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TV VIOLENCE

Mark Twain is usually credited with the expression, "Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it." The same complaint might be voiced about the subject of violence on television. For years, newspapers, magazines, speakers, and scien tific studies have piled up data setting forth the staggering statis tics of crimes portrayed on the tube and the way they stimulate aggressive and brutal behavior among our youth.

Among the many recent additions to the evidence of the effect of so many people being shot, stabbed, tortured or mutilated on television is the book "Where Do You Draw The Line?" by psychology Professor Victor B. Cline. He devoted three years to monitoring TV
and studying the effects of an overfeed of blood and guts on children aged 5 to 14. Cline concludes that increased personal aggression and a growing indifference to real-life victims can be traced to an oversaturation of media violence which causes "desensitization" among viewers.

Dr. Robert M. Liebert, a psychologist at the State University of New York, _reports that 11it was not a boy's home life, not his school performance, not his family background, but the amount of TV violence he viewed at age nine which was the single most important determinant of.how aggressive he was 10 years later, at age 19.11

The basic reason for our widespread failure to come to grips with the problem may have been unearthed by Dr. Donald T. Lunde, professor of law and psychiatry at Stanford University. He made a

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five-year study of the increasing real-life murder rate, and came to the conclusion that the principal cause of the crime rise is that the whole generation of Americans who grew to adulthood since World War II has been trained to blame its troubles on "society" and to look to the government for the solution to all problems.

The permissive child rearing, the decline **in** self-discipline, and the diminishing influence of religion have all had their impact on a generation that has abdicated responsibility for individual actions.

While Dr. Lunde did not apply his findings to TV violence, it is obvious that parents have abdicated their moral responsibility to supervise the entertainment of their young children. Thus, the aver age citizen may bemoan the prevalence of television violence, but he confines himself to saying, "isn't it terrible," "there ought to be a law," or "it's up to the FCC to stop it."

TV GUIDE recently quoted a scientist as estimating that the average child by the age of 15 will have witnessed 13,400 televised killings. What is the matter with the parents who permit their chil dren to watch all those murders?

What is the matter with parents who continue to patronize the advertisers whose commercials are sandwiched in between the murders and the robberies, and whose advertising budget has purchased the high-priced prime time? What is the matter with the parents who fail to protest bad programs to their local stations and to the sponsors?

If the parents really want to get rid of TV violence, nobody is restraining them from using the switch on the tube, the telephone and the mails.

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