Another CBS Travesty
by Phyllis Schlafly Feb. 11, 2004
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CBS paid big bucks for the television rights to come into the living rooms of 100 million Americans on Super Bowl Sunday. But public response to the thrilling last moments of a truly exciting football game may be overwhelmed by public disgust at CBS's airing of indecency during the half- time entertainment.

CBS-TV proved again that it is determined to offend our moral sensibilities and trash our culture. The shocking primetime display of Janet Jackson's breast, decorated for maximum eye-catching attraction, was undoubtedly deliberate.

Performer Justin Timberlake issued this statement afterwards. "I am sorry that anyone was offended by the wardrobe malfunction during the half-time performance of the Super Bowl. It was not intentional."

His statement is not credible. Moments before pulling off the covering to expose Janet's bare breast during the song "Rock Your Body," Timberlake sang these lyrics: "I'm gonna have you naked by the end of this song."

That's exactly what he did. The song's lyrics described exactly what was to come moments later. Janet's bare breast was accentuated by a metallic sun-shaped eight-pointed star with a cutout for the nipple.

Of course it wasn't a wardrobe malfunction at all. Her garment had to have been carefully stitched and cut to come off quickly and exactly as it was intended to tear, no more, no less.

MTV issued this statement. "The tearing of Janet Jackson's costume was unrehearsed, unplanned, completely unintentional." MTV's alleged apology is not believable because for hours before the Super Bowl, MTV was advertising that "Janet's Shocking Moments" were scheduled to air during Super Bowl half-time.

It's impossible to believe that the half-time entertainment was not carefully scripted, down to the last millisecond. Every 30 seconds of precious Super Bowl time has a market value in excess of two million dollars.

CBS can't duck responsibility for Viacom's MTV. It's CBS's sister outlet and the half-time entertainment was full of sexual lyrics and objectionable simulated behavior.

Drudge reported that "the decision to go forward went to the very top of the network," as indeed it must have. It's always been CBS's policy to exercise dictatorial control over everything that is aired, and it's impossible to believe that this outrage wasn't cleared at the top.

CBS is the same network that several months ago tried to air a malicious, full-of-false-dialogue caricature of Ronald and Nancy Reagan (fortunately, CBS retreated after tens of thousands of angry emails). CBS's track record reveals not merely "Bias," as documented in Bernard Goldberg's book; CBS is determined to move America politically to the left and culturally to the sexually deviant.

We expect the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to enforce the decency laws passed by Congress. CBS-TV and MTV should be severely fined and punished, including denying CBS the opportunity to broadcast future Super Bowl games.

And we want to hear something more substantive from President Bush than a White House spokesman telling us that Bush didn't see the offensive performance because he had dozed off. After all, the

President's obligation is to see that the laws are faithfully executed, and he should see that the FCC does its duty in aggressively enforcing television decency laws.

The radical Muslims who criticize our culture as degraded and demoralizing now have new proof for their charges. Who is going to answer them?

Fortunately, FCC Chairman Michael Powell said, "I am outraged at what I saw during the halftime show of the Super Bowl. Like millions of Americans, my family and I gathered around the television for a celebration. Instead, that celebration was tainted by a classless, crass and deplorable stunt. Our nation's children, parents and citizens deserve better."

Powell told the commission to open an investigation, promising it would be "thorough and swift." Such an investigation could result in a fine of up to $27,500 or, if the FCC applies the sanction to each CBS station, in the millions.

In recent years, the FCC has been lax in enforcing the decency laws, so we hope Powell will act on his outrage this time. The Super Bowl is supposed to be the preeminent family entertainment night of the year, and it's completely unacceptable for American families to be assaulted by obscenity in the middle of a football game.

If the FCC is to retain any credibility it must take action against CBS for this unprecedented, carefully scripted, pre-announced shocker during the most-watched television show of the year.