



Alex Wallau  
President

February 3, 2004

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Mr. Dingell:

This letter is in response to your letter asking ABC to answer several questions regarding broadcast indecency.

At the outset, we want to emphasize that ABC takes very seriously its responsibility to its audience. As discussed in more detail below, ABC considers and reviews very carefully the content of its programming.

In response to your first question, ABC believes that the "f-word" is not appropriate for network programming in almost any circumstance. We note, however, that the "f-word" was included in ABC's network broadcast of the Academy-Award Winning film "Saving Private Ryan," in which the word was uttered a number of times as a profanity by soldiers at war. Because of the special nature and quality of the film, ABC decided to retain this language in its airing of "Saving Private Ryan," but preceded the broadcast with an extensive advisory and parental warning about language and violence and repeated the warning at several points within the broadcast.

Your second question asks about ABC's preventative mechanisms and procedures. ABC's preventative mechanisms are extensive. Specifically, ABC has a Broadcast Standards and Practices Department, headed by a Senior Vice President with twenty years of television experience and composed of 24 professionals who are responsible for the review and acceptance of all ABC primetime entertainment programming. ABC's Broadcast Standards staff works with creative personnel throughout the entire prime-time program development process, from inception all the way through to the on-air broadcast of entertainment programming.

Broadcast Standards editors are assigned to specific ABC scripted entertainment programs and, in this role, they read, review and issue notes on each draft of the script for each episode. A Broadcast Standards editor also is on set or location during the live or taped production of comedy, reality, specials and awards shows.



Rough cuts of taped prime-time entertainment programming are reviewed and, when necessary, revised prior to broadcast. Acquired theatrical films are reviewed and where necessary revised prior to broadcast. Live prime-time entertainment programming is subject to a delay mechanism staffed by experienced Broadcast Standards editors.

With respect to your last three questions, we want to assure you that ABC is committed to complying with all indecency rules adopted and articulated by Congress and the Federal Communications Commission, regardless of the magnitude of the available sanctions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alex Wallau".

Alex Wallau  
President  
ABC Television Network

Cc: The Honorable W.J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce