

## THE CHILLING EFFECT

You may not know it, but TV programs are already being changed or not aired at all, out of fear of government fines. It's what Americans *don't* see that may anger them.

- One third of the country wasn't able to watch *Saving Private Ryan* on Veteran's Day 2004, when stations declined to air it fearing action by the FCC.
- An episode of *ER* was edited to remove a brief shot of the exposed breast of an 80-year-old woman receiving emergency care.
- A *Family Guy* episode that aired 5 years ago – without incident – was edited to remove a view of an animated character's buttocks. In another episode, an animated depiction in of a character breast-feeding was also altered.
- Broadcasters across the country have ceased covering live news events or move their microphones far from crowds to avoid utterances by those the stations cannot control.
- An episode of *That 70s Show* that won an award for its treatment of sexual health in a responsible manner has been shelved for reruns even though when it aired prior to the Super Bowl it drew no complaints.
- FOX edited testimony in *The Jury* (which examines the jury system), even though it went to the crux of the case – and the jury's verdict – in a program involving child sexual abuse.
- For a documentary about South Africa, scenes of Nelson Mandela at a dance event were cut out because some women in the background were dancing topless as is the cultural norm in Africa.
- The FCC investigated NBC's coverage of the Olympic Games Opening Ceremonies in Athens because historical depictions of Greek art and dance appeared in the broadcast.
- Even shows like *Antiques Roadshow* must now screen items, including such pieces of Americana as famous lithographs of Marilyn Monroe and illustrations of the female form in artwork from World War II bomber planes.
- Phoenix TV stations dropped coverage of a live memorial service for Pat Tillman, the former football star killed in Afghanistan, because of language used by mournful family members.
- Fearing FCC fines, more than 80 percent of PBS affiliates declined to air an unedited version of the *Frontline* documentary "A Company of Soldiers."
- ABC now alters language and images in the long-running, Emmy Award-winning *N.Y.P.D. Blue* though the now-edited content has been a staple of the show for over a decade.
- Garrison Keillor's national, daily five-minute poetry and history program was canceled by a Kentucky radio program after the word 'breast' was spoken during a reading. After an outcry from the community, the show was reinstated.

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