



Talking Points ...

Violence in Entertainment

As responsible members of the communities in which we live and serve our patrons, we are concerned with the safety of our friends and neighbors.

A link between “violent entertainment” and **criminal behavior** has never been proven by any study. Some studies have shown increased aggression among viewers of “violent entertainment” and players of violent video games, but the effect is mild and short-lived. Even if this small subset of studies were reliable, the results could not possibly account for serious criminal conduct—much less premeditated violence.

Virtually every federal court examining the question of a linkage between violent entertainment and real-world violence has rejected the evidence as weak and unpersuasive. Thus, laws aimed at regulating access to **violent video games**, for example, have all been struck down on constitutional grounds.

Significantly, while some commentators assert that our culture has become ever more violent, the rate of murder and other violent crime is at its **lowest** point in thirty years.

Audiences are not passive recipients of whatever is shown on a screen. They bring their own attitudes, values and experiences to what they see and judge it accordingly.

We do not have violence in our culture because it is in our entertainment. We have violence in our entertainment because it is in our culture. Violence is an inescapable fact of human existence and always has been. Indeed, it is the process of telling stories about violence that can sometimes make sense of it, or soothe a corrosive fear of it. Our human impulse is to tell and listen to **stories**. Audiences want these stories, and that is why they exist.

Movies and video games are high-profile targets for pundits and crusaders, but they are only a fraction of our total culture. There are 300 million people in this country interacting in countless ways with movies, books, music, video games, plays, sports, religion and each other. How do we separate the effects of so-called “violent media” from other powerful influences?

Art and entertainment should not be judged by how they are used or interpreted by a **sick and damaged mind**. If that is our standard, all things can be banned or regulated.

We support and enforce the **voluntary movie rating system**. Enforcement of the rating system supplements—but can never substitute for—direct parental involvement in what children watch or play in and out of the home.