.

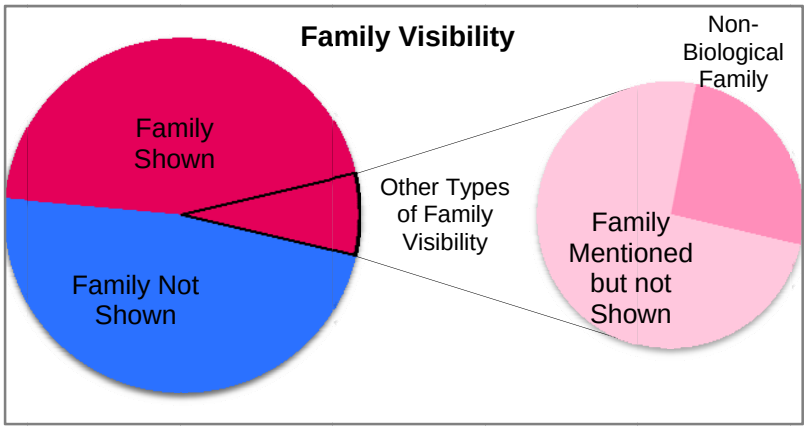

Figure 1. Family visibility breakdown. N = 308: Family Not Shown = 147; Family Shown = 138; Family Mentioned but Not Shown = 17; Non-Biological Family = 6

In the following sections, I will examine the demographic changes in criminal's family visibility. First, I will look at the ways that inclusion of a deviant's family differed across time, using program airdate as the indicator of time. Second, I will look at sex differences between male and female criminals regarding the appearance of family members. Third, I will look at socioeconomic differences between criminals and the inclusion of their families in the storyline. Finally, I will look at race as an indicator of criminal family visibility.

Changes Over Time

In observing the breakdown of criminals' families as shown by decade, a clear trend emerges in which families are shown much more frequently in the 1990's and 2000's than they were in previous decades (χ^2 (5, n = 308) = 14.481, $p < .05$) (See Figure 2). The following are two main interpretations of these data: One is that media trends changed; and the second is that societal views about criminals changed during that time period.

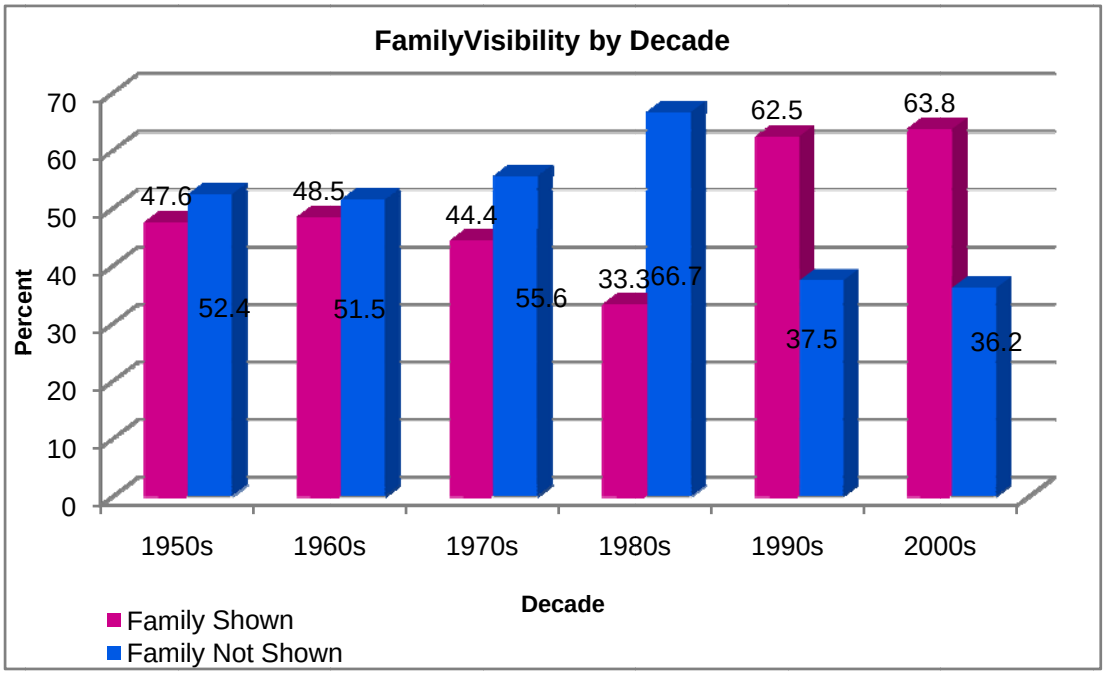

Figure 2. Rates of family visibility broken down by decade. χ^2 (5, n = 308) = 14.481, $p < .05$.

Based on the first theory that media trends changed, it may be that a switch occurred where popular images of crime became more complex. The increased complexity and incomprehensibility of television crime may have necessitated inclusion of richer background information about the criminal in order to understand his or her deviant actions. Dominick (1973) found that TV criminals were generally nondescript: "A TV criminal is a function, not a person. He exists solely as a

criminal; his character is seldom developed any further" (Dominick, 1973, p. 249). Based on the increasing numbers of criminals' families that are shown on television, it would seem that this trend is no longer true and that TV criminals are humanized much more in recent years than in the past. Because it is likely that television crime will get more, rather than less, complex in the future, it is likely that similar levels of details on criminals' families and backgrounds will continue into the future.[iii]

Based on the second theory that societal views of criminals changed in this time period, the increase in family visibility may be a result of a more individualistic view of criminals. The higher the number of contextual clues that appear within a given show (of which family visibility is one), the more likely audiences are to locate those factors as being individually specific to the criminal. In doing this, audiences are unable to identify the overarching causes of crime. Both media and society can therefore be seen as placing increasing stock in the context from which criminals emerge(Carney, 2001). Thus, with more detail about a deviant's family, audiences are presented with more of the factors that differentiate them from the rest of society, and therefore different from "us," the audience.

Sex Differences

In looking at overall demographic trends of family visibility, there is a striking difference between the deviant's sexes (See Figure 3). This difference is such that it is not expected by chance values, χ^2 (1, n = 305) = 18.868, $p < .05$. Female criminals are almost three times more likely to have their family members shown (76.6%, or 49 instances) than not (23.4%, or 15 instances). Males, on the other hand, are slightly

more likely to have *no* family members shown (53.9%, or 130 instances) than they are to have family members shown (46.1%, or 111 instances).

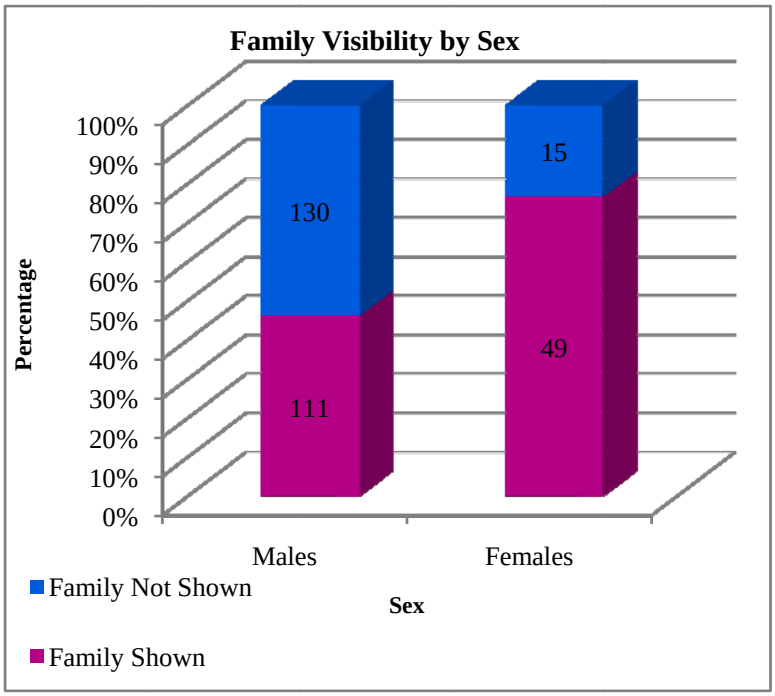

Figure 3. Rates of family visibility broken down by sex.

χ^2 (1, n = 305) = 18.868, $p < .05$.

Hess and Grant (1983)explain that, "All forms of mass media strongly emphasize traditional gender roles" (p. 372). Specifically, females are pictured dealing with family issues more often than males are. Parsons and Bales (1955) explain that "Females' social action… is traditionally characterized as expressively oriented and concerned with the social and emotional needs of the family and community" (cited in Hess & Grant, 1983, p. 376).

The disproportionate presence of familial context for female criminals in crime dramas is congruent with social stereotypes of gender, especially those suggesting that women are more involved with family than men. In this study, female criminals are situated within the family more than males. Although the women in this study are depicted as being deviant (which contradicts stereotypical images of femininity), there is still a strong link between them and their families, as evidenced

by the increased involvement of their families in their lives compared to men. The unwavering insistence of the media on portraying women with their families is a manifestation of a deeply rooted societal belief that women belong in a family. Skill et al. (1990) claim that women on television are twice as likely to carry out actions focused on the home, family, or personal relationships than were men. The representation of women criminals in popular crime dramas as inseparable from their families suggests that women and family are so deeply intertwined that even criminal women cannot deviate from the female-family roles.

Content analysis of violent TV can be used to identify power relations that exist within society. The criminality of women in television suggests that they are less likely to use violence as a means of getting what they want and that they are more likely to be victimized in general. Dominick (1973) contends that this characterization of women overemphasizes and perpetuates their subordinate position in society (Dominick, 1973, p. 242; Elasmar, et al., 1999).

While a female criminal's family visibility remains relatively constant over time, a male family visibility changes over time. From the 1950's to the 1980's, rates of males whose families were not shown are larger than males whose families are shown. This trend changes in the 1990's and 2000's, when males' family visibility jumps to being significantly more common that lack of family visibility (See Table 2).

This change in male family visibility can be explained in two different ways: One, that there was a change in mores that resulted in a newfound value of male family orientation, or two, that story lines became more complicated, thus

Family Visibility by Decade and Sex						
Decade	**Family Visibility**	**Male**		**Female**		**Total**
1950's	Family Shown	***38.9%***	**n = 7**	100%	n = 3	47.6%
	Family Not Shown	61.1%	n = 11	0%	n = 0	52.4%
1960's	Family Shown	***44.4%***	**n = 12**	66.7%	n = 4	48.5%
	Family Not Shown	55.6%	n = 15	33.3%	n = 2	51.5%
1970's	Family Shown	***37.7%***	**n = 26**	83.3%	n = 10	44.4%
	Family Not Shown	62.3%	n = 43	167%	n = 2	55.6%
1980's	Family Shown	***25.8%***	**n = 8**	80.0%	n = 4	33.3%
	Family Not Shown	74.2%	n = 23	20.0%	n = 1	66.7%
1990's	Family Shown	***61.9%***	**n = 13**	63.6%	n = 7	62.5%
	Family Not Shown	38.1%	n = 8	36.4%	n = 4	37.5%
2000's	Family Shown	***60.0%***	**n = 45**	77.8%	n = 21	64.7%
	Family Not Shown	40.0%	n = 3	22.2%	n = 6	35.3%

Table 2. Rates of family visibility broken down by sex.
1950's: χ^2 (1, n = 305) = 3.850, $p < .05$.
1960's: χ^2 (1, n = 305) = .971, $p > .05$.
1970's: χ^2 (1, n = 305) = 3.628, $p < .05$.
1980's: χ^2 (1, n = 305) = 5.690, $p < .05$.
1990's: χ^2 (1, n = 305) = .009, $p > .05$.
2000's: χ^2 (1, n = 305) = 2.747, $p > .05$.

necessitating the introduction of more of the male criminals' families as a means of supporting the plot. I believe that increased family visibility in the 1990's and 2000's

is a result of both of the above explanations. Complex storylines likely contribute to the depiction of criminals' families, but mostly it seems that social values have changed in recent times, thus causing the shift in media presentation. Modern society has new feelings about males staying in the home and raising families. It naturally follows that these changing mores would be reflected in television as well, to a point that it is now much more socially acceptable and accurate to portray males who have connection and history with their families in a way that previously was reserved mostly for females. Male connection to family has become a part of the cultural lexicon more in recent years than ever before, and this is clearly reflected in the trend towards showing male criminals with their family members more often than in the past.

Socioeconomic Differences

Significant differences also existed in representations of the socioeconomic status of family. For the purpose of this study, I define lower class as indigent or poor, as people who do not having sufficient money to provide adequately for basic necessities such as housing, food, and clothing. I define upper class as being extremely wealthy, where they have enough money to buy all the necessities of life as well as an abundance of material goods (e.g., nice cars, luxurious accommodations, fancy dining in restaurants, high-end consumer goods, and first-class travel). All criminals who had enough money to live on, but not enough for extras were classified as being middle class.

Family visibility by class differed significantly over time; χ^2 (3, n = 308) = 26.762, $p < .05$ (See Figure 4). For middle class criminals, in particular, the rates of

deviant's family shown versus not shown were nearly 3 to 1 (75.9 to 24.1%). In other words, if they were from the middle class, they were much more likely to have their family shown. The only category in which the rates of family not shown exceeded the rates of family shown is for the criminal's who are of an unknown class, where rates of families not shown (67.4%) are double the rates of families shown (32.6%).

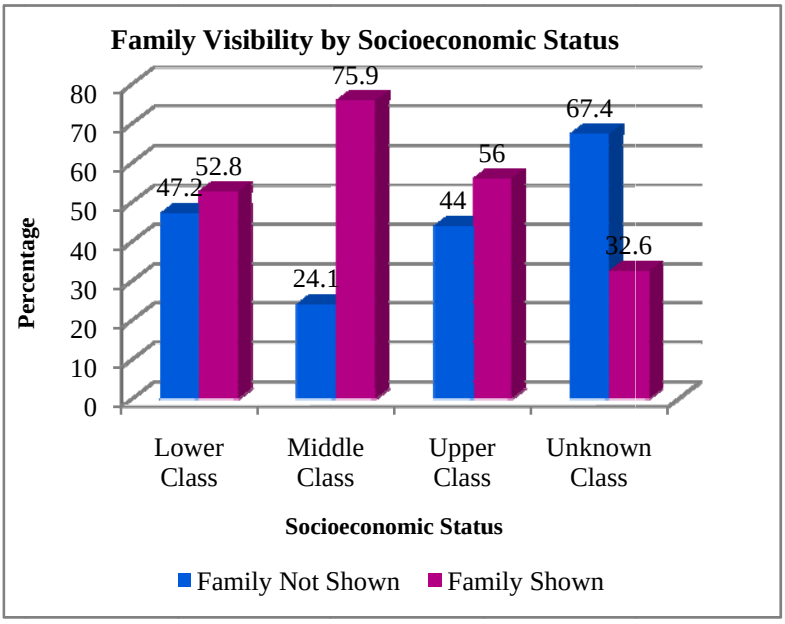

Figure 4. Rates of family visibility broken down by socioeconomic status. χ^2 (3, n = 308) = 26.762, $p < .05$.

The differing rates of visibility between criminals with unknown classes and those with known classes can be understood by thinking that family contextualizes not only the criminal behavior, but also the criminal. This means that in situations where the family is not shown, it is also harder to have a sense of what type of life the criminal leads both in terms of their financial status and in terms of other things. It logically follows that economic status is clearer for criminals whose families are shown than those whose families are not, because this is one way that audiences can place the criminals within the appropriate categories to understand their actions. For instance, especially in cases of theft, it is helpful to know that a character is poor. When a character has little money, we have an easier time understanding his or her motives for stealing. Audiences also

have an easier time understanding when children have grown up in very affluent families, where they are ignored by their parents and where all nurturing comes in the form of money, that they may have fewer social connections and have a lesser understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Contextualizing both poor and rich criminals by their family wealth status enables audiences to generate a better concept of why characters are deviant to begin with. Socioeconomic status is one of the main predictors of violation of the law in real life (Haney, 2005). The interplay between socioeconomic status and deviant behavior highlights a difference in family visibility among different wealth status'. Because we understand poor and rich criminals, those two categories require less family contextualization for audiences to understand the crimes. With middle class criminals, it may be that we are less able to understand why they would have problems. While Americans typically aspire to be wealthier as opposed to less wealthy, middle class is the golden standard of "making it" in society. Because being from this middle section implies some inherent comfort and satisfaction in life, it requires the highest frequencies of family contextualization so that audiences can understand why these characters would be deviant.

Racial Differences

Family visibility across racial boundaries was the only demographic characteristic that was not statistically significant (χ^2 (2, n = 299) = .757, $p > .05$.). This lack of significance, however, is due mainly to small numbers of minority criminals. Regardless of significance, there seems to be a slight trend that White criminals' families are more visible, and that non-White criminals' families are less

visible (See Table 3). Racial differences in family visibility do not appear to change over time.

Family Visibility by Race			
Family Visibility	**White**	**Black**	**Other**
Family Shown	53.4%; n = 143	44.4%; n = 8	46.2%; n = 6
Family Not Shown	46.6%; n = 125	55.6%; n = 10	53.8%; n = 7

Table 3. Family visibility broken down by race. χ^2 (2, n = 299) = .757, $p > .05$.

This difference between White family visibility and minority family visibility suggests that White television criminals are more connected to their families than criminals of other racial backgrounds. This could be indicative of a larger social emphasis on White people as being more connected in society in general. It may be that there is a value judgment implicit in this representation that says that White criminals, although they appear more frequently than non-White criminals, still follow societal standards of family more than minority criminals do. Another interpretation is that Black people are inherently deviant, so their inability to follow laws necessitates contextualization less than White people's deviant behavior, which is more out of the ordinary, and thus, requires more background information for audiences to understand.

The data on criminals' racial composition is also crucial in its own right. While there were 268 White criminals in this sample, there were only 18 Black criminals. This staggering difference in racial composition is shocking not only given social stereotypes that tend to overemphasize the rates of deviance of young Black men, but also in its factual inaccuracy (Taylor & Dozier, 1983). In American society,

crime is deeply tied to race, and people of color are disproportionately convicted of crimes and incarcerated (Haney, 2005). One explanation for the observed infrequency of Black criminals may be that television is fighting against a culture that strongly embraces the image of the Black criminal. This may be an attempt to dissociate the link between deviance and race that is implicit in American culture.

It may also be that the media industry shies away from portraying Black deviants as a way to not incense potential Black audiences. Showing Black criminals in the rates that stereotypical (and incorrect) notions of who a criminal is would suggest that they appear in television may incense minority audiences. Haney and Manzolati (1977) suggest that this likely occurs because television attempts to appeal to the widest audiences while alienating and offending the least number of people. By this logic, White people are less likely to be offended by portrayals of White criminals because that feels natural, whereas having a large proportion of Black criminals on TV has the potential to offend African-American viewers and make them feel as though they are being stereotyped as deviant.

A third interpretation of the racial disparities between criminals might be that there are simply fewer representations of Blacks on television in general. It may be that there are just fewer Blacks, and therefore fewer Black criminals. Sampling error is another possible interpretation of the variance between White and minority criminals.

Family Responses to Deviance

Familial responses to deviant behavior are one of the few ways that television comments about the social experiences of crime outside of images of the legal system. As such, it is vital to look at the reactions that criminal's families have to deviance and to make note of what those reactions look like (See Figure 5). Of all of the shows sampled for this study, only 46 episodes (or 27.54% of the total sample) showed any family reactions to deviance. A majority of the episodes did not deal with familial responses at all.

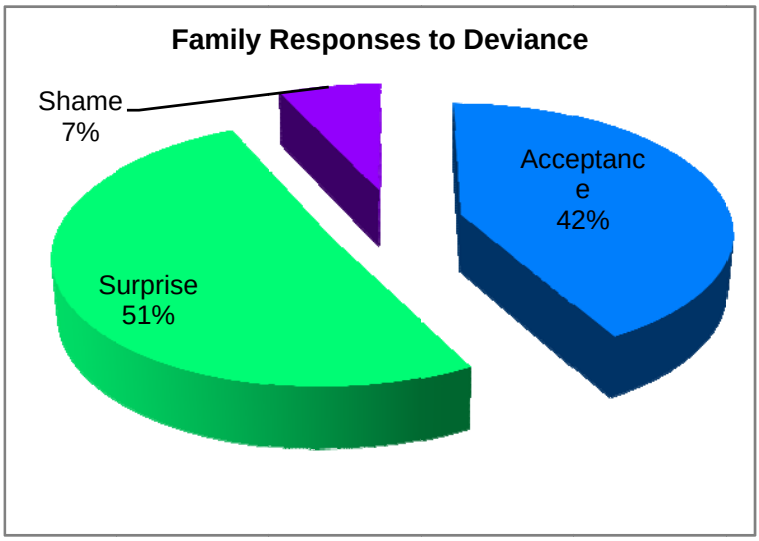

Figure 5. Breakdown of responses to deviance by type. Percentages represent relative frequencies in episodes when familial responses existed within shows. N= 64.

This negligible presentation of responses to deviance suggests that television families are minimally involved in the lives of their loved ones. There are several possible hypotheses that might explain this phenomenon: First, deviance is a hard subject for society in general to come to terms with, and therefore television doesn't attempt to grapple with the issues that families go through in dealing with it. Second, criminal's families are not involved enough in the lives of their loved ones to warrant being a part of the criminal-catching story. Third, crime shows spend the overwhelming majority of their on-air minutes dealing with the crime and the criminal investigation, and there is not enough time in the standard 30- or 60-minute

show to dig into more detailed family background and emotional fallout from the criminal act. Fourth, criminal acts are so ubiquitous in some segments of the population that it is the norm, rather than an oddity, so family members assume that some of their own will commit crimes In this scenario, lack of response to deviance is indicative of a world in which criminal behavior is not unusual, but rather expected. Fifth, and finally, families that produce people who do not follow the law may be unconcerned about their loved ones in general, and are even more likely to exhibit apathy or inappropriate emotional responses to deviance. This lack of response may translate in the television world to just not being shown.

Of the episodes that had any mention of how criminals' loved ones dealt with their actions, the responses were overwhelmingly that of surprise and outrage or acceptance, and minimally of shame (See Figure 5).

Feeling surprised by a loved one's violation of the law indicate that families are unable to predict criminality. It is interesting that television shows would propagate the notion that families cannot spot criminality, because it has the potential to suggest to audiences that they too would be unable to spot deviance in their own lives. In *"Unorthodox"* (2008), an episode of *Law and Order: SVU*, one boy says of his brother, "My brother is my best friend, he wouldn't do that [rape little boys]" (Platt, 2008a). This inability to recognize that someone you know and love has the ability to do harmful things to others may suggest to audiences that we do not know people as well as we think we do. In *Law and Order: SVU, "Trials"* (2008), the wife of a serial rapist is shocked to find out not only that her husband regularly rapes women, but that he also raped her at one point before they knew one another. "Are

you telling me that I married my own rapist?" (Platt, 2008b) she screams in disbelief at the police when she finds out. Not only is she unaware of her husband's absolute lack of respect for women, but also, she had no idea that she had been one of his many victims.

The above examples follow a deeper trend of television as depicting crime through an individualistic lens. Rather than being able to be generalized, crime on television tends to be context-specific. There are two conflicting interpretations of the function of individualized crime: First is that anyone can be a criminal and their family would not necessarily know it. This interpretation places a higher value in the context of the situation and suggests that it is situations rather than individuals that lead to deviant behavior. Second is that crime is so individualistic that no one else can see it. In this way, crime becomes even more private and personalized.

In addition to familial exhibitions of genuine surprise over the deviance of a loved one, there are a number of instances where family members were surprised when a deviant re-offended (17.65% of all instances or surprise). This suggests that in television, families tend to believe in the good in people and the idea that criminals can change. In *Crossing Jordan, "The Ties that Bind"* (2001), the prison reverend, who functions as a father figure to one of the inmates, seems genuinely confused that the inmate murdered again. He contends, "There's got to be some mistake… this man's a model prisoner. I've never met a more devout Christian!" (Wolk, 2001). Even within the context of working in a prison with a known murderer, the reverend is shocked by recidivism. Familial confusion over repeated deviance is even more perplexing than shock at first time deviance. This reaction suggests, in television at

least, that we believe criminals are capable of change, and that it is possible for them to revert back to being law-abiding citizens.

Although characters seem to initially believe in the ability of their loved ones to change, the preponderance of examples where efforts to change fail tells audiences that deviance is not something we can choose. Many shows suggest that criminals are unchanging and that once bad, a person is likely to remain bad for life in spite of efforts to change and belief of others to the contrary (Carney, in press). This serves as a warning to family members saying: "You better not trust that your loved one has changed; he or she is just fooling you."

At the same time as familial surprise suggests that criminals may walk among us unnoticed, the high frequency of familial acceptance of crime suggests the opposite. There are many instances where family members not only accept their loved ones' deviance, but also where they work together to commit a crime. Additionally, there are many episodes where one family member coerces another into becoming breaking the law to work as a sidekick or fulfill some other position in the carrying out of a criminal act. In *S.W.A.T., "The Killing Ground"* (1975), two brothers convince their cousin to join them on a cop-killing rampage to get back at the police for the inaccurately perceived mistreatment of their father. They also coerce one of the brother's wives into working with them. This suggests that deviance is contagious and that spending time with someone who does illegal things will alter our own inhibitions against deviance. Situations like these, where many members of a family are involved in and sanction criminal behavior, contradict typical conceptions of deviance. These types of acceptance of deviance indicate more than just tolerance, but

often function as being permission-giving as well. If this is the case, audiences may be comforted to know that their own family members are unlikely to be deviant without their own acceptance, or even permission of such actions. Because people ostensibly like to believe with their own goodness, it is likely that audiences would assume that they, themselves, would never accept or encourage criminal behavior, and thus, deviance would not strike their own family.

Surprisingly, shame was one reaction to deviance that was exhibited in extremely low frequency (2.4% of all episodes). One interpretation of this information is that families do not feel shame at the actions of their loved ones. In general, shame appears as a vanishing emotion in North-American culture. Shame is one emotion that we do not teach our children; instead, we seemingly encourage them to avoid feeling shame at all costs. This reluctance towards feeling shame in society is mirrored in television culture. In terms of TV crime, primetime shows suggest that family members have little, if any, subjective feelings of responsibility for the actions of their loved ones. This may function to absolve criminals' families of any feelings of blame or remorse for the actions of those who are close to them.

While this interpretation would allow for the absolution of guilt of parents, the shows that do include shame and familial feelings of responsibility all depict family members explicitly stating that they think they somehow played a role in the deviance of their loved ones. In the episode of *Law and Order: SVU, "Confessions"* (2008), the mother of a teenage pedophile laments: "My son is sexually stimulated by children… I keep going over and over the past in my mind and I – what did I – what did I say? What did I do? What did I do wrong? … I brought him into this world.

What does that make me?" (Forney, 2008). This mother feels immense guilt at the way her son turned out.

The idea of parental responsibility – or at least parental lack of control – of deviance further suggests the idea of an individual locus of crime, where individuals are to blame for criminals' inability to follow the laws rather than society in general. Her feelings of hopelessness and shame over her son's behaviors and in her own parenting skills are echoed and expanded upon by the father of a sexual predator in another episode of *Law and Order: SVU, "Unorthodox"* (2008):

> Do you have any idea how people look at me now. Every time a kid does something wrong, all people can say is 'where are the parents?'… But every morning, I made him breakfast. I checked his homework. I gave him his lunch money. I got him to school – on time. And he goes and rapes four little kids. I'm sick to my stomach.(Platt, 2008c)

This father suggests that not only may he question how his son ended up breaking the law, but also that family outsiders question this as well. Both of these parents express confusion at how their own actions may have created the deviance in their children.

The idea of blaming a parent or loved one is one that appears in news media as well as in entertainment media. Perhaps the entertainment media is showing subtle signs of backlash against the trend towards blaming third parties. In this way, media sources localize blame for deviance on the criminal so that outsiders, especially family members, may be absolved of guilt. In the few instances where family members do feel shame and responsibility for their loved one's deviance, they are quoted as expressing the belief that we are all our brothers' keepers. The specific circumstances function to nullify this argument in favor of explaining crime as highly individual and unstoppable.

Another interpretation of this familial questioning of blameworthiness is that in attempting to uncover the origins of crime, we invite the critical eye of society, culture, or the family to question what went wrong to create such monsters. Yet the answer to this question is often that there was nothing the parent could have done; no amount of homework checking, or love and attention would have been enough. The fact that these parents did so much for their children, who still turned into deviants, suggests an interpretation of the world that says that some people are just bad, and nothing could possibly change that. To audiences, this inability to control criminality means that there is nothing they can do to prevent their own deviance or that of their loved ones and may suggest that they need not bother because it would be fighting the inevitable.

The trends of family responses to deviance vary over time (See Figure 6). There is much variance in the rates of surprise and acceptance of deviant behavior. Both of these responses are marked by low rates in the 1950's, followed by elevated rates in the 1960's. These then decrease each decade through the 1980's, at which point both begin another upward trend. Rates of surprise are especially high in the 1960's, when they appeared in a total of 42% of the episodes. It is unclear exactly why the 60's had such high rates, but whatever the reason, it may be that the extreme social unrest of the 1960's precipitated more trusting and family related portrayal of criminality. The 90's was the only decade where acceptance or promotion of deviance exceeded surprise. This appears to be an outlier to the overall trend of familial reactions to deviance. In the 2000's, family responses to deviance are on the rise once again.

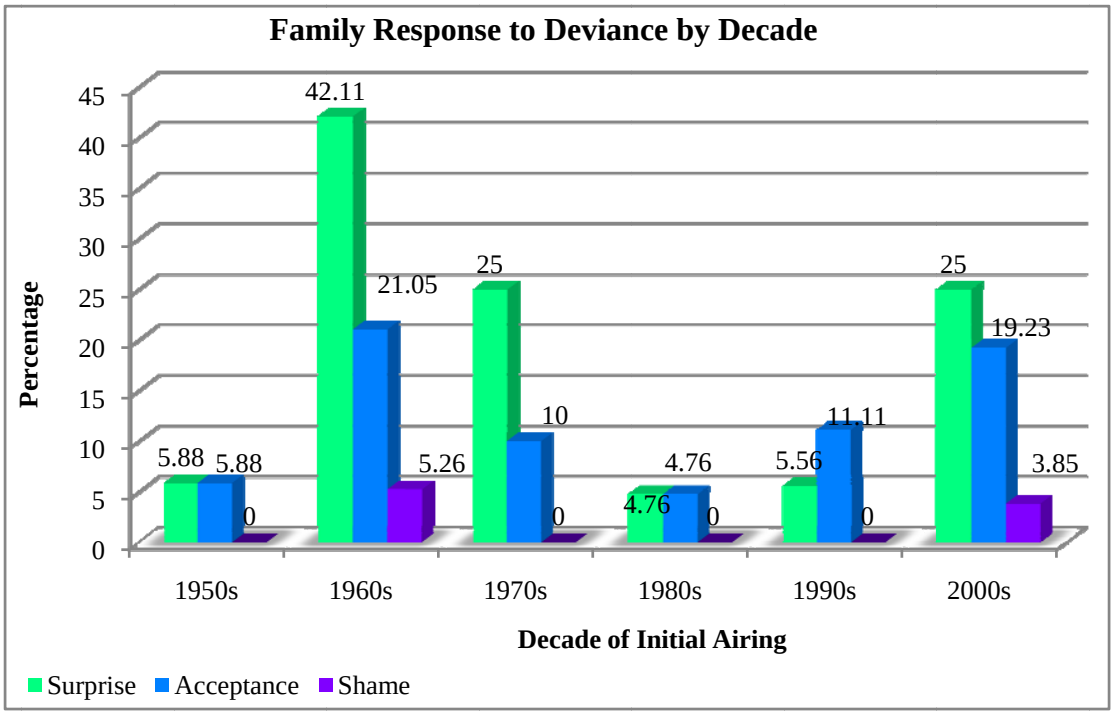

Figure 6. Percent of episodes in each decade that feature familial surprise, acceptance, and shame at deviance. N = 64.

This trend, where familial responses to deviance is high in 60's and 70's, exhibits a lull in 80's and 90's, and seems to be on the rise again in the 2000's tells a number of potential stories about our cultural understandings of the relationship between crime and family in television. One is that television stories have changed in recent years to depict more in depth answers to why people commit crimes. In this framework, family is situated as one of the main factors associated with illegal behaviors. A second interpretation of the data is that the nature of the crimes being depicted on television today requires more contextualizing information in order to portray criminals as being horrible monsters. It may be that the qualitative depiction of criminals has changed such that the story and plot narratives function to make deviants appear even more monstrous than in previous depictions. A third interpretation of these data is that the style of storytelling, and audience expectations,

might have changed so that audiences now expect criminals to be situated within the context a house and a family. These results may also be a result of sampling error due to the relatively small sample size in each decade. Rates of family responses may not have changed as drastically as they appear in my data if this is the case. Each of these explanations may play a part in recorded trends of family responses to deviance among primetime crime dramas.

Family as an Explanation of Deviance

Mitigating factors are circumstances that lessen the gravity of an offense (Acker, 1994; Polzer & Kempf-Leoard, 2007). As they pertain to crime, mitigating factors explain deviant behavior in a way that can partially excuse a criminal or their actions, or explain why they may have behaved in a certain way based on their prior history and life experiences (Acker, 1994; Polzer & Kempf-Leoard, 2007). The main function of mitigating factors is to lessen a criminals' culpability. Contrarily, aggravating factors are circumstances that increase the seriousness of an offense (Acker, 1994; Polzer & Kempf-Leoard, 2007). In crime, aggravating factors function to make a person guiltier (Polzer & Kempf-Leoard, 2007). In crime media, the interplay between the existence of mitigating and aggravating factors plays a big role in how audiences view and think about criminals. Recently, scholarly debate has arisen regarding the effects of contextualizing criminal behavior and humanizing deviance.[iv] Keeping the debate about the role of crime contextualization in mind, I looked at the ways that mitigating and aggravating factors relating to criminals' families functioned to explain, blame, and assuage criminal behavior within my sample.

In four of the episodes sampled, criminals acted under misunderstood or false motives. This means that they either thought that they were aiding a family member and were unaware that their actions were criminal, or that they were aware that they were being deviant, but felt justified in doing so because they had been told false stories by their family members that led them to feel their actions were legitimate and right. Instances where criminals falsely believe in a motive range from storylines where characters do not realize they were doing something bad, to stories in which they are aware of their deviance but think that it is okay given the circumstances. Unintentional deviance appeared in *The Untouchables, "The Empty Chair"* (1959), where a woman is accessory to murder by letting her brother use her home to hide illegal records. It happens again in *Baretta, "The 5 ½ Pound Junkie"* (1975), when a pregnant woman does a lot of drugs after being told that they would not harm her unborn child.

Intentional criminality under a false premise occurs in *S.W.A.T., "The Killing Ground"* (1975), when criminals go on a cop killing spree to avenge the death of their father, who they think had been murdered by the police. In actuality, however, their father had been caught by police, and committed suicide to avoid going to prison. *Crossing Jordan's "The Dawn of a New Day"* (2001) features a story in which a woman kills another woman's husband after being told the false story that he was molesting their children. These stories are situated within the larger theme that emerged of crime as an accident.

In each of the above situations the contextual information about the occurrence of the crimes does not function to absolve the deviants of guilt. Instead,

this information works as background information that helps audiences to better understand the situation, but it does not seem to function to arouse audience sympathies for the criminals. This background leads to the individualization of crime, but not the excusal of it – a trend that accompanies the interpretations of all of the other explanations for deviance that are explored in this section.

Having a past history of abuse or neglect is another contextualizing piece of information that appeared in many of the shows. In total, it occurs in 12 shows throughout time, and back-stories of abuse or neglect are featured in 13.75% of all episodes (or 10 total shows) that aired in the time ranging from 1984 through today. This contextualization can be divided into four categories of abuse, namely; neglect, abandonment, rape, and domestic violence (See Figure 7).

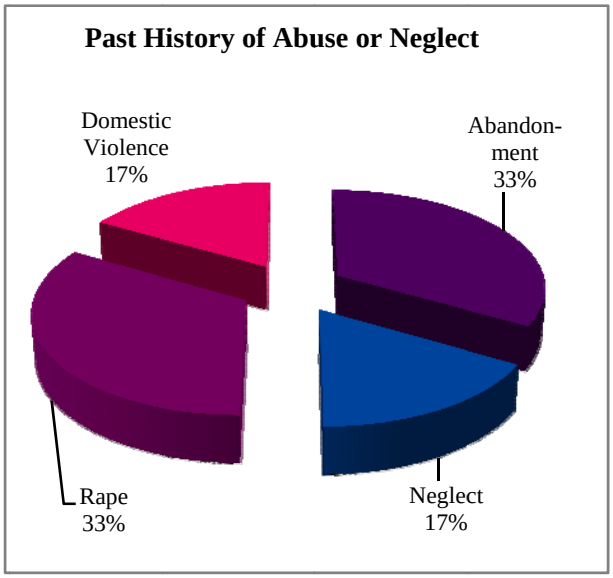

Figure 7. Relative rates of abandonment, neglect, rape, and domestic violence. N = 12.

Like crime committed for falsely believed motives, past history of neglect was used to explain crime, but not necessarily to excuse it. In *Law and Order: SVU, "Hysteria"* (2008),the childhood neighbor of a criminal explains of his childhood:

> The kid was a nightmare… things weren't easy for him… poor thing, with that mother of his… Saltines – that was the sign. If the crackers were outside the door, he wasn't to come in... That means she was in there with a customer – you know, a John… He'd sit outside the door all night sometimes – in the cold, in

> the rain. He can hear the goings on in there. Saltines for dinner. Imagine. (Dobbs, 1999)

This same neighbor then goes on to talk about the criminal's guilt and hope that he is caught. This juxtaposition of a potentially mitigating factor with a reiteration of guilt suggests that the guilt far overrides any sympathy that television audiences might feel for the character after hearing about his childhood. In another episode of *Law and Order: SVU, "Confessions"* (2008), the mother of a teenage sexual predator explains: "He is lost. His father abandoned him and maybe he thinks I did too" (Forney, 2008). A few scenes later, the boy is violently sodomized and bludgeoned to death. Although this episode introduces potentially mitigating factors, it quickly nullifies their affects by reiterating not only the character's guilt, but also that his actions warranted punishment. Similarly, in *Law and Order: SVU, "Web"* (2006), the mother of a boy who runs a child pornography website say of her son: "Teddy was a happy, loving child till his sick father stuck his hand down his pants. He ruined Teddy's life" (Leto, 2006). The idea of both of these quotations is that some family factor turned these children "bad." While this suggests that the character's deviance is outside the realm of their own control, it also suggests that the road to deviance may lie in the hands of family members and loved ones.

Overall, the media does not encourage us to feel badly for criminals (Carney, 2001). Even in situations when mitigating factors make criminal behavior almost inevitable, the shows lead audience sympathies towards the victims of the crime and rarely encourage viewers to identify with the criminals. Although background information may allow us to contextualize crime, it does not seem to function to alleviate any guilt (Carney, 2001). Perhaps the most salient function of these details is

to individualize the crime. This has the effect of othering the crime so audiences feel more removed from it. Professor of Psychology and the Law, Sarah Carney, explains that media accounts of specific details of crimes function to prove to audiences that crimes do not ordinarily happen. Rather, crime occurs in a bubble that is both situational and contextually specific (Carney, 2001). Not only are audience families less likely to be criminals, but also, they are less likely to be victims of crime in this framework where deviance only occurs by specific people for very explicit and individualized reasons. Moreover, looking at crime in this way allows us to question what those reasons are. Many times, those explanations are individualized and context specific. These types of problems tend to occur within the nuclear family and can be attributed to individuals as opposed to social systems. So long as we can hold individuals accountable for criminal behavior, we will not be forced to reevaluate our current social system.

Only when crime is committed to honor or rescue a loved one do the shows switch to presenting the criminal as sympathetic, as opposed to unsympathetic. In all, there are 10 instances of this type of crime in my sample. These occur fairly consistently throughout time. This type of crime occurs five times in order to rescue or save a loved one and another five times to get vengeance for a wronged loved one. Rescue crimes are the most understandable and reasonable, and criminals of this nature are portrayed more positively than other types of criminals. It is hard for audiences to fault a woman who violates traffic laws in attempts to rush her husband to the hospital before he dies of a heart attack, as in *CHiPs, "Dog Gone"* (1977), or a father who non-violently takes a judge hostage in hopes of convincing the judge to

demand a harsher punishment for his son's murderer, as in *NYPD Blue, "4B or Not 4B"* (1993). Instances where family members fight to save their loved ones seem to be the only true mitigating factors. In these cases, audiences are encouraged to overlook deviance in favor of weighing the specific circumstances that give rise to illegal behaviors. There seems to be a strong argument in these shows that deviance is unacceptable in all situations except for those in which familial honor or safety is at risk. Under such circumstances deviance is not only allowed, but often seems to be required (Taylor & Dozier, 1983). This type of crime feels the most personal to audiences, and perhaps garners the most sympathy and works to inspire audiences. We see ourselves as being likely to act similarly in comparable situations. Audiences have difficulty faulting criminals who act out in order to place a high value on familial support, dependence, and safety.

Family Violence on Television

Child Abuse and the Abuse of Children

Instances of child abuse and the abuse of children appear in 11.4%, or 19 episodes, of all the shows watched in this study. In most cases, child abuse is not referred to by name, but rather is inferred based on visual and contextual cues in the television shows. While abuse occurs across all decades except the 1950's and the 1980's, there is a marked increase in shows in the 1990's and 2000's. From 1960 to 1970, the frequency of child abuse elevates slightly from 5.3% to 7.5%. This rate more than doubles to 16.7% of episodes from the 1990's, and increases again in the 2000's to 21.2% of episodes that feature a storyline associated with child abuse. Child

abuse falls into three major categories:[v] sexual abuse (44.1%), physical abuse (47.4%), and child endangerment (10.5%) (See Figure 8).

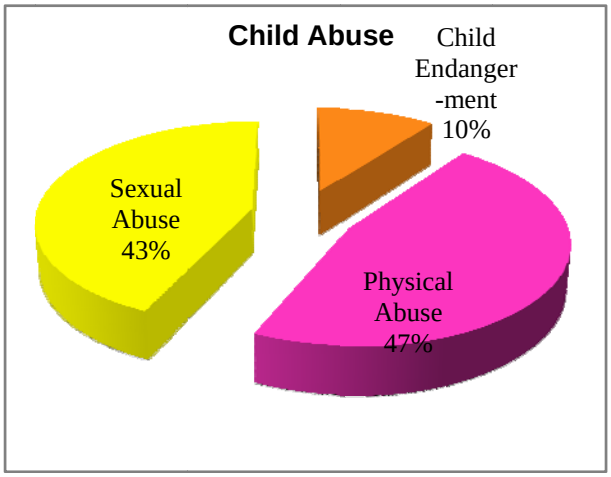

Figure 8. Relative rates of child abuse broken down by sexual abuse, physical abuse and child endangerment. N = 19

Child sexual abuse is a theme that does not emerge until the 2000's. Once it appears, however, it becomes one of the most heavily demonstrated examples of child abuse, accounting for 72.7% of all instances of child abuse in the 2000's, and ranging across four different series; *Law and Order: SVU "Hysteria"* (1999), *"A Single Life"* (1999), *"Web"* (2006), *"Confessions"* (2008), *"Streetwise"* (2008); *CSI "Pilot"* (2000); *Crossing Jordan "The Dawn of A New Day"* (2001);and *Law and Order "Cost of Capital"* (2006). Male characters conducted the sexual assault in each of these instances. On six occasions, it was female characters that were molested and two times (*Law and Order: SVU "Web"* (2006) and *"Confessions"* (2008)) teenage boys molested younger boys.

Physical abuse is depicted in rates similar to that of sexual abuse, but occurs over a longer time span. For this study, physical abuse is defined as any type of violence directed at a child. It occurs once in each of the 1960's and 1970's, three times in the 1990's, and four times in the 2000's. In general, the level of violence escalates across time as well. In both *The Untouchables, "Ma Barker and Her Boys"*

(1959), and in *Diagnosis Murder, "Murder at the Telethon"* (1990), brash parents slap their sons when they feel they are not being sufficiently respected or treated with the dignity they believe that they deserve. Each of these instances of physical abuse is a minor level of physical assault that leaves no physical trauma on the bodies of the victims. The physical abuse in shows in the 1990's and 2000's is consistently more invasive and permanently damaging, and in some instances, results in the death of a child. *Law and Order, "Good Girl"* (1996), features a White teenage girl whose father broke her arm when she brought home her Black boyfriend. Her injuries, although not shown during the episode, are said to be consistent with injuries of other child abuse victims whose limbs have been twisted until they break (Alexander, 1996). In *Law and Order: SVU, "Hysteria"* (1999), a female victim is severely beaten by a family member before being tied up and raped repeatedly by other members of her family. Another female victim is badly beaten by her father in *Without a Trace, "Between the Cracks"* (2002), when her father does not approve of the way she wears her hair. In *Law and Order, "Homesick"* (1996), and *Bones, "The Perfect Pieces in the Purple Pond"* (2008), a child is not only injured, but murdered by an immediate family member.

Child endangerment is by far the least common of the child abuse themes, but it is notable in that it has a very different intent than the other varieties – namely that it is an accident. The two cases of child endangerment both stemmed from mothers who have no intention of putting their children in harm's way. In *Baretta, "The 5 ½ Pound Junkie"* (1975), a mother unwittingly supplies cocaine to her unborn baby. She does so after being told by a friend that the drugs will not affect the fetus, and is

unaware of the potentially deadly affect her actions can have on her child. In "*Night of the Living Dead"* (1993), an episode of *Homicide: Life on the Street*, a mother leaves her infant locked in a cage in the basement of a police precinct while she works the evening shift as the building's janitor. In this particular case, the mother is doing her best to protect her child, by trying to make money to keep the baby fed and clothed, while at the same time keeping rats away from nibbling on his tiny body. Both of these instances show a mother who is truly trying not to harm her child, however misguided it may appear to other characters in the drama, as well as to television audiences. It is important to note that in both instances, it is a mother, rather than a father, who endangers the life of her child. This may be indicative of a prevalent social notion that implicitly associates women with being bad or negligent parents more often than men. It may also be that women are viewed as caregivers and men are simply not associated with caring for children.

The instances of various types of child abuse can be understood as a commentary on the awareness of gruesome social issues. The drastic increase in instances of all types of abuse suggests not only a growing awareness of issues, but also a growing concern about child abuse in general. Of the two major types of abuse, physical abuse is most common throughout television history. The reason for this is that it physical abuse is more culturally sanctioned than sexual abuse, especially given the prevalence of acceptance of corporal punishment in American society (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Straus, 1992).

Although not always labeled as child abuse, instances where children are hit or physically injured by their parents span television history in a way that sexual

abuse does not. One explanation for this is a change in social mores. Where once spanking and a certain amount of corporal punishment were once socially sanctioned, it is not commonly accepted today (Greven, 1991). For this reason, the slapping and spanking of children in earlier episodes is in keeping with social customs of the time. At the time these episodes aired, it is likely that viewers did not experience instances of spanking as being physical abuse, but instead tolerated this behavior as an appropriate form of discipline for children who were misbehaving. It is only looking back through the lens of a researcher in 2009 that we see the slapping and spanking of children as being associated with child abuse. Recent examples of physical abuse in television are more overt, ranging from severe physical markings to broken bones and permanent injury (See for example: *Law and Order: SVU, "Hysteria" (*1999), *Without a Trace, "Between the Cracks" (*2002), *Law and Order, "Homesick"* (1996), and *Bones, "The Perfect Pieces in the Purple Pond"* (2008)).

Another explanation is that physical abuse is a topic that is more socially acceptable and is a topic that has less stigma attached to it. Knowledge of physical abuse is much more of a constant over history, as sexual abuse of children has only become fodder for public discussion in recent years.

Sexual abuse is a behavior that is increasingly talked about in media and society in general. The stigma associated with sexual deviance, especially that of a child, may have had the effect of silencing media representations of abuse. In the 2000's, social mores have changed such that it is now more acceptable to fight the social issue of sexual abuse rather than hide from it. In *"Hysteria"* (1999),an episode of *Law and Order: SVU,* a young victim of abuse recounts:

> I had a man beat me up that bad once… he tied my hands and feet to the bedpost and started raping me. That night, he came back with his buddies. I don't remember much after that… I could give you a group photo if I only took a family album when I left home. (Dobbs, 1999)

This matter-of-fact way of talking about sexual abuse may have been considered crude, vulgar, and improper in earlier times. The spike in televised instances of sexual abuse can be understood both in conjunction with a recent trend for television to depict stories of increasing shock and gore(Sacco, 1995), as well as with current awareness efforts to stop child abuse. This trend will likely continue, as the barrier to discussing the sexual abuse of children has now been broken.

Partner Murder

The murder of a partner is defined in this case as murder that occurs as a one-time escalation of violence not related to previous domestic violence tendencies. These instances involve partners who are not consistently violent or abusive, but rather appear in situations in where a trigger event or situation leads one partner to kill the other. An example of a trigger event would be finding out a spouse is cheating, or some other situational information that would lead one partner to murdering the other. In *Hunter* (1984), one detective is quoted as saying "In sixty-eight percent of homicides involving a husband and a wife, it was that spouse who committed the crime" (Duke, 1984). Partner murder appears in 11.4% of all episodes in this sample. In the 1990's, there is a marked spike in the incidents of television partner murder. Four out of the 18 episodes of the 1990's feature partner murder (22.2% of the episodes in the 1990's). The 1950's, 1970's, and 1980's have similar rates of partner murder at 11.8%, 12.5%, and 14.3% respectively. The 1960's and

2000's have markedly lower rates of partner murder, with respective rates of 5.2% and 7.7%.

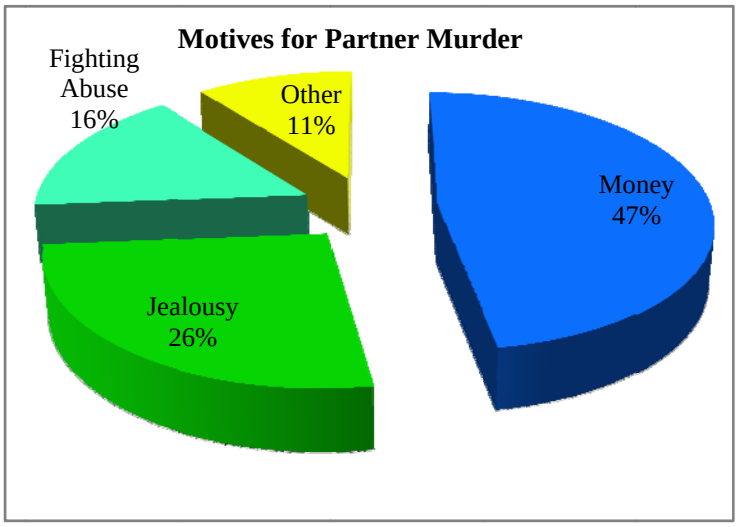

Figure 9. Relative rates of motives for partner murder broken down amongst jealousy, money, to fight abuse, and other. N = 19.

Partner murder falls into three major motive categories, two of which are consistent over time. Those two categories are for money (47.4% of all partner murders) and as a result of jealousy over a new spouse or partner (26.3% of all partner murders) (See Figure 9). Money as a motive is generally explained in terms of one spouse wanting inheritance money, although two instances lie as outliers to the inheritance claim, and instead occur so that partners can keep money they already have. Greed as a motive appears in each decade with the exception of the 1960's (which has only one instance of partner murder, and therefore a very small sample size). Jealousy over a cheating spouse is the motive in partner murders in the 1950's, 1960's, 1980's, and 2000's. Like greed, it is fairly stable over time.

Fighting back against an abuser is a motive for partner murder that does not appear in television until the 1990's. After that point, it appears in three episodes, or 15.8% of all episodes that feature partner murder, but appears in a total of only 4.3% of all the episodes from the 1990's through the2000's. The first instance was in 1993

in *Homicide: Life on the Street, "A Ghost of a Chance"* (1993), in which an elderly woman who claims to have endured 60 years of mental and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband. Also in 1993, in *"True Confessions,"* an episode of *NYPD Blue*, a woman who has been physically abused by her husband (as well as routinely cheated on by him) shoots him in order to stop his torture of her. The last instance was in an episode of *Crossing Jordan*, "*The Dawn of a New Day"* (2001), where a woman has her husband murdered after years of abuse. In this instance, the woman had called a battered women's shelter 17 times preceding her husband's murder, filed 3 restraining orders against him, and had had 7 domestic violence disturbances in the previous four years.

In an episode of *Bones*, FBI agent Sealy Booth explains that "When someone dies, the first suspect is always the spouse" (Kroeker, 2005). Greed and jealousy are each explained with less detail than other crimes in the television shows sampled. Explanations for this may lie in the fact that money and jealousy are crimes of passion that are more readily understandable, although not necessarily more forgivable, to audiences. The two most common reasons for partner murder are indicative of a society that values personal gain above all else and esteems self worth to the point that challenges to one's self worth are punishable by death. Although we may watch these shows and be able to understand why characters would want money or vengeance for being cheated on, as an audience, we also realize that this goes against many social mores. Audiences who see these shows may use their own sense of morals to separate themselves from the criminals depicted on television. Unlike other types of crime, murder to escape abuse makes more sense to audiences than

other types of murder. Taylor and Dozier (Taylor & Dozier, 1983) contend that violence may be sanctioned in instances where it ultimately serves to protect a disadvantaged party.

It is possible that partner murder in the case of greed functions less as a commentary on familial values than it does on the character of humans; that we would be able to kill even our own loved ones if it could bring us fortune. Given the high frequency (58.7%) of crimes in the entire sample that have greed as at least part of the motive, it is possible that spousal murder for money is not a reflection of hatred or violence within families, but rather as a reflection of the immense power of greed. The consistency of the image of violence to obtain wealth creates a hierarchy of needs that values money over human life. It may also be that partner murder with greed as its motive happens in situations where spouses no longer love each other, and murder is a convenient way to both exit a burdensome relationship and to make a little money as well.

Fighting against an abuser is one understandable motive for murder. While none of the portrayals of a victim of abuse killing her abuser in the sample qualify as legal self-defense against imminent danger, the women who murdered their abusive husbands do so as a means of empowering themselves and protecting themselves from future harm. These types of murder are framed as being a last resort of distraught women:

> I went into the bedroom and I got the gun and I told him that he had to leave… I wanted him to leave. I just wanted him to leave me alone. I just didn't want him to hit me anymore… He started towards me and I said 'please leave, I mean it.' But he never paid any attention to me. Ever. In all the years that we were together. And he came forward and I told him to stop.

> And I kept backing up, getting further and further away from him. And he laughed at me. He took a step forward and I shot him. I'm sorry [crying]. I'm sorry. (Haid, 1993)

Victim-criminals of this variety are not quite lauded for their behavior, but they are not judged as harshly as other types of murderers. In fact, audience sympathies, as well as those of the police, often lie with the victims of abuse who go on to murder their abusers. Domestic violence is one type of mitigating factor that is used to contextualize reactive

There is an implication that under certain circumstances, murder of an abusive family member is not only necessary, but also culturally sanctioned:

> …the idea that violence used in defense of the status quo is morally if not legally justified, and socially necessary. Indeed, the presumed need to protect 'society' from behaviors (and characters) which are simplistically portrayed as antisocial, is the central theme that runs throughout the history of violent TV programs. (Taylor & Dozier, 1983, p. 120)

In the shows sampled, there is a clear value judgment about when violence is acceptable. Television may, on some levels, send the message that it is appropriate to use violent measures in such situations where it is necessary stop a greater evil. Thus, violence is not always seen as improper behavior, but can sometimes be sanctioned in the event that it is used against those that challenge the American way of life (Taylor & Dozier, 1983), as is the case with abused spouses.

Traditional Husband-Wife Domestic Violence

Traditional conceptions of domestic violence involve a husband repeatedly being physically violent with his wife. Most common beliefs also assume that the injuries must be visible and long lasting. Although this definition of domestic violence is somewhat simplistic and does not include many types of abuse and

abusers, I have used the traditional, most commonly accepted understanding as the basis of determining situations of domestic violence in television.

Domestic violence appears in only a small fraction of the sample episodes – eleven out of 167, or 6.6%. While this rate is quite small, it increases more than twofold, appearing in 13.5% of all shows after 1984. The sample yielded no instances of domestic violence before *"Hard Contact"* (1984), an episode of *Hunter*. After that initial instance of domestic violence, 10 more episodes feature storylines that involved domestic violence, ranging across 7 different series (*Hunter* (1984), *NYPD Blue* (1993), *Law and Order: SVU* (1999), *Crossing Jordan* (2001), *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* (2001), and *Without a Trace* (2005)).

Once domestic violence appeared on the pop-culture stage, it forever altered the way that we talk about violence in the media. Now that partner abuse has become a topic of cultural fodder, it is likely to remain in the popular media eye. It may also be the reverse, where once domestic violence appeared on television, it became a more common topic of cultural discussion. The relatively recent trend towards including domestic violence as one of the plotlines in crime dramas speaks to two major trends: First, the increasing awareness that domestic violence is a potent social issue. Second, the increasing comfort involved in discussing a social problem that has previously been shrouded in secrecy and shame.

If domestic violence were not thought about as an issue of importance, then it would not be discussed in modern media. The fact that there has been an explosion of shows that use domestic violence in their storylines identifies a change towards social understandings of spousal abuse as not only a problem in society, but one that is large

enough and understandable enough to modern society that it deserves its own position among the other trends of social deviance that are depicted in popular television. The trend towards showing more instances of domestic violence can also be attributed to the fact that it makes for good entertaining television.

Psychologist Lenore Walker coined the term “battered woman” in the1970’s (Berns, 2004; Blackman, 1990; Kozol, 1995; Walker, 1979). As a result of Second-Wave Feminism, issues like domestic violence received more political and social attention. Since that time, it has become more commonly understood and widely talked about in American culture. The timeline of the appearance of domestic violence in television reflects these language developments in which spousal abuse gained public awareness. In the years immediately subsequent to the invention of “battered women” as a concept, the issue was not well understood, and was shrouded by layers of shame and secrecy. Over time, as some of the stigma of being a victim of domestic violence has eroded, the social issue has appeared more frequently in popular cultural media.

It is important to note that although domestic violence is a topic of eleven total episodes, it is never actually shown on screen. This means that audiences never see explicit domestic violence of one spouse hurting the other. Instead, audiences see the bruised aftermath of abusive sessions as well as being privy to conversations about the physical markings of abuse. “There is nothing complicated about those bruises on your wife’s face” (Haid, 1993), said a police officer in *NYPD Blue* to one abusive husband. Detective Olivia Benson, of *Law and Order: SVU* talks to one victim of abuse about her situation, explaining, “Lisa, he’s escalating. Last time you were here,

you needed 30 stitches… if you leave now, the next time I see you, you'll be in the morgue" (Forney, 2008). Another victim explains that her husband regularly beat her, and eventually turned on the couple's daughter as well. She explains her abuse by saying:

> He'd come home drunk, and anything would set him off. I was the designated punching bag… [My daughter] begged me to leave, but I couldn't. And then one day… [my daughter] was sitting there – and her face was – well, it was the way mine usually was. All swollen and red from where he'd hit her. (Gomer, 2002)

Each of these instances, as well as the several others that discussed domestic violence, bring to light the pain and suffering of victims at the hands of their spouses. Even in situations where domestic abuse is brought to the attention of audiences, there still seems to be a 'behind closed doors' mentality that keeps the physical fighting and actions of domestic violence from being broadcast to viewer audiences. The cultural ideas of battered women as being invisible reflect societal "don't ask, don't tell" values, where we view domestic issues as being private and not typically acknowledged. Instead of showing us the gruesome reality of spousal abuse, we hear about it second hand, in a way that can soften the violence and put more distance between the crime and audiences.

Falsified Domestic Violence

Since 2001, a new trend of depicting situations in which people fake domestic violence has emerged. This trend is especially disturbing to those who take seriously the horrific effects of real beatings. In the 44 episodes in the sample that aired after 2001, 6 episodes, or 13.6% of shows, features deviants who lie about instances of domestic violence to suit their own means. Pre-dating the trend of fake domestic

violence in the 2000's is one instance in a 1975 episode of *S.W.A.T., "The Killing Ground"* (1975), in which criminals call in a false report of domestic violence in order to lure the police to a specific location for an ambush and police killing spree. Like in the 1975 episode, all of the instances in the 2000's use falsified domestic violence as a ploy to get others to feel sorry for them or to manipulate situations into getting what they want. This representation makes real cases of domestic violence less believable.

In *Crossing Jordan, "The Dawn of a New Day"* (2001), one young White female invents a tale of child molestation as a way to enlist the help of another woman to murder her husband. Her genuine motive is to have her husband murdered so that she could profit from his sizeable life insurance policy. In this situation, she appeals to the sympathies of another woman who actually suffered from severe domestic violence at the hands of her husband in order to get her way.

Law and Order: SVU, "Cost of Capital" (2006), tells the story of a divorcing couple going through a bitter custody battle. The wife and her attorney concocts a story in which the husband appears to be violent and out of control as a way to try to get custody of their young daughter. The husband claims that "Her attorney cooked it up to improve her bargaining position in our custody fight" (Watkins, 2006), and explains that in actuality, he was been in the process of cutting an apple while they had a conversation about custody and that he never threatened her with a knife, but rather had one in his hand at the time of their argument. He claims that there was no threat or violence whatsoever associated with the incident.

In *"Streetwise"* (2008), an episode of *Law and Order: SVU*, a teenage girl who ran away from her parents in order to live on the streets claims to have been threatened and to fear for her physical safety at the hands of her street "husband." She makes this story up only after being put on trial for being an accomplice to murder, and attempts to use domestic violence to absolve herself of blame and punish her "husband."

Each of the aforementioned episodes features a false claim of domestic violence as a means to an end. This use of domestic violence shows its importance in society while simultaneously invalidating it. On the one hand, police and other characters' responses lend themselves to an interpretation that domestic violence is a serious issue that must be regarded with care and attention. This frame sets domestic violence in the light of being a serious problem and, in some ways, stresses the gruesome, unnatural way that people in abusive relationships treat their family members. In every case where familial abuse is claimed, audiences see immediate actions on the part of friends, family, and police in the television shows to rectify the situation and stop the violence.

On the other hand, the fact that there seems to be a strong new trend towards using domestic violence as a means to an end suggests that it is not as important as other types of crime. In fact, in my sample there are only two more instances of actual domestic violence in the 2000's as there are instances of falsified domestic violence. This observation of the rise of domestic violence shows characters making a mockery of a very real and very dangerous behavior that is all too common in society. According to Berkowitz's (1984) knowledge transmission explanation of media

influences, showing domestic violence as being trivial has the potential effect of teaching audiences that it is, in fact, trivial.

The false allegations of abuse that these shows depict make it more likely that future instances of abuse will go ignored. Victims today are less likely to be believed because television teaches our society that abuse is often made up. Because of the representations of false abuse in these shows, we are more likely to believe an abuser who denies claims of domestic violence than we are to accept allegations of an abused woman. The step forward in showing domestic violence on television is overshadowed in current media by a trend towards belittling and mocking the very serious public issue.

These conflicting understandings of domestic violence fit together to tell the story that average or "good" people view domestic violence as being a serious issue that warrants attention from society, and that perpetrators of family violence ought to be punished. This story simultaneously claims that criminals, who are othered from society by their deviance, make light of the serious social condition for their own benefit. The effect of this incongruence between criminals' beliefs about domestic violence and the general population's functions to drive a bigger wedge between those that we consider to be good, and those that we consider to be evil.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

While I am very pleased with my study design and the outcomes produced, with the benefit of hindsight, it is worth briefly elaborating on some flaws to my study design and suggesting some fruitful avenues for additional research.

Were I to do this study again, each episode would be watched at least two times by multiple observers to make sure that no information was overlooked. I used lab assistants to check my work on many of the initial episodes in order to test the accuracy and consistency of my observation. Due to vast amount of time required for this type of research and the fact that this project was being conducted primarily by only one researcher, such precautions were not possible for the entire study. For a broader, more in-depth study, ideally it would be useful to have multiple researchers to check observation reliability and consistency and to eliminate, as much as possible, any researcher error or subjectivity in recording observations.

The sampling methodology, in which I watched only the first disk of the first season of each series, may also have skewed my results. While I picked this sample to make sure that I was familiar enough with the shows' main characters so that I was not bogged down in comprehension questions, I am also aware that this criterion for inclusion in my sample may have altered the results I found. It is possible than the first few episodes of a series may be created to be less controversial that subsequent episodes in efforts to draw upon the biggest audience base. For this reason, the character of crime in the initial shows may be slightly different than episodes that were conceived of after the shows achieved notoriety and regular audiences. In the

alternative, it may be that shows were actually *more* controversial in the first few episodes as a way of getting reviewer mindshare and audience attention. This might also have been a positive thing in that only socially palpable storylines were included in the sample selection. Regardless of the effects of using mainly the first shows, it is important to note that having used a sample of shows that came from the first episodes of a series may have skewed the results on way or the other. For a broader, more in-depth study, ideally the sample size would be larger in order to include all the episodes of the series selected, or at least to test for a sub-sample of series whether the findings initial episodes in that series were different than the results over time for all series from that decade.

Future studies of this nature might benefit from a bigger sample size that includes a standard number of episodes from within each series. Because my sample was largely one of convenience, I viewed different numbers of episodes from each series, which may have resulted in my unwittingly weighting trends that belong solely to a particular series to a particular decade instead.

I also limited my study to include only standard crime shows that focused on civilian crime. Future studies could look to see if there are differences in the contextualization of criminals between standard crime shows and those that focus on the West, armed services, or science fictions. It would also be interesting to see how representations of criminals differ, if at all, between popular television and popular theatrically-released motion pictures.

CONCLUSION

As the primary interpreter of culture, television has a vast power to educate and socialize American society (Reese, et al., 2001; Taylor & Dozier, 1983). We take our social and, in many cases, moral cues from the lessons that television provides for us. This influence of television is so profound that we learn from it even when we are unaware that we are doing so (Haney & Manzolati, 1977). In our culture, the ideas we learn from television are frequently confounded with reality. For this reason, we need to understand better what it is that media sources display for public consumption. Especially in the case of crime, many Americans get most, if not all, of their knowledge from what they watch on television. Family is the most basic unit of contextualization and explanation of deviant behavior in television. Because of this, it is important to understand what it is that crime shows teach us about crime as it relates to the family.

The contextual background depicted for criminals has changed significantly over time. From the 1950's to the present, a clear trend emerges in which deviants' families are included in television crime drama storylines more frequently in more recent shows than in older episodes. In all, this points to a trend towards the contextualization and individualization of criminal behavior. On the whole, increased detail about the life of a criminal provides audiences with a greater emotional buffer between themselves and the deviance portrayed. In representing illegal behavior as being environment-specific, the media frame deviance in a way that allows it to be individualized and removed from the reality of audience experiences.

Within the framework of family visibility, there are observable differences in the ways that criminal's families are portrayed with regards to a number of demographic characteristics. Specifically of note are the apparent sex differences in family visibility. The overall higher frequency of a female criminal's family visibility, as well as the recent increase in male family visibility, speaks to the idea that television reflects dominant cultural ideologies. In this particular case, women have stereotypically been shown as being more family-oriented – a trend that is observed even in female criminals. Similarly, more recent shifts in societal mores have placed a higher emphasis on male accountability and contact with family.

One way that the media teaches audiences how to think about deviance is through the ways that it shows characters' responses to deviance within a show. These responses viewers to observe what their reactions to deviance ought to look like. Of note is that a majority of the shows depict no familial reactions to deviance at all. The idea that deviance is commonplace, and often not note-worthy, is further exemplified by the high proportion of families that accept deviance. Television teaches us that crime is a common and nearly continuous part of American life in a way that contradicts real-life crime statistics (Hartnagel, et al., 1975).

When families do respond to their loved one's deviance, it is overwhelmingly in the form of surprise, shock, or disbelief. The image of a family member who is unaware of their loved one's criminality further individualizes crime to make it even more context-specific and situates the locus of deviance within the individual, as opposed to within some societal framework that condones violence. We see in these

depictions that no amount of love or caring can change criminals, thereby absolving loved ones of any guilt associated with being related to a criminal.

In the case of intra-family violence, television gives us models for how to think about domestic violence. For the most part, these models present views of family violence that are congruent with social understandings of crime in the times the shows were produced. For this reason, instances of domestic violence are unheard of in the sample until the mid-1980's, and sexual abuse of children only appears in the 2000's. The introduction of these themes parallels a broader introduction of these types of abuse in the lexicon of problems that plague the American family.

Most noteworthy in this study is a recent trend towards portrayal of storylines that include falsified reports of domestic violence. The fact that television seems to, with increasing frequency, depict situations that make a mockery out of a very horrific and very real social problem condones a blasé attitude towards domestic violence. In effect, television crime shows have taken a turn towards negating claims of domestic violence in favor of using it to create a more intricate, more exciting, storyline The effects of such portrayals are to belittle the problem of family violence and to make it harder for real victims of abuse to come forward and be trusted and helped by society as a whole.

Overall, primetime crime shows appear to support an attitude about crime that differentiates criminal behavior from viewers as much as possible. Even in their depictions of criminals' families, which are perhaps the most relatable unit for many viewing audiences, crime shows persist in portraying crime within the locus of the individual according to specific context and circumstances. These depictions allow

American society to overlook the systematic triggers of deviance, including family life and structure, in favor of idealizing society and individualizing the criminal.

[ii] http://www.netflix.com/HowItWorks

[ii] N_{series} = 39. $N_{episodes}$ = 167. $N_{criminals}$ = 314. Depending on the statistical test, the number of criminals ranged from 304-314 depending on the specific code. This variation in number is due to missing data and instances where information was non existent or unavailable.

[iii] For more on this argument about the function of humanization of criminals in the media, see Haney and Carney (Carney, 2001; Haney, 2005).

[iv] For more on this argument about the contextualization of deviance and its affects on audience perceptions of guilt, see Haney and Carney (Carney, 2001; Haney, 2005).

[v] Some episodes featured multiple types of abuse within one episode. The following percentages are the raw percentages of frequency in total. See Figure 8 for weighted percentages of child abuse.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Television Reference List

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Antonio, L. (Director) (1974). The Kirkoff Case [Television series episode], *The Rockford Files*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Arkush, A. (Director) (2001). Pilot [Television series episode], *Crossing Jordan*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Arkush, A. (Director) (2001). The Dawn of a New Day [Television series episode], *Crossing Jordan*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Arkush, A. (Director) (2001). Born to Run [Television series episode], *Crossing Jordan*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Badiyi, R. (Director) (1982). High Steel [Television series episode], *Cagney & Lacey*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Bailey, R. (Director) (2004). American Dreamers [Television series episode], *CSI: NY*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Baron, A. (Director) (1976). The Mexican Connection [Television series episode], *Charlie's Angels*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Beesley, M. E. (Director) (2005).Plain Sight [Television series episode], *Criminal Minds*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Bellisario, D. P. (Director) (1980). China Doll [Television series episode], *Magnum, P.I.* New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Benedict, R. ((Director) (1968). Full Fathom Five [Television series episode], *Hawaii Five-O*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Benedict, R. (Director) (1974). The Gamble [Television series episode], *Police Woman* Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Berke, W. ((Director) (1953). The Wire Tappers [Television series episode], *Man Against Crime (Follow that Man)*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Bray, K. (Director) (2005). Won't Get Fooled Again [Television series episode], *Criminal Minds*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Burns, F. (Director) (1949). Doctored Will [Television series episode], *Martin Kane, Private Eye*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Burns, F. (Director) (1949). Hotel Con Game [Television series episode], *Martin Kane, Private Eye*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Burns, F. (Director) (1949). Murder in the Court [Television series episode], *Martin Kane, Private Eye*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Burns, F. (Director) (1949). Reclusive Sisters [Television series episode], *Martin Kane, Private Eye*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Busfield, T. (Director) (2005). Transitions [Television series episode], *Without a Trace*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Caffey, M. (Director) (1967). Message from Beyond [Television series episode], *Ironside*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Caffey, M. (Director) (1972). Concrete Valley, Neon Sky [Television series episode], *The Rookies*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Caffey, M. (Director) (1972). The Commitment [Television series episode], *The Rookies*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Caffey, M. (Director) (1977). Dog Gone [Television series episode], *CHiPs*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Campbell, M. (Director) (1993). A Ghost of a Chance [Television series episode], *Homicide: Life on the Street*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Cannon, D. (Director) (2000). Pilot [Television series episode], *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Cannon, D. (Director) (2000). Crate and Burial [Television series episode], *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Cannon, D. (Director) (2002). Cross-Jurisdictions [Television series episode], *CSI: Miami; CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Cannon, D. (Director) (2004). MIA/NYC- NonStop [Television series episode], *CSI: NY*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Carter, T. (Director) (1984). Brother's Keeper (2 episode Pilot) [Television series episode], *Miami Vice*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Chappelle, J. (Director) (2002). Golden Parachute [Television series episode], *CSI: Miami*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Chappelle, J. (Director) (2002). Losing Face [Television series episode], *CSI: Miami*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Danton, R. (Director) (1982). Beauty Burglars [Television series episode], *Cagney & Lacey*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Daucherty, H. (Director) (1968). Strangers in Our Own Land [Television series episode], *Hawaii Five-O*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Day, R. (Director) (1986). Diary of a Perfect Murder [Television series episode], *Matlock*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Dobbs, R. (Director) (1990). Bronx Cheer [Television series episode], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Dobbs, R. (Director) (1999). Hysteria [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Donner, R. (Director) (1964). The Iowa-Scuba Affair [Television series episode], *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Donner, R. (Director) (1964). The Quadripartite Affair [Television series episode], *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Donner, R. (Director) (1973).One for the Morgue [Television series episode], *Kojak*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Duke, B. (Director) (1984). The Hot Grounder [Television series episode], *Hunter*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Dunbin, C. S. (Director) (1973). Knockover [Television series episode], *Kojak*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Falk, H. (Director) (1975). The Killing Ground [Television series episode], *S.W.A.T.* Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Falk, H. (Director) (1975). Death Carrier [Television series episode], *S.W.A.T.* Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Falk, H. (Director) (1975). Hit Men [Television series episode], *S.W.A.T.* Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Fields, M. (Director) (2001). Smothered [Television series episode], *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Forney, A. W. (Director) (2008). Confessions [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Forney, A. W. (Director) (2008). Signature [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Ganzer, A. (Director) (1974). The End Game [Television series episode], *Police Woman*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Gates, T. (Director) (2002). Wet Foot/Dry Foot [Television series episode], *CSI: Miami*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Goldstone, J. (Director) (1967). Ironside - World Premiere (2 hour pilot) [Television series episode], *Ironside*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Gomer, S. (Director) (2002).Between the Cracks [Television series episode], *Without a Trace*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Green, B. S. (Director) (1980). Thank Heaven for Little Girls and Big Ones Too [Television series episode], *Magnum, P.I.* New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Haid, C. (Director) (1993). True Confessions [Television series episode], *NYPD Blue*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Haid, C. (Director) (2005). Compulsion [Television series episode], *Criminal Minds*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Hale, W. (Director) (1973). Siege of Terror [Television series episode], *Kojak*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Hale, W. (Director) (1973). Web of Death [Television series episode], *Kojak*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Haller, D. (Director) (1986).The Stripper [Television series episode], *Matlock*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Hayers, S. (Director) (1981). The Meek Shall Inherit Rhonda [Television series episode], *The Fall Guy*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Hayers, S. (Director) (1981). The Rich Get Richer [Television series episode], *The Fall Guy*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Hibler, C. (Director) (1986). The Judge [Television series episode], *Matlock*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Hoblit, G. (Director) (1993). Pilot [Television series episode], *NYPD Blue*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Hoblit, G. (Director) (1993). 4B Or Not 4B [Television series episode], *NYPD Blue*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Hoblit, G. (Director) (1993). Brown Appetite [Television series episode], *NYPD Blue*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Horn, L. (Director) (1972).Dead, Like a Lost Dream [Television series episode], *The Rookies*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Horn, L. (Director) (1972).The Informant [Television series episode], *The Rookies*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Horn, L. (Director) (1972). Covenant with Death [Television series episode], *The Rookies*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Hunter, T. (Director) (2004). Creatures of the Night [Television series episode], *CSI: NY*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Jameson, J. (Director) (1971). Death Chain [Television series episode], *Cannon*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Kaplan, J. (Director) (2007). Snitch [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Karlson, P. (Director) (1959). The Scarface Mob (2 Part Pilot) [Television series episode], *The Untouchables*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Kessler, B. (Director) (1984). Hard Contract [Television series episode], *Hunter*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Kowalski, B. L. (Director) (1975). He'll Never See Daylight [Television series episode], *Baretta*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Kowalski, B. L. (Director) (1975). Woman in the Harbor [Television series episode], *Baretta*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Kowalski, B. L. (Director) (1975). If You Can't Pay the Price [Television series episode], *Baretta*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Krasney, P. (Director) (1977). Pilot [Television series episode], *CHiPs*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Kroeker, A. (Director) (2005). The Man in the SUV [Television series episode], *Bones*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Broadcasting Company.

Kroeker, A. (Director) (2005). The Man in the Bear [Television series episode], *Bones*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Broadcasting Company.

Lang, R. (Director) (1976). Hellride [Television series episode], *Charlie's Angels*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Lang, R. (Director) (1976). Night of the Strangler [Television series episode], *Charlie's Angels*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Lange, M. (Director) (1993). Miracle Cure [Television series episode], *Diagnosis Murder*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Lange, M. (Director) (1993). Amnesia [Television series episode], *Diagnosis Murder*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Laven, A. (Director) (1974). Warning to All Wives [Television series episode], *Police Woman*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Lehmann, M. (Director) (1993). Night of the Dead Living [Television series episode], *Homicide: Life on the Street*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Leto, P. (Director) (2006). Web [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Leto, P. (Director) (2008). Closet [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Leto, P. (Director) (2008). Trade [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Leto, P. (Director) (2008). Lunacy [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Levinson, B. (Director) (1993). Gone for Goode [Television series episode], *Homicide: Life on the Street*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Lewis, R. J. (Director) (2000). Pledging Mr. Johnson [Television series episode], *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Linka Glatter, L. (Director) (1999). A Single Life [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Llewellyn Moxey, J. (Director) (1976).Charlie's Angels (Pilot) [Television series episode], *Charlie's Angels*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Llewellyn Moxey, J. (Director) (1984).Heart of Darkness [Television series episode], *Miami Vice*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Llewellyn Moxey, J. (Director) (1984).Birds of a Feather [Television series episode], *Murder, She Wrote*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Llewellyn Moxey, J. (Director) (1990). The Fixer Upper [Television series episode], *Murder, She Wrote*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Makris, C. (Director) (1997). Terminal [Television series episode], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Makris, C. (Director) (2001). The Faithful [Television series episode], *Law and order: Criminal Intent*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Martin, D. (Director) (2008). Angelgrove [Television series episode] [Television], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Mayberry, R. (Director) (1974). The Countess [Television series episode], *The Rockford Files*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Mayberry, R. (Director) (1981). The Fall Guy Pilot (2 hours) [Television series episode], *The Fall Guy*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network

McCowan, G. (Director) (1971). Cannon (Pilot Episodes 1 and 2) [Television series episode], *Cannon*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

McCowan, G. (Director) (1971). The Salinas Jackpot [Television series episode], *Cannon*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

McCowan, G. (Director) (1975). Coven of Killers [Television series episode], *S.W.A.T.* Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

McCowan, G. (Director) (1975). Pressure Cooker [Television series episode], *S.W.A.T.* Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Medford, D. (Director) (1964). The Vulcan Affair [Television series episode], *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Medford, D. (Director) (1975). The 5 1/2 Pound Junkie [Television series episode], *Baretta*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Montagne, E. (Director) (1953).Petite Larceny [Television series episode], *Man Against Crime (Follow That Man)*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Montagne, E. (Director) (1953). Third Rail [Television series episode], *Man Against Crime (Follow that Man)*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Montagne, E. (Director) (1953). Death Takes a Partner [Television series episode], *Man Against Crime (Follow That Man)*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Nelson, G. ((Director) (1975). Death Ride [Television series episode], *Starsky and Hutch*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Norris, P. R. (Director) (2005). A Boy in a Tree [Television series episode], *Bones*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Broadcasting Company.

Nutter, D. (Director) (2002).Pilot [Television series episode], *Without a Trace*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Nutter, D. (Director) (2002).Birthday Boy [Television series episode], *Without a Trace*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Nyby, C. I. (Director) (1977). Undertow [Television series episode], *CHiPs*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Parker, J. (Director) (1959).Ma Barker and Her Boys [Television series episode], *The Untouchables*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Penn, L. (Director) (1967). The Leaf in the Forest [Television series episode], *Ironside*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Penn, M. (Director) (1996). Homesick [Television series episode], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Peyser, J. (Director) (1959). The Empty Chair [Television series episode], *The Untouchables*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Platt, D. (Director) (2001). Art [Television series episode], *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Platt, D. (Director) (2008). Trials [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Platt, D. (Director) (2008). Swing [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Platt, D. (Director) (2008). Unorthodox [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Rosenthal, R. (Director) (1999). Or Just Looks Like One [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Russell, W. D. (Director) (1957). The Case of The Restless Redhead [Television series episode], *Perry Mason*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Russell, W. D. (Director) (1957). The Case of the Sleepwalker's Niece [Television series episode], *Perry Mason*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Russell, W. D. (Director) (1957). The Case of the Nervous Accomplice [Television series episode], *Perry Mason*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Russell, W. D. (Director) (1957). The Case of the Drowning Duck [Television series episode], *Perry Mason*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Sarafian, D. (Director) (2004). Blink [Television series episode], *CSI: NY*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Satlof, R. (Director) (1984). Pilot (2 episode pilot) [Television series episode], *Hunter*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Schultz, M. (Director) (1974). The Dark and Bloody Ground [Television series episode], *The Rockford Files*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Segonzac, J. D. (Director) (1999). Payback [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Segonzac, J. D. (Director) (2001). One [Television series episode], *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Shaver, H. (Director) (2008). Streetwise [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Shear, B. (Director) (1974). The Beautiful Die Young [Television series episode], *Police Woman*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Shear, B. (Director) (1975).Pilot [Television series episode], *Starsky and Hutch*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Shepard, R. (Director) (2005). Extreme Aggressor [Television series episode], *Criminal Minds*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Singer, A. (Director) (1982). Witness to an Incident [Television series episode], *Cagney & Lacey*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Starrett, J. (Director) (1975). Savage Sunday [Television series episode], *Starsky and Hutch*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Starrett, J. (Director) (1975). Texas Longhorn [Television series episode], *Starsky and Hutch*. Burbank, CA: ABC Television Network.

Swackhamer, E. W. (Director) (1990). Subterranean Homeboy Blues [Television series episode], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Szwarc, J. (Director) (2008). The Perfect Pieces in the Purple Pond [Television series episode], *Bones*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Broadcasting Company.

Talalay, R. (Director) (2002). He Saw, She Saw [Television series episode], *Without a Trace*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Watkins, M. W. (Director) (2000). Cool Change [Television series episode], *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Watkins, M. W. (Director) (2006).Cost of Capital [Television series episode], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1952). The Big Cast [Television series episode], *Dragnet*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1952). The Big Phone Call [Television series episode], *Dragnet*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1953). The Big Hands [Television series episode], *Dragnet*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1953). The Big Little Jesus [Television series episode], *Dragnet*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1954). The Big Trunk [Television series episode], *Dragnet*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). The LSD Story [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). Big Explosion [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). The Big Hammer [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). The Big Bank Examiners [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). The Big Masked Bandits [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). The Big Kidnapping [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Webb, J. (Director) (1967). The Big Interrogation [Television series episode], *Dragnet '67*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Wendkos, P. (Director) (1968). Cocoon (2 episode Pilot) [Television series episode], *Hawaii Five-O*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Whitesell, J. (Director) (1990). Prescription for Death [Television series episode], *Law and Order*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Williams, A. (Director) (1993). Murder at the Telethon [Television series episode], *Diagnosis Murder*. New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Wolk, A. (Director) (2001). The Ties That Bind [Television series episode], *Crossing Jordan*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network.

Yaitanes, G. (Director) (2005). Pilot [Television series episode], *Bones*. Beverly Hills, CA: Fox Broadcasting Company.

Young, R. (Director) (1980). Please Don't Eat the Snow in Hawaii, Part 1 [Television series episode], *Magnum, P.I.* New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Young, R. (Director) (1980). Please Don't Eat the Snow in Hawaii: Part 2 [Television series episode], *Magnum, P.I.* New York, NY: CBS Television Network.

Zalla, C. (Director) (2008). Inconceivable [Television series episode], *Law and Order: SVU*. Burbank, CA: NBC Television Network