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VCR viewing by American parents and young teenagers : a family systems perspective

Sarah M. Regan

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sarah M. Regan entitled "VCR viewing by American parents and young teenagers : a family systems perspective." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communication.

Barbara A. Moore, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Herbert H. Howard, Ronald E. Taylor, Dorothy Bowles, Julia A. Malia

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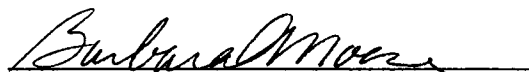
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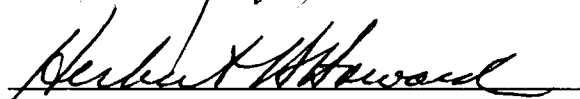
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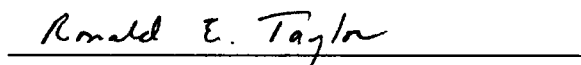
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Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

VCR VIEWING
BY AMERICAN PARENTS AND YOUNG TEENAGERS:
A FAMILY SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Sarah M. Regan
August 1996

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To my mother, Margaret Caroline Henderson Regan,
a Juris Doctor who **treasured** family beyond measure,

To my father, William Joseph Regan,
an exceptional attorney whose love of family reached out
beyond our family home to touch numerous grateful clients and
who provided me with continual support and encouragement,

and

To my sister, attorney Star-Beth Regan,
who would never allow me to become discouraged and who spent late
night hours listening patiently and offering her advice

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated how VCR viewing by American parents and young teenagers demonstrated the family system during its volatile adolescent development period. All participating families were two-parent families.

Voluntary, face to face, in-depth interviews were conducted separately with twelve teenagers and six of their parents. VCR viewing diaries were also kept separately by five teenagers and five parents. Ethnographic data were provided by participant-observation of VCR viewing in two family homes.

Triangulation of data revealed that mothers' role included responsibility for video viewing content. Mothers became guides (and referees) for video selections, which supported previous research (Jordan, 1990; Krendl et al., 1993a). Fathers in this study mentored family discussions after VCR viewing.

Teenagers and their parents agreed that there were no rigid rules surrounding VCR viewing, however mothers expressed concern for video content. "R-rated" selections were acceptable, but some boundaries concerning video content were expressed during in-depth interviews.

All parents were concerned with what they considered extreme violence in some movie portrayals, and such content was never welcome in their homes. Explicitly sexual content was also considered outside family boundaries. However, parents and teenagers found many video

selections that provided a relaxing "time out," and these offered benefits for shared or private VCR viewing.

Interaction and communication among family members was found to be positively promoted from video selection through viewing in the home. Teenagers, 13 to 15 years of age, needed someone with a driver's license to accompany them to the rental store, and the mother usually took this part.

Some video content promoted family negotiation or discussion; other content promoted bonding among family members. However, VCR viewing consistently provided a valuable resource during this volatile transition period in family life.

Viewing required communication and interaction among family members and encouraged conscious decision-making. This contributed to a balance in the family system and allowed video movies to become **invited guests** rather than intruders in participants' homes. Videos also offered families the opportunity to join together or to go separate ways as family growth evolved.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Families with teenage children experience periods of unsettling transition (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Duvall & Miller, 1985; Hill, 1949; Hill & Mattessich, 1979). During this stage of family life, children tend to question parental authority and test established family boundaries to the limit (Galvin & Brommel, 1991). Many teens also try on new personalities as they adopt distinctive clothing trends and experiment with new ideas. A nose ring and a permanent tattoo are not out of the question for teens at this time, especially when their peers nod approval. At the same time, parents question what is going on and try to understand how the family is changing as they attempt to stay sane.

During this volatile period, families face the challenge of redefining themselves individually and as a family (Barber, 1992; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). The family "stew" simmers, then boils in transition. Family roles, rules, and relationships often change as boundaries created by the family itself stretch to accommodate growth (Galvin & Brommel, 1991). Although some researchers have seen television and later video cassette recorder (VCR) viewing as a communication resource during this time of transition in family life, (Dobrow, 1989) others have noted that television and video cassette viewing provide a potential source of family conflicts (Morgan, Alexander, Shanahan, & Harris, 1990). Still, researchers

agree that at no time is communication more essential for the family's healthy development than during this period, even though at no time is communication more challenging for family members (Duvall, 1985; Hill, 1949; Hill & Mattessich, 1979; Strong & DeVault, 1992). During this transitory adolescent period, American families may find recourse in the video cassette recorder (VCR), now widely available in American homes. This source of communication options offers entertainment and information possibilities for the whole family, as well as for individual family members.

American families have welcomed this technology. The VCR is now being tracked at an 88% penetration of United States television households, an increase upward from the 87% penetration achieved in 1995 (Electronic Industries Association data, 1996). By the early 1990s, most American families in television households considered VCR units and VCR technology at home standard. Klopfenstein (1989) suggested that one major driving force behind such rapid diffusion of VCR "hardware" in American homes was the increasing availability of VCR "software," especially prerecorded video cassettes which could be rented or purchased in retail stores. Many American families enjoyed taking charge of their evening's entertainment, and the ease of video cassette rental made this an attractive option (Lull, 1980). What was also notable is that VCR viewing provided families with a common meeting place not unlike the family dinner table where all family members could gather at least on occasion.

Today, through use of the VCR, families with young teenagers can view prerecorded entertainment videos together, individually, and with peers. Those who view together as a family can create shared meanings or at least create a shared agenda (Jordan, 1990), and today, the family's interaction with its VCR provides a set of options distinct from television. Notably, there is the opportunity for selectivity and control over video content. For example, parents who are proud of their cultural heritage can share this pride with children by selecting and watching videos that demonstrate ethnicity and cultural heritage (Dobrow, 1989). At other times, the same parents and children can relax, escape, and watch entertainment videos that they select for fun and view alone or with peers. Such options highlighted by selectivity and control make the family's VCR viewing an observable phenomenon that reflects family change when children are teens.

Purpose of this Study

The VCR has become an essential part of the home environment for most American adolescents (Morgan et al., 1990), and the family's structure and communication processes have been reflected in patterns of VCR use when the children are young (Jordan, 1990, 1992). However, the interaction of families with adolescents whose roles, rules, and relationships are subject to unsettling change deserves particular investigation. A greater understanding of how the family itself changes when children become adolescents may be revealed by the family's video viewing patterns at home. The proposed study will try to provide insight into family roles, rules, and relationships during the transitory adolescent

stage by interpreting VCR viewing patterns and relating them to the family system.

Statement of the Problem

The family systems perspective provides an organizing principle for interpreting patterns of the American family's VCR viewing at home. For instance, regular parental control of video content through positive reinforcement of video selections provides insight into family roles, rules, and relationships (Jordan, 1990). Besides a concern for content, viewing patterns also reveal a family's outlook on time as a valuable resource (Jordan, 1990, 1992). However, scholarly studies have been focused on families with children under 13 years of age, and research has only begun to investigate the meanings of VCR viewing at home from a full family life-course perspective.

I propose to advance the study of American families and of family systems by investigating patterns of VCR viewing at home when the household includes young teenagers. During this stage of the family's life cycle, teenagers consider the VCR essential to family life (Morgan et al., 1990). During this period, roles, rules, and relationships are in transition (McGoldrick & Carter, 1984). Whether families adjust boundaries and encourage adolescents toward independence can be mirrored in patterns of VCR viewing. Rules that surround video viewing in the home can also offer insight into how adolescents are empowered or not empowered to make decisions on their own.

Research Question

How does VCR viewing in the natural setting of the home reveal family roles, rules, and relationships within the *family's system* when the children are young teenagers?

In this proposal, the *family system* is considered unique to the family that creates it. It can be considered a multi-faceted composite of distinct components working together and contributing to family functioning. This system is revealed through family structure and process with structure involving family roles that are reflected in observable behavior (like who controls and who nurtures) and observable family rules that reflect boundaries. However, the family system extends beyond structure and takes into account family processes, especially communication (Galvin & Brommel, 1991; Minuchin, 1984; Strong & DeVault, 1992).

Family members are so inter-related that they are an essential part of the specific system, but the family system itself extends beyond its immediate members. For example, any specific family system bears the influence of its previous generations, the influence of its developmental stage, the culture that surrounds the family, and the family's environment (See McGoldrick & Carter, 1984, pp. 168-176).

The family system itself can be observed through the family's interactions and brought to light through in-depth interviews concerning family values, attitudes, and goals. The inter-relationship of the family system with past and present is revealed in "the pattern of interactions of

family members: their communication, roles, beliefs, and rules" (Strong & DeVault, p.79).

Data from in-depth interviews and participant-observation of the family's VCR viewing at home may combine to provide insight into the family system when the children are young teenagers. The following questions offer a guide to data collection through in-depth interviews and participant-observation:

1. How are the family's VCR viewing patterns demonstrated in the natural setting of the home?
2. How are video cassettes selected for viewing at home by family members?
3. Who loads the tape into the VCR for playback, and who is in charge of the remote control during the playback of a videotape?
4. How do family members communicate about the content of prerecorded videos before, during, and after viewing at home?
5. Who really watches (attends) the playback of prerecorded videos at home when the whole family is present or when the whole family is not present?

6. How does the body language of family viewers reveal family roles, rules, or relationships when a video is selected or played-back?

Summary

The process of viewing video cassettes at home became common place in America during the early 1990s. Today, this process offers American families a variety of decision making options. Among these is the selection of video cassette content, the time when viewing takes place, and with whom videos are viewed. With each option, family roles, rules, and relationships within the family may be acted out and may mirror the family system. For example, considering the selection of content, Jordan's data suggest the significance of parental control when parents encourage particular choices during the time that children are young (1990). However, children may test any parental control when they become young teenagers (Galvin & Brommel, 1991). At this stage, children may certainly prefer their own video selections. Therefore, this study looks with special interest at the VCR viewing process in the homes of families with young teenagers in an attempt to increase insight into this transitory adolescent period when family structure and process experience change.

A family systems approach has been adopted in the presentation of data provided by families and family members who participated in this study.

Organization of the Dissertation

This research study begins with a review of literature that reflects the findings of two distinct disciplines: human ecology and

communication. Both of these disciplines provide inquiries concerning media use within the family context, and both offer insight into the American family's interaction with media. This study focuses especially on the VCR viewing process demonstrated by families with young teenagers, since VCR viewing at home is common during this adolescent life stage (Morgan et al., 1990). In addition, human ecology provides studies of the family life cycle and the family system, which offer assistance in understanding family structure and communication when video cassettes are viewed at home.

This study proceeds with a discussion of methodology in Chapter III, which explains the selection of several qualitative techniques for collecting data. First, individual, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with participants are described; second, VCR viewing diaries are described, and finally, participant-observation of family VCR viewing in the home is discussed.

Chapter IV presents the results of in-depth interviews with twelve teenagers and six participating parents, whose interviews are coded and interpreted according to the techniques suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Data from VCR viewing diaries and participant-observation are also reported.

Chapter V presents a model of how the American family's VCR viewing reveals family's boundaries, relationships, and changes in family structure and processes. From these data, it appears that viewing may sometimes stretch family boundaries, separating family members, while at other times, VCR viewing may bring family members together.

Appendices "A" through "E" include in-depth interview questions, data from VCR viewing diaries, and sample transcripts from in-depth interviews with teenagers and parents.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual media available to families at home on broadcast television, cable, and the video cassette recorder (VCR) have attracted inquiry from various disciplines. Among these is human ecology, the discipline concerned with the well being of the whole family and its individual members. This chapter begins with research based in human ecology, proceeds to review the family systems perspective and McGoldrick and Carter's (1989) interpretation of the family life cycle, then reviews communication inquiries focused on the family and media.

This writer notes that traditional communication research focuses on media effects that are related to individuals who are studied in samples *outside* the family context (Chaffee, 1972; Gantz, 1986; Gerbner, 1969c, 1973; Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli and Morgan, 1980; Lin, 1989; Zillmann, 1982). This research is nontraditional in the respect that it focuses on the family's media use, especially VCR use, *in the family context* because this context can reflect the family system. For this reason, the review of communication literature emphasizes studies that relate to media use by families and family members.

Studies in Human Ecology

Investigations originated by either child or family specialists have considered the effects of media on viewers in the home environment. Quite often, these studies have presented findings that suggest the family

seldom benefits from consistent heavy use of mass media, especially when the media are heavily attended (viewers paid attention). Generally, findings have pointed to direct relationships. For example, the amount of time spent with the television medium has been related to negative effects on viewers, and specific content of the medium has been related to negative effects on viewers. Often, such studies have not emphasized the individual's part in this process. However, analysis of data from large samples has encouraged human ecologists to suggest predictions and make generalizations that emphasize the negative potential of media effects on the family.

It is noteworthy that concern with the media has seldom been a central focus of family scholars. Family research in the United States usually focused on the family as a small group from the turn of the century through the middle 1960s. Particular emphasis was placed on the socialization of family members, with mounting concern for the significance of family stress which prompted investigations from the early 1940s. At that time, external stress, such as war, and internal stress, such as troubled family members, demanded research attention. It seems understandable that the American researcher whose work was most published during this era was Reuben Hill, who created and continued to refine his models of family stress (1949, 1979). However, one human ecologist, Bronfenbrenner, did investigate the significance of television and the family during the 1960s.

Bronfenbrenner compared massive amounts of survey data (some by secondary analysis) that related to the development of children in the

United States and the Union of Socialists Soviet Republic (U.S.S.R.) in the late 1960s. Although he visited and photographed children in their schools, one method of investigation familiar to qualitative researchers, his final analysis reflected the methods of received science, statistically organizing and reporting quantifiable data.

One quantifiable area that was prominent in his research was time. He was very concerned with the dwindling amount of time American parents spent rearing their children in the 1960s. He argued that healthy parent-child interaction created many positive outcomes. Among these, it helped a child develop a sense of responsibility, but this took time, and such interaction could not take place during television viewing.

Respected for his studies of child and family development, Bronfenbrenner was invited to a BBC radio interview with Alasdair Clayre in 1972 specifically to discuss television's impact on the family. His comments transcribed from that broadcast interview continue to generate research. For example, Bronfenbrenner claimed during the broadcast that when the family's television set was *on*, "everything that used to go on between people--the games, the arguments, the emotional scenes out of which personality and ability develop--was stopped;" he claimed that, all told, the "process of making human beings human" was *turned off* when the family television was *on* and the family was viewing (Bronfenbrenner, 1973, p.20).

In 1976, family specialists asked whether American families used television viewing as a way to avoid interaction, notably expressions of anger, while the set was on. After extensive interviews, researchers

concluded that some families maintained only the appearance of togetherness because they sat together in front of a television, however this appearance was deceptive. Family members could appear to be together when they were comfortably isolated because television made it unnecessary to talk (Rosenblatt & Cunningham, 1976). These studies also correlated levels of family tension with television viewing and presented data indicating that families with high levels of tension viewed more television than those with moderate or low levels of tension (Rosenblatt & Cunningham, 1976).

Taking a different view of television's role in family interaction, Goodman (1983) suggested that a family systems perspective, which included observation of family viewing in the home, revealed a more complete picture of what was going on when families watched television. Therefore, Goodman adopted this analytical framework for a family television study, and as a result, reported findings that television functioned in a variety of *roles* in family life, among these that of companion, mediator, scapegoat, even boundary marker, a function that demonstrated decision-making processes, family control, and family rules (See Goodman, 1983, p. 409).

Goodman's choice of a family systems perspective has gained advocates over the past decade and acts as the chosen framework for the present study. Therefore, a comparative analysis of the family systems perspective follows.

Family scholars have offered helpful comparisons to explain the significance of the family systems perspective. This perspective has drawn

heavily from *symbolic interactionism*, "a down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct" (Blumer, p. 47), which posits the following (p. 50):

1. people, individually and collectively, are prepared to act on the basis of meanings of the objects that comprise their world;
2. the association of people is necessarily in the form of a process in which they are making indications to one another and interpreting each other's indications;
3. social acts, whether individual or collective, are constructed through a process in which the actors note, interpret, and assess the situations confronting them; and
4. the complex interlinkages of acts that comprise organization, institutions, division of labor, and networks of interdependency are moving and not static affairs.

Such are the antecedents of the family systems perspective, but more current metaphorical comparisons have emphasized an inescapable inter-relatedness that ties family members together by birth, not choice, into a system that seeks continual balance as a whole. Whenever one "part" moves another is affected. For example, Minuchin suggested that "we live our lives like chips in a kaleidoscope, always part of patterns that are larger than ourselves and somehow more than the sum of their parts" (1984, p. 2).

Making another comparison, Satir (1988) illustrated family connectedness by placing family members in a relationship represented by the artist's hanging mobile. The mobile has various parts that hang in balance as long as each part steadfastly maintains its relative, stable distance; however, movement of the smallest part affects the whole. Similarly, when a family member begins to develop, to change, and to move, each family member is affected by the process. This development is apparent in the years of the family life cycle in which there are adolescent members, especially when children enter their teenage years (Erikson, 1959). Therefore, an understanding of the family life cycle is also essential to understanding the family system during this period. McGoldrick and Carter's (1989) view of the family life cycle offers insight.

The Family Life Cycle

Transitional stages in the family life cycle are relevant to analysis of data from a family systems perspective because these stages offer distinct challenges to family members and the family as a whole. Each stage offers potential for family growth and development, but each stage also offers potential for stress (notably Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Duvall & Miller, 1985; Hill, 1949; and Hill & Mattessich, 1979). According to family life specialists Carter and McGoldrick, these stages can be identified as six major transitional periods in family life:

- when the single young adult leaves home;
- when families are joined through marriage: the new couple;

- when families have young children;
- when families have adolescents;
- when children are launched from home and the family moves on; and
- when families move into later life (See 1989, p.15).

The inquiry proposed by this writer focuses on the family's adolescent stage when stress is often associated with changing family boundaries, which are described as the family's "physical or psychological limits that regulate access to people, places, ideas, and values" (Galvin & Brommel, 1991, p.27). At this time, healthy family development depends upon boundaries flexible enough to allow for the development of each family member, and young teenage children generally stretch these boundaries to investigate diverse ideas and relationships (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). During this period, the family's shared communication is vital to the family's health, but seldom is it more difficult to achieve.

Family experts provide insight. Strong and DeVault (1992) suggest that marital satisfaction generally reaches its lowest ebb during this period. Further, Duvall (1985, 1988) says that family morale and motivation vital to healthy family continuity and growth both become difficult at this time. To work through this period, resources are needed, especially resources that encourage communication: the "symbolic transactional process of

sharing meanings which under girds and illuminates the structure of kinship relationships" (Galvin & Brommel, 1991, p.49).

Goodman's (1983) television research, which studied the family with young children at home from a family systems perspective, was unique among family research of its day, and Fabes, Wilson, and Christopher (1989) indicated this rarity after their content analysis of family journals, which revealed an overall lack of television/family research. Based upon their analysis, they asked family specialists to re-examine television's role in family life. They had analyzed the content of five major family journals that were sponsored by National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) finding only 22 articles between the years 1950 through 1987 addressing issues concerned with television and family life. Of these articles, none explored the potential of television as a "valuable asset" to family life (p. 34) and for this reason, Fabes et al. urged family specialists to initiate aggressive investigations to "maximize television's potential and minimize its undesirable effects" (p. 338).

Although family specialists did not respond heartily to this request, communications researchers continued investigations of family interaction with media, especially television, and responded to the findings of Bronfenbrenner. Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) inquired into whether television interfered with the family's interaction and socialization in such a manner that it threatened healthy family life, as Bronfenbrenner, 1973; Goldsen, 1977; Maccoby, 1951; Mander, 1978; and Winn, 1977 maintained. Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi also considered the opposite stance. Positive and healthy family interaction had been reported

after analyses of similar data through the research of Friedson, 1953; Glick and Levy, 1962; Lull, 1980; Riley, Cantwell, and Ruttiger, 1949. This discrepancy in findings prompted a need for further research. To this end, Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi collected and analyzed extensive correlational data concerned with family interaction and television viewing. These analyses specifically examined the relationship between the significance of heavy or light family viewing to the family's sense of well being, and their findings generally supported the view that television harmonized with family life whether viewing was heavy or light (1990). However, it is important to note that there were no simple answers reported.

Generally, the Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi research supported findings that for many families television provided a chance for interaction, a sense of family well being, and an opportunity for shared laughter, sorrow, anger, and conversation (Friedson, 1953; Glick & Levy, 1962; Lull, 1980; Riley, Cantwell, and Ruttiger, 1949). But this was not the complete picture. Some adult viewers complained that a spouse would rather watch television than have a discussion, talk, or listen, and Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi responded that without television the spouse would probably hide elsewhere (1990). The newspaper was given as an attractive alternative.

Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi further indicated that their evidence did not support the idea that heavy television viewing signified poor family relationships. In fact, these data showed that frequent television viewing by teenagers was positively correlated with better feelings toward

the family (1990). In earlier communication studies, insight into the *adolescent* audience was provided, and in some instances, the family was studied at home as media were used.

Communication Research Proceeds From "Uses and Gratifications" to Ethnographic Inquiries

Among communication scholars, research interests have often included the child and adolescent audience; therefore motivational scales were developed in the mid-1970s to determine why children viewed television. However, this "uses and gratifications" approach focused on the children and did not involve the family as a unit.

First, British and later American adolescents were asked to rank viewing motives on motivational scales and to answer open-ended questions about viewing (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1977, 1979, 1981). Generally, findings suggested that adolescent viewing was most often motivated by habit and a desire to pass time, followed by a desire for relaxation or for excitement.

During the late 1970s and continuing into the 1990s, certain communication scholars, using ethnographic methods, investigated how entire families interacted with television and VCR video at home. Prominent among these was Lull, who developed an analytical typology based upon extensive observation of family viewing. This observation indicated three levels of "ritualized extension" simultaneously affecting viewers and their viewing process: the family's culture, the household itself, and individual personalities of family members (1988, p.258). Lull's concept of ritualized extension was dynamic and reflected changing

agendas presented by the culture, the household, and the person, and for this reason, each family viewed TV as distinctively expressing its unique extensions (p.258).

Lull attempted to know families on their own terms, in their own homes, and with this degree of intimacy, he noted growing consistencies in viewing patterns among different families. Based on these patterns, Lull suggested a major social trend: Western World families may prefer staying at home in the evening for entertainment, and the VCR increased options, provided viewer control, and added interpersonal dimensions to the viewing process (1980, 1988, 1990).

Supporting Lull's approach to understanding audience reception of mass media, Jensen (1987) suggested that the meaning of any mass communication should be studied as a variable dependent upon its recipients, who applied alternative frames of reference. Seen in this way, audience reception involved such a wide range of factors that it required description and interpretation according to specific data. To accomplish such an understanding of a mass communication audience, Jensen suggested participant-observation, interviews, and focused discussions, modeled after those used with the analysis of the television program, *Dallas*, where small groups of friends (usually six persons) discussed interpretations (1987).

Gunter and Levy (1987) recognized expanding options for family audience research during the middle and late 1980s when VCR technology was readily adopted by families throughout England. Central to their inquiry was the question of whether a family's use of its VCR resembled

its use of off-air television. They asked specifically if VCR viewing were a family group phenomena, who viewed with whom, and what was watched.

A combination of methods was used to investigate more than 400 VCR households throughout England. An initial interview with each household explained how to keep a weekly video-viewing diary. A second interview focused on VCR behaviors and attitudes toward media. Families kept their diary over a two-week period and also responded to questionnaires. Findings indicated that use of the VCR was most often a "privatized media experience" (p. 491) associated with individuals in the family. Some exception was noted for adolescents who preferred viewing with peers.

These findings differed significantly from later survey data that looked at patterns of viewing rented videos. Later rental data suggested that 50% of VCR viewing was shared in the company of family members (Einsiedel & Savage, 1988).

Family viewing of video cassettes by participating families in Great Britain suggested gender issues. Ethnographic research revealed that British women, who returned tapes that were selected by their husbands, discovered titles that they would prefer renting. Consequently, they formed female viewing clubs and gathered to watch their selections when children and husbands were at school or work (Gray, 1987).

Commenting on the complexity of understanding video and television viewing in the family setting, Lindlof et al. (1988) observed that television offered the family one occasion when all family members could

gather together naturally, creating an audience. Paradoxically, this ethnographic study also revealed that television offered family members an occasion for separating from one another, if not physically, then mentally. Data from diaries and interviews complemented these later observations. Therefore, Lindlof et al. suggested that video investigations involving members of the family need to be studied on different levels. On one level, the individual family member's perception of video is significant; on another level, the social context of the family viewing is significant. Both levels are necessary to advance an understanding of complexity of family viewing. The interaction of family members needs to be observed in the viewing process.

Lindlof et al. (1988) emphasized that relationships were created and recreated through family interaction. These communication frameworks were established uniquely and jointly by family members and deserved distinct consideration. According to Lindlof et al., maturational levels of family members offered an additional influence on family viewing, and for families with adolescent members, the VCR introduced a new area of family negotiation (1988). For example, viewing specific video content or recording certain programming on the VCR offered particular potential for negotiation between parent and adolescent. Media control became a more pressing family issue as children matured into adolescence.

Correlating telephone survey data, Lin (1988) reported that American teenagers who were the most active VCR viewers stated that they had control over what videos they rented and programs they taped. VCR families in this survey represented a cross-sectional group

representing all economic and social stratas in America. Continuing correlational studies and regressing variables, Lin also looked at the VCR's function and role in American family entertainment (1992, 1993). Lin questioned how viewer satisfaction was achieved among those families who were heavy, gratified VCR users (1992, 1993). Findings suggested that both interpersonal discussion and rental activity were significant when the family was well satisfied. Lin suggested that further studies might investigate VCR-use discussions within the family in order to better understand a family's communication patterns.

Looking at family communication through the eyes of adolescents, Morgan et al. (1990) surveyed over 900 adolescent students in 1985, with a follow-up of those available in 1988. Questions focused on VCR and television use in the family, family cohesion, and family communication as perceived by these adolescents.

Family conflict and communication were explored in a global fashion through survey items, then in the more specific fashion by questions of family viewing. Findings indicated that the VCR could play different roles in the family's interaction. For example, at times the VCR was used to avoid family conflicts--but at other times, its use created family conflicts. Adolescent family members who frequently used the VCR were often found to be argumentative. Findings also suggested that from 1985 to 1988, availability of a family VCR, which was easily accessible to adolescent respondents, had increased from 29.9% to 89.4% (Morgan et al., 1990, p.92). The dominant reported family use of the VCRs was the viewing of rented videotapes.

More recently, Jordan (1990, 1992) adopted a family systems perspective to investigate family interaction with mass media at home. Using ethnographic methods and in-depth interviews with parents, Jordan became a participant-observer with participating families, who had at least one child 12 years of age or younger at home. All families had ready access to television and at least one VCR. One major finding emerging from Jordan's research was the significance of a family's perception of time as a family resource. The amount of media used by the family and the family rules surrounding media use were significant (Jordan, 1992). In the social domain, findings indicated that the VCR played a notable role in patterns of family interaction, since the content viewed was discussed outside viewing time (Jordan, 1990, 177), and for some working parents, the VCR became the child's companion when s/he was alone. Jordan observed that a "symbiotic relationship" between media behavior and family life existed and was tied to the larger family system at home (Jordan, 1990, 177).

The significance of a family's media time was emphasized in Jordan's later analysis (1992). For participating upper-middle class families, time was viewed as a precious commodity that they valued highly. Therefore, parents from this social economic stratum often created rules to limit their children's media use, which children seldom followed (1992). However, these parents were not particularly concerned with media content.

On the other hand, participating families from less affluent social economic strata were most concerned with media content, and hardly

concerned with how much time was devoted to media use. These families tended to live continually "plugged-in" to a mass media environment while they engaged in other activities simultaneously.

From these different outlooks on time, Jordan suggested that a family's temporal ideology was revealed by the family's rules: either limiting the amount of time spent with media or skipping rules related to how long media were used. Such a temporal ideology implied at least the importance of time in a family's value system and offered evidence of diverse patterns of family interaction in the media environment at home.

In 1990, Heintz looked at the issue of parental control and wondered if parents attempted to control media use at home with the rental or purchase of video cassettes that they played for their children in place of commercial broadcast or cable television programming. Heintz hypothesized that if parents were dissatisfied with the broadcast and cable programs watched by their children, the VCR could be used to provide alternative, acceptable viewing. After a secondary analysis of telephone survey data, this hypothesis was not upheld. Heintz's analysis indicated that most parents selected from video cassettes which mimicked commercial television and cable programming because these were the only choices in local retail outlets.

Using a combination of methods to investigate VCR use in the homes of preschool children between 4 and 6 years old, Krendl et al. (1993a) asked whether the children perceived parental rules associated with the VCR and whether children could operate the VCR. Individual interviews with children were conducted in an interview room where a

VCR was available, family interaction with the VCR was observed in family homes and documented in case study format, and in-depth interviews with parents (separately and together) were conducted.

Distinct and diverse perceptions of family rules concerning VCR use emerged from these data. Each of the children observed at home expressed confusion over VCR rules or perceived no rules. However, all parents thought that they had established rules. In each case, the mother's role in media use was revealed. In each family, it was "Mom" who took an active interest in television and video content. Mom changed television channels and monitored video content, and she appeared to accept this responsibility as a part of her role as a mother, whether or not she worked outside the home.

These researchers concluded that the VCR could be controlled by parents, but parents could also use it to empower children, to encourage them to exercise their own authority over viewing content and length of viewing. Although participating families were similar to each other in social class, economic standing, and education, their interactions with television and video were diverse with the exception of the mother's role as video monitor. On the issue of whether any of these preschool children could operate the VCR at home without help, the necessity of parental or adult support was observed.

Summary

The American family's interaction with television and video cassette viewing in the home has attracted inquiries from human ecology and mass communications for just over four decades. The research

findings of human ecology's child and family scholars generally indicated that television played a detrimental role in family life (Bronfenbrenner, 1970, 1973; Rosenblatt & Cunningham, 1976). These findings suggested that television often interfered with healthy family interaction and that television viewing offered families a handy way to avoid confrontation and conversation when the set was tuned-in and the family was watching (Rosenblatt & Cunningham, 1976). Later family studies looked at television from a different perspective. These studies offered a family systems perspective, which included an examination of the roles television played in family life, especially when the children were young. Sometimes, television took the role of companion for family members, but occasionally, it also took on the role of mediator or boundary marker, which demonstrated family decision-making and rules (Goodman, 1983). More recently, communications research adopted the family systems approach to understanding family interaction with the media.

Attempting to advance studies of families with young children and the media, communications researchers selected a family systems approach to look at television and the VCR use in the home. Findings indicated how family rules developed to govern television and VCR viewing, how mom often played the most decisive role in selecting material for viewing, and how some higher income families perceived time as too precious a commodity to devote to television or VCR viewing for any extended time period (Jordan, 1990, 1992).

Communications studies of VCR viewing that included families with teenage children supported the position that VCR viewing provided

opportunities for healthy family sharing and interaction, but some exceptions were noted (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Such contrasts pointed to the complexity of family viewing and complemented the findings of Lindlof (1987, 1988) and Lull (1980, 1988, 1990).

For families with adolescent members, the VCR offered rich potential for negotiation (Lindlof et al., 1988). Parents and teenagers held distinct and often differing views of which videos were the best selections. Additional investigations found that family discussions of which videos to rent and which programs to tape for later viewing encouraged greater satisfaction among family members (Lin, 1992, 1993).

The significance of attempts at parental control of family viewing in the home has been established, especially with families that include young children (Goodman, 1983, Krendl et al., 1993a, Jordan, 1990, 1992). However, family structure and processes reflected by rules concerning viewing at home when children are teenagers has not been investigated. This suggests a need for further study. During the period when families include young teenagers, parents may encourage teenagers to facilitate the technical aspects of VCR use. In addition, they may adjust rules that were established when teenagers were young children and allow teenagers to make decisions concerning video content. Further investigation can reveal whether parents empower teenagers to facilitate VCR use and to select their own video content during this family life stage. Such a study of media rules and VCR control in the family can also reflect the challenges experienced by the adolescent family in transition.

No study has looked specifically at ways the VCR reflects how the family system is organized and functioning during the family's adolescent years (i.e., when at least one member is from 13 to 15 years of age) and no study has looked specifically at the way family viewing patterns affect the communication process during these adolescent years. However, the family's reality at this time, reflected through patterns of VCR viewing, can provide researchers with insight into the family system during this period of development. Therefore, this study offers a vehicle for gaining insight into how the family grows, how boundaries change, how family roles are acted out, and how the communication process is revealed through family patterns of VCR viewing at home.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To investigate family roles, rules, and relationships suggested by VCR viewing patterns of American families with young teenagers at home, a combination of methods was selected. These methods focused on the video viewing patterns established by the participating families in the natural setting of their homes; however, children also were interviewed individually in a school setting where they were freer of parental influence.

Following the ethnographic methods of family studies suggested by Jordan (1990, 1992) and the in-depth interview methods suggested by Krendl et al. (1993a), I sought two-parent families who were willing to participate in this investigation. Two-parent families were chosen since both the mother's and the father's roles contribute to potential balance within the family system. Such family balance may be enhanced by the distribution of parental duties, which may be divided when two parents take part in the family system (Minuchin, 1984; Satir, 1988).

Sample

Participating teenagers and several of their families were solicited with the cooperation of the Chattanooga public schools, particularly The Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (CSAS), which attracts families of various racial and ethnic backgrounds including white, black,

Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian families. The school also was selected because it reflects the ethnic and economic diversity demonstrated by the city of Chattanooga, and because the school's mission emphasizes the same quality, humanistic curriculum for all students from the city of Chattanooga and Hamilton county. This mission is grounded in the recommendations found in *The Paideia Proposal* (Adler, 1982).

The Proposal advocates quality education for students from every neighborhood in a democratic manner, and CSAS has offered city and county students in grades K-12 this opportunity on a first come, first serve basis since 1990. It is important to note that until CSAS opened its doors in 1986, admitting middle school students (grades five through eight), *de facto* segregation affected the public school system in white and non-white Chattanooga neighborhoods.

Parental and student attraction to the CSAS magnet school was influenced by its mission, and in 1994, the racial balance of student applicants was 51% majority and 49% minority (Patterson, 1995). The "majority" for Chattanooga was "white" according to the *1990 Census of Population and Housing* that was issued by the U. S. Department of Commerce. The "minority" included black, American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic residents.

All human subjects considerations required by The University of Tennessee and described in "Form B" were strictly observed, and consent forms were required of all participants who were apprised of the voluntary nature of their participation. Copies of all consent forms are available in Appendix A.

Twelve teenagers from CSAS participated in individual face-to-face interviews for this study. Six of their parents also participated in individual face-to-face interviews and responded to the same questions considered by their teenage sons and daughters. (Questions used in interviews are available in Appendix B.) Five of the six parents interviewed and five of their teenagers kept individual VCR viewing diaries over a five-week period following their in-depth interviews, and diaries provided data that were compared. Finally, two parents invited me to become a participant-observer in their homes when their families or family members viewed videos.

Procedures

To begin this investigation, I contacted principal Bill Kennedy at The Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (CSAS) and presented an overview of my research project, then I asked for the school's cooperation in helping me find young teenagers and their families who might participate in my study. Mr. Kennedy suggested that vice principal Everette Correll could facilitate my study best because he taught history to young teenagers in the 13-to 15-year-old age range that was of interest to this research.

Mr. Correll agreed to help me and introduced me to other classroom teachers who cooperated as I searched for consenting parents and teenagers who might agree to be interviewed. With the written consent of parents and their sons or daughters, I pursued the first component of my study, individual face-to-face interviews with student volunteers. I elected to make my first acquaintance with each family

during my individual in-depth student interview, which gave me the teenager's perspective of how VCR viewing fit into family life at home.

Mr. Correll also provided a quiet room in the school library where in-depth student interviews could take place, and he prepared a letter of cooperation from the school in compliance with human subjects requirements. A copy of this letter is available in Appendix A.

Several seventh and eighth grade teachers allowed their 13-to 15-year-old students to consider participating in interviews during their tutorial (study) periods. Mr. Correll also coordinated the distribution and retrieval of parental consent and confidentiality forms that were sent home through the students and required parental signatures before the interviews began.

These forms explained that as a doctoral student in communications, I was conducting research that I proposed could lead to insight concerning the family through its VCR viewing patterns at home when children were 13 to 15 years old. In the consent forms, I explained how the research would proceed. First, I would conduct in-depth interviews with volunteer students in a face-to-face meeting in the school library if parental and student permission were granted. All interviews would be recorded on audio tape with the participant's permission to assure accuracy in the transcription process. Next, I would conduct face-to-face, in-depth interviews with volunteer parents in their homes or places of business wherever they preferred. I explained that I would ask teenagers and participating parents the same questions.

Those parents who chose to participate in the parental in-depth interview component of this study indicated their interest by offering their phone number and best time to call at the bottom of the teenager's consent form. A brief description of the whole study was outlined on the written consent forms so parents and teenagers could make an informed decision before signing.

Individuals and families were assured that they could drop out of this study at any time for any reason without any negative consequence. A copy of all consent and confidentiality forms is available in Appendix A.

Statements and questions which guided the separate interviews of participating teenagers and their parents were recorded on audiotape with their permission. Later, recordings of these interviews were transcribed for analysis of pertinent data. A complete interview guide is available in the Appendix B, and the following statements and questions were included:

1. Is your home a two-parent household with both parents living at home?
2. How are videos selected for viewing in your home?
3. Tell me about any rules that your family has concerning VCR viewing or the type of videos you watch at home.
4. Who is with you when you watch videos at home?
5. Sometimes, do you actually prefer to watch videos alone?

6. What types of videos/films do you like to watch with other family members--or just by yourself?
7. Does your family ever watch videos/films together?
8. Do you ever discuss the videos/films that you watch?--when? --with whom?
9. Tell me about VCR viewing in your home.
10. Would you be willing to keep a daily video cassette recorder (VCR) viewing diary for several weeks noting what videos you view at home; when you view; who is with you--if anyone is with you when you view; where you view in your home; and what else you may be doing while you view?

Analysis of In-depth Interview Data

When student and parent in-depth interviews were transcribed, the text was processed through open coding and axial coding to allow a core concept to emerge as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). All in-depth interview texts proceeded through three levels of analysis that required textual coding, and this process began with open coding, continued through axial coding and progressed through selective coding. As this process progressed, a core category emerged, which eventually contributed to the development of a core concept.

Open Coding

First, open coding established and named categories from participants' comments that connected family roles, boundaries, and relationships to the process of VCR viewing in the home. During this first level of coding, each transcript was analyzed line by line, and from this analysis the following six categories were named and color coded because they were consistently notable in interview texts. The open coding categories and their corresponding colors were as follows:

1. that VCR viewing brings family members together (RED);
2. that VCR viewing separates family members (BLUE);
3. that there is interest in and concern for video content (GREEN);
4. that family boundaries are reflected by VCR viewing (BROWN);
5. that VCR control, especially control of the remote device, provides some sense of power or authority to some family members (ORANGE);
6. that VCR viewing mirrors family growth and change (PURPLE).

After transcripts were marked during open coding and appropriate colors were used to underline corresponding passages, each category was visually apparent with the amount of text related to it quite evident. Categories were noted on index cards and separated by color. Page number(s) and line number(s) of passages were also noted on these cards. This method of organization proved most helpful when axial coding merged categories into notable relationships contributing to the eventual discovery of a core concept.

Axial Coding

After open coding has been accomplished, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest analyzing in-depth interview data in a new way, especially taking into account connections between categories, then combining categories (or collapsing one into another) where distinct similarities prompt a new, more inclusive category. This step is accomplished with the help of a coding paradigm. First, the paradigm asks for an investigation of causal or antecedent conditions preceding the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the paradigm suggests looking at the context of the phenomenon. This is followed by a determination of strategies used by persons involved with the phenomenon, and then the consequences of these activities are assessed (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 99).

An additional component of this study was introduced to participants following each in-depth interview. A VCR viewing diary was discussed as a means of comparing the parents' and the teenager's viewing at home along with any viewing by family members together. A sample diary was available for each participant to consider. Responses to diary items were requested daily over a five-week period, therefore responses might indicate viewing patterns, and if the viewing patterns of parents and teenagers differed, they could be compared. Diary items included: title or type of video that teenagers and parents chose to view; with whom they viewed videos; where they viewed in the home, and when they viewed. Participants were also asked what other activities took place while videos were viewed. Six teenagers and six parents agreed to

keep separate viewing diaries during their interviews, and five teenagers and five parents from the same families actually kept separate diaries that were returned to me. A compilation of VCR viewing diaries and their results is available in Appendix D.

The final, ethnographic component of this study was accomplished when two parents volunteered their families for the participant-observation phase of this research. They invited me to join them for VCR viewing in their homes. Both parents agreed to this component of my study during their in-depth interviews. With this agreement, I gained an opportunity to view VCR videos with two families or family members on three separate occasions with each family. My observations were transcribed immediately after each viewing session and the results are available in Chapter IV.

Data were analyzed from the family systems perspective suggested by Jordan (1990, 1992), who related ethnographic data and in-depth interviews concerning family viewing patterns to the organization of the family system observed. Both Krendl and Jordan used methods which included participant-observation, and this allowed each to become a part of the family at home over a period of time, which made their observations less obtrusive.

Like Jordan (1990, 1992), I took a family systems perspective when analyzing data, but my study was unlike Jordan's in regard to the age of children in participating families. Families in this study represented the adolescent stage of family life, and participating children were between 13

and 15-years-of-age. Jordan focused on families with children whose average age was 7.8 years.

All participant interviews were recorded on audio tape and transcribed, and confidentiality of those interviewed was assured. Because these data were confidential, names of participants were not revealed when data were reported, and recorded tapes were kept in appropriate locked files in the office of the transcriptionist, then moved to the broadcasting department of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where they were erased upon completion of this study.

Daily VCR viewing diaries that were completed by teenagers and their parents were kept in locked files in the broadcasting department until the project was complete. Upon completion, these diaries were also destroyed.

The text of the face-to-face interviews with teenagers and parents provided extensive data for this study. Ethnographic observations were added since two families agreed to allow me to join them for participant-observation of VCR viewing in their homes on a total of six separate occasions during the summer of 1995. Data from interviews, diaries, and observations are reported in Chapter IV.

A check list which suggests family viewing patterns through observable family behavior included the following points:

1. Who "takes charge" of VCR viewing by operating the remote control to play the tape, to *zip* through commercials, to rewind and review a specific segment, or to *zap* to an alternate source of video?

2. Who seems *concerned* with video content?
3. How are videos selected for viewing, especially if several are available?
4. How do viewers react nonverbally with gestures, body language, or glances during viewing?
5. How do viewers react verbally with comments, remarks, or exclamations during viewing?
6. By whom and with whom are videos viewed?
7. Where do viewers sit (and with whom) during playback?
8. How is video content perceived and discussed before/after viewing--if any discussion precedes or follows?
9. Are any family rules or boundaries observable during the selection and playback of a video?

Adopting the triangulation of methods suggested by Denzin (1978), this study brought data from four different sources to bear on each issue related to the basic research question. For example, data from in-depth interviews with young teenagers and their parents were compared. Next, these data were compared further with data from VCR viewing diaries kept by participating teenagers and their parents. These data were also compared with ethnographic observations of VCR viewing at home. Such

a triangulation of sources strengthened findings on individual issues like the mother's role in the VCR viewing process. Corroborating data in this manner revealed significant relationships and provided insight.

Such triangulation of data was incorporated into the studies of Jordan (1990, 1992) and Krendl et al. (1993). Their studies, like mine, analyzed in-depth interviews with a coding schema suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), then results were compared to information from diaries and participant-observation of viewing in the home. Using this triangulation of methods and data, a core concept eventually emerged from my own data, which was supported by interviews, diaries, and participant-observation.

Goodman (1983) and Jordan (1990, 1992) clearly opened the door to further investigations of the "symbiotic relationship" that exists between video use and the family system. However, these researchers focused primarily on significant family relationships suggested by television and VCR viewing patterns of families with children 12 years of age or younger. I have looked specifically at VCR viewing by families in the adolescent stage of family life when teenage children may contribute to the family's most volatile period. Insight is provided by my investigation that can help families understand the normalcy of the challenges families face during the period when the children are young teenagers.

Carter and McGoldrick (1989) have indicated that the transitions experienced by American families in this adolescent stage are critical. Boundaries once appropriate to younger families undergo a period of change that is critical to the family's well being during its later adolescent

stage. As this change progresses, families can evolve from more rigid boundaries to loosened boundaries that expand to allow adolescent teens to develop and grow.

VCR viewing patterns developed by American families in the adolescent family stage can reflect the changing family system. For example, any family conflict or dispute related to which video is viewed, when it is viewed, how long it is viewed, or with whom it is viewed may indicate changing family boundaries/rules.

With a family systems perspective, this study collected and analyzed data to explore the family viewing process. Family roles, rules, and relationships were demonstrated--from parental nurturing to adolescent questioning of family boundaries as presented in the Chapter IV. Interview data were coded and textually analyzed to determine the significance of answers, revealed by consistently repeated words or phrases and absolute statements made by participants. These analytical methods are suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Observational data gathered during family viewing sessions provided additional visual and aural data that were compared with in-depth interview data and analyzed from a family systems perspective. These observational data suggested family roles, family relationships, and family boundaries that were demonstrated through the VCR viewing process.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter begins with the results of twelve individual, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with young teenagers. Following these data, the results of individual, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with six participating parents are presented. Tables are then provided to compare the comments of teenagers with their parents. After this comparison of in-depth interview data, the results of the axial and selective coding processes are presented. Next, the results of VCR viewing diaries that were kept separately by teenagers and their parents are presented. The chapter concludes with the results of ethnographic observations, which were gathered through my participant-observation of two families who invited me to join them during VCR viewing in their homes.

Open Coding of Teenage In-depth Interviews

The first six teenagers, who are introduced, participated in this study individually without their parents. An additional six teenagers participated individually, but their parents also participated and volunteered for individual, in-depth interviews. All teenage volunteers did have written parental permission to participate, and they gave their own consent before individual, in-depth interviews at school during tutorial periods. Data from the open coding of these interview texts follow. The names of all teenagers and their parents have been changed to

preserve their anonymity. In addition, other identifying details including the occupations of parents have been disguised.

Christa Cambre is a 13-year-old, African-American female, who is from an intact, two-parent home. Christa's mother is a grammar school teacher and her father works for a local car dealership. Christa is one of two children living at home, and her brother is 15 years old. The family has one VCR playback unit in the living room.

During the interview, Christa seemed to express what is nowadays called an attitude toward the interview, toward me, or both. For example, as she considers interview questions, she leans back in her chair away from me and looks skeptical, almost defiant. She seems to venture a little trust when I assure her that I will never divulge her name. At that, she smiles and says that when it comes to selecting video movies, she would rather watch movies "about black people" than any others, and she adds, "no offense." Boys 'N' the Hood is one of the video movies she watches with her friends, but she quickly adds that she also likes to watch "scary" movies with her brother.

When I inquire whether she ever watches videos with other family members, she says that mom sometimes "picks out movies that we all watch," but those are "mostly [movies] that she would like to watch." Christa has watched Piano and Prince of Tides with her mom and her brother.

These comments contribute to the first level of analysis, open coding. At this level categories are suggested based on the participant's

interview text, however these categories are subject to the second and third level of analysis.

From Christa's comments at the first level of coding, two categories are clearly suggested. **One category, that VCR viewing can bring family members together, and a second category, that VCR viewing can separate family members.** For instance, mom lets Christa know that she has no interest in "scary" movies, but Christa enjoys watching this type of movie with her brother.

In all, six categories are suggested by the comments of participants, and these categories suggest family roles, rules, or boundaries affecting the family, as well as family relationships. Interest in and concern for video content becomes an identifiable **third category**. Christa prefers watching "scary" movies with her brother and "movies about black people" with her friends. But her mom is interested in new releases that she thinks may interest the whole family. However, according to Christa, mom also expresses concern about video content, and this suggests a **fourth category, any rule or family boundary concerning videos**.

Christa does not believe that her family has definite "rules" that pertain to VCR viewing at home. Yet, she mentions, "My mom, she lets me get what [video content] I want, but just no intercourse." According to Christa, her mom says, "I know what I can and can't watch." This lends support to the fourth category, family boundaries.

The issue of taking charge or control of the VCR suggests a **fifth category**. In Christa's view, the remote control device is not a major issue in her home since "whoever gets there first" [to the remote] takes control.

But when she watches videos with her mom and her brother, she admits that mom is inclined to take control of the remote, to replay a scene, or to explain some part of the video.

A sixth category, video content and VCR use indicate that the family is growing and changing, is also suggested by Christa's comments. This category is supported by Christa's mention of her mom's ban on videos that demonstrate explicit sexual content. "She lets me watch what I want, but just no intercourse." That the family is growing and changing is also suggested by the fact that Christa cannot think of a time that dad watches video movies with the family at home. Perhaps, the father defines himself as the principal breadwinner during this family life stage and allows little time for entertainment with family members.

Kim Leader is a 14-year-old Caucasian male, whose mother is a special education teacher and whose dad works in insurance. Kim is from an intact, two-parent family and has one sister who is 15 years old. Kim's dad works in insurance and travels a great deal, which Kim believes makes him "man of the house" when dad is away. The family has three VCR playback units at home, one in the living room, one in Kim's room, and a third in mom and dad's room, but Kim says that he usually watches videos in the living room with his sister, and "that's mainly it," especially when they "entertain" themselves on weekends.

When asked if viewing ever brings the whole family together, Kim notes that mom sometimes "joins in" and watches with him and his sister, but dad is usually "too tired." Therefore in **category one**, VCR viewing brings the family members together, Kim's comments indicate

that viewing with his sister is "mainly it." Sometimes mom joins in, but the whole family does not view videos together.

Asked what makes him decide to watch video movies, Kim mentions boredom, especially when he stays at home "sick," and when there's "nothing on TV." Comedies and horror movies are his favorites. His collection of videos includes Forrest Gump and "all of Freddy Krueger and Jason" movies.

Since video movies featuring Freddy Krueger or Jason are notably bloody and sometimes called "slasher" movies, I ask Kim whether his mom expresses any concern over his watching movies like these. Kim claims that mom allows him to watch Freddy and Jason because she knows that he doesn't "take too much belief in it." Although he does not recall any rule or family boundary when he views videos at home, Kim admits that mom usually watches [videos] before he does "to see that it's O.K."

From Kim's comments, **category two** becomes apparent that VCR viewing can separate family members, since mom does *not* view "slasher" movies with Kim. However, mom does preview some videos before Kim watches them. For this reason, the **third category** is indicated because mom demonstrates an interest in and concern for video content by previewing some videos before they are viewed. Although Kim does not recognize any family boundaries or rules associated with VCR viewing at home, this **fourth category** is demonstrated because mom previews certain tapes before Kim watches them. The **fifth category**, control of the VCR, especially the remote device, is very important to Kim. He makes it clear

that he is in control, especially when he watches with his sister. Although both of them apparently get along quite well, she "wants to fast forward through the gross parts" of some horror videos that Kim wants to watch, so he says that he keeps close control of the remote. The **sixth category**, video content and VCR use indicate that the family is growing and changing, is also demonstrated by diverse family interests in video content and Kim's specific interest in VCR control. Some "scary" video content concerns mom while Kim finds it acceptable and entertaining.

Among relationships between members of the Leader family, Kim's relationship with his sister appears to be positive and companionable as indicated by their mutual VCR viewing on weekends. Kim mentions that they "entertain" themselves with videos, and their interest in the horror genre indicates a pattern among young teenagers in this study, whose taste in video movies often turns toward "scary movies" as the family enters the children's teenage years.

Linda Larkin is a 14-year-old African-American female from an intact two-parent home. She is an only child, and her mom works as an administrative assistant for a non-profit agency. Her dad holds a position at a manufacturing plant. There are two VCR playback units available in the Larkin home, one in the den and the other in "daddy's room."

When Linda thinks about the question of whether family members watch videos together in her home she says, "Sometimes, my daddy'll be with me." Asked if her mom ever joins in VCR viewing at home, Linda giggles and says, "Un-uh, [No]." Therefore, **category one**, that VCR viewing brings family members together, is indicated by Linda's remark

that her dad sometimes views with her. However, interview data also support **category two**, that VCR viewing separates family members since Linda says that her mom does not watch with her and dad. In addition, Linda uses a serious tone of voice to relate that "most of the time, I'm by myself" watching videos.

Category three, interest in and concern for video content, is demonstrated when Linda describes the types of movies that are her favorites. These are "comedies, mostly comedies," she says, but she also mentions watching The Bodyguard, which she calls "a drama." She does watch "Westerns and old movies" with her dad. Sometimes, she adds, she watches "scary movies" like Freddy Krueger with her dad, but mom will not watch anything like that with them, which indicates mom's concern for video content.

Mom's concern for video content can be related to **category four**, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs. It is apparent that mom views movies like Nightmare on Elm Street as a genre whose content she personally will not watch. But she does not express any rule that limits Linda's viewing this content, and Linda and her dad do choose to watch movies like these. In regard to category four, Linda does recognize two family rules: first, that she can watch videos when homework is done; second, that she can watch videos when the kitchen is clean.

Category five, that someone takes charge or controls the VCR, seems funny to Linda. She giggles while she explains that she is in control of the remote device and that she likes to fast forward through the previews at the beginning of the video. She says that she also likes to

rewind/replay funny scenes to see them again. Asked whether dad ever tries to use the remote control, Linda says, "He'll try to use it sometimes, but I get it back!"

Finally, the **sixth category, video content and VCR use indicate that the family is growing and changing**, may be indicated by the way Linda describes selecting rental tapes at a Blockbuster Video store. She explains this process saying that she usually goes to the store with her dad, but "Sometimes," she says, "I leave him, and then I come back and show him what I want and see if he'll let me get it." She is exploring independent selections, then looking for approval.

Kerry Lane is a 14-year-old African-American female from an intact two-parent home. Her dad works in industrial administration, and her mom holds a secretarial position. Kerry is the youngest child in the family, and she has two older sisters, one 15 years old, the other 19. The family owns one VCR playback unit.

After Kerry considers which family members are usually with her when she views videos at home, she comments, "My sisters are--my mom and my sisters." Asked whether dad ever watches with them, Kerry says, "Umm--He'll come in--like every once in awhile but not really." When I ask if dad's taste in video movies is just different from all the females in the family, she responds, "Uh, yeah!" Based on these comments, it appears that **category one, VCR viewing brings family members together**, is supported by VCR viewing behavior in this home since Kerry views with her sisters and her mom. **Category two, that VCR viewing separates**

family members is supported simultaneously since dad does not really sit down and join his wife and daughters while they are viewing.

Category three, interest in and concern for video content is expressed when Kerry explains that she, her sisters, and her mom prefer new releases when they rent video movies, and when they make a selection, she says that they especially look for comedies. However, these selections do not attract dad's attention long enough to encourage him to sit down and watch an entire feature. Although the horror genre is also available to mom and the girls, mom makes it clear that she does not like any Freddy Krueger type movies, but she does let the girls watch what they want according to Kerry.

When it comes to a question of family boundaries or rules, **category four**, Kerry doesn't think that her family has any established VCR viewing "rules," but she is very clear that mom does not like Freddy Krueger type VCRs. **Category five, who takes charge of VCR viewing or controls the VCR**, is indicated when Kerry explains that she has some control of the VCR remote device. For example, she likes to replay scenes when she thinks that something is funny, and she likes to rewind the tape.

Category six, video content and VCR use indicate that the family is growing and changing, is demonstrated by mom's allowing her daughters to make decisions concerning which videos to rent and view. For example, mom makes it clear that she does not like the horror genre ". . . but she lets us watch what we want," according to Kerry, which suggests that mom is loosening viewing boundaries regardless of her preferences.

Matt Sanders is a 14-year-old Caucasian male from an intact two-parent home. He and his brother are twins and the only children in the family. Matt's dad works for a chemical company and his mom works for a company that teaches computer skills. There are three VCR playback units available in Matt's home, one in the room that he shares with his brother, one in his mom and dad's room, and one in the basement.

When asked who is with him when he watches VCRs at home, Matt responds, "Uh, just maybe my friends or Mark, my brother, maybe." "You and your brother," but "Do you ever watch with your mom?" Matt says, "Un-uh, I probably **never** have." In addition, Matt volunteers that dad doesn't care much about videos. He says that dad doesn't watch them, and "he just doesn't want to spend the money," on video rentals.

Category one, that viewing brings family members together, is not strongly suggested by Matt's remarks. Sometimes, he says that he may watch with his twin brother, but he adds that he watches videos alone, especially when his twin is "staying a night somewhere," and then he can watch whatever he wants without negotiating with his twin on video content. **Category two, that viewing separates family members**, is strongly suggested by Matt since he "probably never" watches videos with his mom. Matt also volunteers that "dad doesn't care much about videos" and doesn't watch them because he thinks that video rental is too costly.

The video content that Matt really likes is comedy, and one sample title that he recalls watching recently is Dazed and Confused, but he also mentions liking video movies like Wes Cravens' Nightmare on Elm

Street. These preferences demonstrate **category three, interest in and concern for video content**.

There is also evidence of **category four, any rule or family boundary related to the VCR** because Matt remarks that when it comes to picking out titles at the video rental store, his mom and dad have definite rules. These rules are first, that he and his brother must agree on the video they choose, and second, that they show their selection to mom and dad before it's rented. Mom sometimes selects titles for herself, Matt adds, but dad is not interested because he thinks that VCR rentals are too costly.

Asked whether mom or dad are concerned about video content like Nightmare on Elm Street, Matt claims that he can watch horror movies, but he thinks that his mom and dad have other concerns. An additional indication of a family boundary is expressed when Matt remarks that his parents "don't want me to watch stuff that's like, you know, has nudity in it, stuff like that," he says.

Category five, who takes charge or controls the VCR, is not a major issue in this family according to Matt. He says that the real issue is finding the remote. Usually the remote control device is hard to find since it falls down into the couch. As the result, whoever finds it takes control. Finding the device, itself, is more of an issue for these twins than who is in charge.

Category six, video content and VCR use indicate that the family is growing and changing, seems evident because mom and dad take an interest in video content and look over the twins' selections before they are rented. They also let the boys know that they have some concern

about "nudity." However it seems clear that the family is developing into the adolescent stage when Matt adds that "well, yeah, I go over to friends, [and] they [mom and dad] don't know most of the movies I've seen."

Tami VanDyke is 14 years old, "going-on-15," she points out. She is a Caucasian female from a blended, two-parent home, and she is the only child living at home although she has a sister, who is 24 years of age and a brother, who is 20 years old. Tami's parents have retired from a nationally recognized group of entertainers, and they now own and operate their own performing arts academy. The family has two VCR playback units, one in the "den" and one in Tami's parent's room. (A third unit is available in the academy but is seldom used by the family.)

Tami initially comments on how family members become involved with VCR viewing at home, and she makes it clear that her family does enjoy viewing as a family on some occasions. Therefore, **category one**, that VCR viewing brings the family together, is suggested, however Tami explains in greater detail. "Oftentimes, we look for the old classics at Blockbuster's--movies that we all like to watch." And during Christmas break, she adds, when her brother and sister come home for a visit, "We watch videos that involve the family like new releases, or old movies like the good old black and white ones." . . . "We like those!" Tami also offers evidence of **category two** that VCR viewing separates family members.

Most specifically, I ask if Tami's parents watch videos with her at home, and she says, they do when the VCR selection "is not something silly." Both mom and dad do watch videos with Tami at times. On the

other hand, Tami also watches by herself. For example, when she gets up early on a Sunday morning, she entertains herself with videos. "I'll just pop in one of my favorite movies or something," she says, and she owns her own collection of tapes including some favorites with Judy Garland.

Besides Judy Garland, Tami likes musicals and "classics," but she also enjoys new releases and comedies; her taste and her family's taste is reportedly wide ranging, which demonstrates **category three, interest in and concern for video content**. For instance, she and her dad like comedies including Speed Racer, but she and her mom prefer musicals and new releases like the latest Little Women. When it comes to the horror genre, Tami thinks that she has "outgrown" video movies like Nightmare on Elm Street. However she remarks that her dad and her brother have "bonded" by watching horror selections like Child's Play and Child's Play 3. Therefore, it appears that viewing certain video content can bring some family members together in a bonding experience. At the same time, certain video content can encourage other family members to choose another activity.

Tami thinks that her dad and her older brother are trying to get to know each other better by watching videos, since her brother is her dad's step-son. When they watch horror movies, Tami says, "They both have fun." They seem "to bond."

It also seems important to Tami to let me know that her parents are "not really into violence and killing," but there are some action-packed video movies that they do watch, like Streetfighter. "My mom even has the urge to see something kind of like that," Tami says.

When Tami considers whether the family has any rules or boundaries related to VCR viewing, which I assess as **category four**, she recalls when she was younger. Then her parents would caution her that she wouldn't want to see movies with too much [bad] language or violence. She also recalls that when she did try to see these types of movies "behind their backs," she had to admit her parents were right; she didn't want to see movies like those.

Tami thinks that her parents have helped her make her own decisions about what video movies to choose and which movies to see at the theatre. Recently, she was a little surprised that they not only agreed to let her see Schindler's List, they went with her to the movie theatre to see it. Similarly when Tami shows them a video movie that she wants to watch before it is rented, they may read the tape box and tell her that she can watch it if she "feels comfortable" with it. Tami thinks that both parents treat her very responsibly.

Category five, taking charge of or controlling the VCR, is not a serious issue in this family according to Tami. She giggles when she comments on who is in control of the VCR remote. She claims that she is in charge because her mom doesn't "want to fiddle with it" and doesn't want to have to put her glasses on. On the other hand, dad knows how to make the VCR and the remote work, but he has taught Tami what he knows, so he doesn't have to bother. Tami finds all of this rather funny, but she does recognize that both parents are often very tired when they get home, and she can help them, she says with a twinkle in her eye, "do the manual labor of pushing buttons or using the remote."

Tami's family demonstrates growth and change as mom and dad loosen boundaries on what video content Tami may select. This provides evidence related to **category six, video content and VCR use indicate that the family is growing and changing.** Tami does seem mature for her years, and she recognizes that she is affected on some occasions by "moods" and at other times by almost childlike fancies. She also recognizes that her parents treat her as if she were responsible, especially when it comes to movie selections and video content.

Teenage Volunteers whose Parents also Participated

Web Carrol is a 14-year-old male, whose mom also volunteered to participate in this study. His mom, Mrs. Jody Carrol, is 48 years old. Web's family is Caucasian and represents a two-parent intact home. Web is the youngest child in the family with an older brother who is 30 years old, another brother who is 25 years old, and a sister who is 22 years old. Web has been the only child living at home during the past school year, since his brothers have moved away from home, and his sister lived in a college dorm.

Mr. Sam Carrol, Web's dad, is a computer programmer and his mom, Jody, is a secretary. The family's combined household income is approximately \$65,000 to \$70,000 a year. The family has one VCR available in the living room at home.

In assessing Web's comments related to **category one, that VCR viewing brings family members together,** Web remarks that he is usually alone when he views videos, however he says, "sometimes, my mom watches 'em with me." When I inquire whether dad ever joins in the

viewing, Web replies that dad is "just not into this." Looking at **category two, viewing separates family members**, dad simply does not seem interested in VCR viewing according to Web.

It is notable that Web seems happy, and he is animated when he describes viewing videos by himself. His expression never hints of loneliness. He explains that he rents the greatest number of video movies for viewing on weekends. He chooses "about two or three" selections so that he can "watch 'em in the middle of the night."

Category three, interest in or concern for content, is supported by Web's description of what he prefers to watch when he is alone (or when a friend his age comes to visit) and what he chooses to watch with his mom. When he is alone or with someone his age, Web says that he enjoys "horror" like Army of Darkness. Along with horror, Web also likes Godzilla, which he describes as movies that he tapes off TV with the main character, Godzilla, who is a "big lizard." Web explains that he likes to laugh at Godzilla because the movies are so "cheezy" that they are "not scary but funny." On the other hand, when he views with his mom, Web says that they usually watch comedies that they both like.

Web does not perceive any rules concerning when he views videos or how long he watches, but his comments do support **category four, family rules or boundaries related to VCR viewing** in regard to content. For example, when Web discusses video rentals, he says that "me and my mom pick out videos to view." Adult or "X-rated" movies are considered out of bounds, Web says, but **now** he can select "R-rated" titles.

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, is an important issue to Web. He explains that he is in control. For instance, the family's universal remote control, which is supposed to control the TV and the VCR, "will sometimes get out of whack with the VCR," Web comments. However, he knows how to fix it although his mom does not. With a twinkle in his eye, Web adds that when he wants his mom to do something for him, he won't fix the remote until she does what he wants.

Web's comments concerning video content are supportive of category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change. He explains that mom now allows "R-rated" titles among his "recent" movie selections. Therefore, mom seems to be accommodating Web's personal development, and he seems to recognize that she is loosening a boundary.

Beth Flood is a 14-year-old female from an intact, two-parent Caucasian family. Both of Beth's parents work outside the home. Mrs. Bonnie Flood, who also participated in this study, is a 46-year-old insurance consultant at a nearby hospital. Beth's dad works for a federal government agency. The family's combined household income is approximately \$60,000 a year. Beth has one sister who is 18 years old. The family has one VCR available in the living room.

Beth comments on who watches videos with her when she is at home and suggests that category one, VCR viewing brings family members together, is supported. She explains that usually, she and her sister watch videos together, but once in awhile mom joins them at least for a little while. Further evidence that is based on Beth's remarks

suggests that **category two** is most apparent in this family, viewing separates family members. For instance, Beth comments that she, her sister, and her mom can seldom agree on what video content to watch so the three of them seldom watch together. She and her sister can agree on what to watch most of the time so they enjoy watching together. According to Beth, dad is generally not interested in going to the VCR rental store or viewing with them.

When she considers viewing alone, Beth remarks that "sometimes I just go into moods like, I want to be by myself [and] watch a good movie." Her light-hearted manner when she describes her "moods" indicates that she simply enjoys being alone once in awhile. She seems to look forward to time by herself.

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is strongly affected by who is viewing videos. When Beth is alone, she says that she likes old musicals like The Wizard of Oz and "loves" Disney movies. However, when Beth is watching with her sister, they tend to watch what she calls "thrillers" like Pulp Fiction.

Beth is also aware that violent video content really bothers her mother, which relates to **category four, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs**. Although Beth says that she and her sister can make their own decisions about what to view, there have been occasions when mom has said, "No, I don't really think that you want to see that." That was the case with Natural Born Killers. Mom saw the previews of that movie on another video and would not allow the girls to rent it.

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, is not a serious issue according to Beth. For example, when it comes to the VCR remote device, Beth explains that "whoever gets to it first uses it." Beth also observes that since she is not old enough to drive, her mom or her sister, sometimes both, go to the video store with her, and this means that they have some control over the content of tapes that are rented.

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, is supported by several of Beth's comments. She mentions that she, her sister, and her mom often disagree about video movie content. Mom prefers less violent selections, but both Beth and her sister sometimes want to view a "thriller." Beth also seems to crave a time that she can watch by herself, and this may suggest her progress toward autonomy. She remarks that "When I watch by myself, it relaxes me." She adds with a laugh that when she watches videos alone, she can just sit there and pigout!"

Don Hoover is a 15-year-old, Caucasian male from a two-parent intact family. Both of his parents work outside the home. His mom, Teri, is a hair dresser, 45 years old, who also volunteered to join this study. His dad, Gary, is an engineer with the telephone company. Don has one brother, who is 24 years of age, who is married and no longer living at home. This family's combined annual household income is approximately \$70,000. The family has three VCR playback units available in the home: one in the den, one in mom and dad's bedroom, and one in Don's room--although the one in Don's room is portable, and he moves it

to the basement on occasion, especially when he looks at videos with friends.

Don offers comments that relate to **category one**, viewing brings family members together. He mentions that the family rents "a lot of tapes," and that the whole family views videos together "when we just want to relax"... "or if we just wanna spend some family time together." However, Don's VCR viewing is not limited to watching with family members.

Category two, VCR viewing separates family members, is also supported by Don's remarks. His comments indicate that the video content chosen either encourages or discourages family viewing. For example, Don explains that his mom does not like "action adventure" videos, and his dad does not like "horror" so they do not watch these types of movies together. Don adds that "what we can agree on" watching is most often comedy or "mild action."

Don also speaks enthusiastically about viewing videos at home with his friends. They often prefer watching "horror" but "nothing terribly gross," according to Don, and since he is the only one in his group without a driver's license, they can drive to the VCR rental store and select whatever they choose free from parental approval.

Mom and dad's interest in particular kinds of video content brings attention to **category three**, interest in and concern for video content. However, Don's personal interest in and concern for video content provides additional insight into **category three**. When Don describes his favorite video movies, he looks very serious for a moment, then says,

"I'm not sick or anything," but "I like movies like Helter-Skelter and um Natural Born Killers." He admits his diverse taste in video content and says that besides "thrillers," he also enjoys comedies, realistic Japanese animation, horror, and movies with "abstract" story lines. By "abstract," he says that he means movies that portray society through symbols.

Don considers any rule or family boundary concerned with VCR viewing, category four, thoughtfully. He remarks that "as far as movies go, my parents have never restricted me 'cause they don't believe in that." He adds, "they trust me to make, you know, a good choice." When Don refers to his parents, he seems genuinely respectful, and he mentions, "I don't rent anything that I think is garbage so far."

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, does not seem of much significance to Don. When he considers who takes control of the remote control device, he says, "whoever picks out the movie, I guess." On the other hand, Don does admit that he likes to rewind the tape to look at it again if it's funny, and he adds that his dad also loves to rewind the tape, so that's why the family won't give dad the changer.

Don's comments offer particular insight in support of category six, video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change. For instance, Don remarks that he was homophobic; he says, "it's just the way I was raised." However, he continues to explain that he learns a great deal from video movies. He reflects that until he saw Philadelphia, he always pictured homosexuals as "really bad people," but after watching the video with his dad, he views homosexuals in a more positive light. He believes that he understands much more as the result of seeing the video movie.

Cathy O'Reilly is a 14-year-old Caucasian female from an intact, two-parent, family with both parents working outside the home. Her dad, Paul O'Reilly, works as a real estate agent. Her 44-year-old mom, Lou, who also volunteered for this study, works as an administrator for a local college. The combined annual household income for the family is around \$80,000. The family has three VCR machines available: one in the family room, one in mom and dad's room, and one in the family van.

Cathy has one brother, who is 13 years old and one sister, who is 15 years of age. Because of a common interest in soccer, Cathy and her 13-year-old brother appear to be very close, almost like twins.

Cathy comments on who watches videos with her, and her remarks strongly support **category one**, VCR viewing brings family members together. She explains, "We mainly have it like a family thing to view [videos]." Cathy continues, "Sometimes we eat dinner while we watch videos--we'll like stop to clean up the kitchen or the family room, then start it [the VCR] again." She adds that when the family goes on long trips, she watches movies in the van with her sister and her brother to stay occupied. For Cathy viewing videos is "a major part of" family gatherings, "'cause that's what we do for fun, mostly, or playing soccer."

Category two, viewing separates family members, is suggested when Cathy describes the different types of video content that family members prefer. She and her brother really like the action genre, especially Top Gun, but dad likes Natural Born Killers or similar fare, while mom prefers comedy. According to Cathy, she and her brother are sometimes allowed to rent selections that they alone want to view, and occasionally,

mom and dad rent a video that is exclusively for themselves. She also mentions that her brother separated himself from the family to watch The Mask in the family room, but she suggests that any family member's viewing alone is unusual.

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is strongly affected by video content and who is viewing videos in this home. Cathy discloses that mom "doesn't like us to watch movies that are really bad, but we can watch "R" movies as long as they [parents] preview it" or co-view. Video movies that are labeled "slasher" movies are not a concern in this home because no family members like this type of movie. Therefore, no slasher movies are rented for viewing. Still, Cathy, her brother, and her dad really do enjoy realistic action dramas.

In regard to **category four, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs**, Cathy's comments do demonstrate boundaries in viewing. These boundaries are closely tied to video content. Cathy explains that mom "doesn't like us to watch movies that are really bad, but we can watch 'R-rated' movies" when mom and dad preview the material or join-in the viewing. Family boundaries concerning content are acted out in the video rental store. "When we pick out a movie, we show it to my mom," Cathy admits, and mom makes the final decision on whether it is acceptable. Generally, video content, especially "nudity," does not get mom's approval according to Cathy, but "killing and blasting people away is not a problem" in her view.

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, does not really concern Cathy. She comments that "dad normally has the VCR

remote control" because it gets lost so often that "he doesn't trust anybody else with it." Cathy smiles when she adds, "We've bought a couple of TV remote controls."

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, is demonstrated through Cathy's comments. When she mentions video content that she thinks mom and dad find objectionable for the whole family to view, she says that mom usually does not approve of "nudity." In Cathy's view, mom is not as concerned with action-adventure content even when it includes violence like "blasting people away." An additional indication of family growth and change is given by Cathy's 13-year-old brother, who rented The Mask, and went to the family room to watch it by himself. When she describes what her brother did, Cathy sounds like she thinks his viewing alone is both daring and funny.

Will Smalley is a 13-year-old, Caucasian male. His family is an intact, two-parent family with both parents working outside the home. His dad, Eric Smalley, who is 47 years old, is the only dad who volunteered to participate in this study. Eric works with adolescents as a guidance counselor in the public schools. His mom, Mary Smalley, teaches in the public schools. Their combined annual household income is approximately \$60,000. There are two VCRs available in this home.

The Smalley family includes three children. Thirteen-year-old Will is the oldest. His younger brothers are 5 years old and 7 years old.

When Will discusses viewing videos at home, his remarks indicate support for category one, VCR viewing brings family members together.

The type of videos selected relate to whether or not the whole family watches according to Will. For himself, new releases, animation, and horror videos are among his favorites, and he says that dad likes "a lot of the same things" so they watch many selections at the same time.

Although Will does not think that his taste for horror videos worries his mom and states that she views this type of video with him, she prefers the action of a Grisham video.

Category two, viewing separates family members, is suggested when Will describes animated types of videos. Will says, "Uh, I usually watch the animation by myself. . . They're the kind of things kids watch."

Japanese animation is what Will says is best, and he watches these videos by himself or with friends, and he adds, "I *never* watch it [animation] with my family."

Interest in or concern for video content, category three, is demonstrated by Will's particular preferences in VCR viewing. New releases, Japanese animation, and horror videos are among his favorite types, and the titles he recalls point to his wide ranging taste. For example, he is equally enthused to relate that he has watched The Lion King more than once, but The Shining by Stephen King has also been a favorite. In addition, movies about space, like Star Wars have captured his attention.

Category four, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs, is reflected in Will's comments. For instance, Will says, "There are some things that we don't watch [like] real bad violence," and Will adds that mom and dad "usually have to be with us to watch some things" [like

Jurassic Park]. But on the whole, Will claims, "They won't let us watch anything in the world, but they are really loose."

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, is of some concern to Will. He comments that "whoever gets to it first" is in charge of the remote, but the process involves more than that. Will explains, "We do have a bunch of controls...like a control for the cable box, a control for the TV, a control for the stereo, a control for the VCR, and then we've got a control that controls them all." Will continues to explain that he doesn't let his friends know about the master control, "because if I did and if I grabbed the control of the TV, then they could just grab the all purpose controller, and it'd be a big control battle." Will especially likes the idea of being in control of the VCR remote because he says then "I also get to, uh, fast forward through any commercials."

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, is particularly indicated by Will's discussion of Japanese animation on video. He makes it clear that he prefers to watch these videos by himself or with friends, so I ask him to tell me more about the contents of these videos. Will responds that the stories concern "heroes and people," but he says, "I never watch [this type of video] with my family."

Gary Ulman is a 13-year-old, African-American male. His family is a blended, two-parent family with both parents working. Mom, Ramona Ulman, who is 42 years old, also volunteered to participate in this study. She works from their home where she manages a licensed day care center for pre-school children. Step-dad, Larry Ulman, works for a federal

government agency. Their combined annual household income is approximately \$50,000. Four VCRs are available to the family: one in each bedroom and a fourth in the kitchen. The daycare also provides a VCR for the daycare children's entertainment.

There are two children in the Ulman family. Gary is 13 years old, and he is Mr. Ulman's step-child. Gary's step-sister is 7 years of age, and she is the natural child of his mom and step-dad.

Category one, VCR viewing brings family members together, receives only limited support from Gary's comments. As a family, Gary says, "We'll start out watching a movie [VCR] together, but something'll come up, like the phone'll ring." He continues, someone will "wind up having to leave." Gary also remarks that he has watched videos with his 7-year-old sister, but that did not workout well because she "talks a lot."

Gary emphasizes **category two, viewing separates family members**, when he explains that he usually goes to his room to watch videos alone. He adds, "We're kind of a busy family. . .all working and doing different things," so there is no time to sit down and watch videos together.

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is evident when Gary discusses the types of VCRs that he really enjoys. His favorite type is horror although he also likes some "funny ones." When I inquire why he particularly enjoys "scary" or horror types, Gary comments that these videos help him escape "boredom," and the horror genre "keeps me from going to sleep."

When he discusses whether he thinks that his family has any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs, **category four**, Gary pauses, then

answers in a fairly forceful manner. From his point of view, the only rule that seems important is, "Just keep your mouth shut while the movie's on!"

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, is not a serious issue with Gary nor is it difficult to determine. Gary explains, "It depends on whose room you're in. . . [since there is] one [VCR remote] in each bedroom" [and in the kitchen].

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, is reflected in several of Gary's comments. He describes where he usually watches videos as "my room" where he watches by himself. In addition, Gary makes it clear that his "dad" is his step-dad, and in Gary's view, the family members as a group are "all working and doing different things," which makes it difficult to view any video together as a family.

A Summary of In-depth Interviews with Teenagers

Textual analysis of in-depth interviews with all teenage participants revealed distinct patterns in their responses and comments. Remarks were generally offered by teenagers in response to my guided interview questions, but often their remarks were quite spontaneous. The following summary presents an overview of the teenagers' comments as they relate to each of the six open coding categories.

An analysis of responses related to **category one, VCR viewing brings family members together**, revealed that only one teenager enthusiastically claimed that VCR viewing was *most often* a "family

thing," which involved *all* family members. More often, teenagers explained that they watched alone or with a sister or brother.

When parents and teenagers did view together, mom was usually the person who sat down and watched videos with the teenager. Dad was notably missing during VCR viewing at home according to all but four of the teenage participants.

When teenagers made comments related to **category two, viewing separates family members**, all participants indicated that video content was the major key to family viewing, viewing alone, or viewing with sisters and brothers. For example, families, who viewed together, often selected new releases, comedies or action-dramas. However, when young teenagers viewed alone or with their sisters and brothers, "horror," or "scary" videos were prominent choices. (One teenager reported that her dad and step-brother had "bonded" by watching "horror" videos.) Japanese animation was also a favorite among three participants, who chose to view this type of video alone or with friends.

It is worth noting, that all of these teenage participants gave me the impression that they enjoyed some time alone. Viewing videos alone did not indicate to me that they were at all lonely. They enjoyed finding a time to be by themselves.

Category 3, interest in and concern for video content, is suggested by the types of videos that teenagers said they prefer. Most teenagers distinguished between which types of videos they prefer to watch alone or with siblings and which types they prefer to watch with parents. Comedies and new releases were most favored for viewing by teenagers and parents,

bu horror and "scary" movies or Japanese animation were more often chosen when teenagers viewed alone, especially teenage males. In contrast, three teenage females who viewed videos alone selected a different type of VCR as their favorite. Each of these young women preferred old movie "classics," especially musicals, now available on VCR.

Three teenagers also mentioned that they were allowed to watch "R-rated" VCRs, especially when their parents previewed the material or watched with them. However, these participants did *not* seem to seek "R-rated" selections, they were more interested in letting me know that they were now grown up enough to view these selections.

Category four, family rules or boundaries related to VCR viewing at home, was demonstrated by teenagers' comments. For instance, explicit sexual content was considered out of bounds, and three teenagers believed that their parents would object to videos that involved "nudity." I believed that teenagers referred to sexual content when they used the term, "nudity." Besides boundaries concerning sexual content, teenagers recognized family boundaries concerning violence. However, teenagers understood that they could usually watch whatever they chose, even "R-rated" movies, when their parents previewed the material or viewed with them. This was particularly the case when one teenager watched Philadelphia with his father although homosexual conduct was not approved in his family.

Family rules concerning VCRs, like when to watch VCRs or how much time to spend viewing, were not recognized by any of the teenage participants with one exception. This exception was a young teenage

female, who said that she had "to do her homework" or "clean the kitchen" before viewing.

On the whole, **category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR**, was an amusing, even funny issue with female teenagers. This was not typical of three teenage males, who preferred being in charge of the remote control. Two of these young men usually watched videos with female family members, and both of them wanted to make sure that they were in control. The third young man explained that he wanted to stay in charge of the universal remote device and believed that there could be a "big power battle" if any teenage male friend learned about the universal control, which could control all of the other remote devices.

Comments that related to **category six, video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change**, included references to viewing alone. All but one participant, who was a teenage female, commented on viewing alone. Participants said that viewing alone provided a time to relax, to complement a mood, or even to "pigout." Teenagers also mentioned that the content, which they chose to view alone, was often "scary" or "silly" and sometimes included Japanese animation or old movie "classics," but the content chosen for viewing with the family was different. Family viewing usually included new releases or comedies.

It was also important to young teenage participants to let me know that their parents would *now* let them view "R-rated" videos, especially if the parents previewed the material or viewed with the teenager. However, none of the participants emphasized "R-rated" selections as they

recalled titles of their favorite selections. It appeared that they simply wanted to seem grown-up.

One teenage male retold how he had experienced what he perceived as significant growth and change when he viewed Philadelphia with his dad. He claimed that he really learned a great deal about what it was to be a homosexual male and that before he watched this video, he had been "brought up to be homophobic."

Open Coding of In-depth Interviews with Parents

Jody Carroll is a 48-year-old Caucasian female, whose two-parent home is intact. Her education includes a bachelor of arts degree, and she works full time as an administrative assistant. Jody is the mother of four children including her 14-year-old son, Web, who participated in this study. Her husband works in middle management, and the family's yearly household income is approximately \$65,000. The family has one VCR available in the living room.

Web is Jody's youngest child, and her two older sons, who are 25 and 30 years of age, no longer live at home. Jody's 22-year-old daughter has just finished college and has just returned home.

Jody's comments during the in-depth interview consistently supported the remarks that her son offered in his interview. When her comments related to **category one**, VCR viewing brings family members together, Jody said, "Oftentimes, I watch what they're watching," referring to viewing videos with her teenage son and daughter. Jody explained that she enjoyed any opportunity to spend some time with her son and

daughter and that she was especially happy now that her daughter was at home.

Category two, viewing separates family members, is suggested when Jody discusses the types of videos that she prefers. She particularly likes romantic stories with "happy ever after" endings but usually watches that type of content alone because Web is not really interested. However, now that her daughter is at home, she thinks that they may sometimes watch romantic videos together.

Jody notes that Web has always been a late night person, and he sometimes watches videos alone in the middle of the night, especially on weekends. At other times, he may go to his room where he can play video games while she watches a romantic video. Commenting on Mr. Carrol's participation in VCR viewing, Jody says simply, "He doesn't do videos at all."

Jody's interest in or concern for video content, **category three**, extends beyond her fondness for romantic video content. When she watches with family members, she often enjoys the action-adventure genre, which is like "Indiana Jones stuff," according to Jody and more recent Disney offerings like Beauty and the Beast. However, when it comes to the horror genre, Jody makes herself clear by saying, "I don't do horror." Still, she is aware that Web likes to watch horror movies, especially when he views videos by himself.

Category four, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs is demonstrated when Jody explains that Web shows her his selections at the video store before they are rented. If he has picked a title that she thinks

may be objectionable based on what she has read or heard, she tells Web, "I don't think that we need that one today." The Freddy Krueger type horror videos do not significantly concern Jody because Web has demonstrated little interest in them. She explains that he prefers science fiction horror, "not the bloody gory, *now* horror."

Jody has established no rigid rules regarding VCR viewing. The time of day or night when videos are viewed or how long they are viewed is not a concern, and Jody knows that Web prefers late, late night viewing after the rest of the family is asleep. Content is the only area that Jody monitors in the video rental store, but she seems genuinely comfortable with the majority of the selections that Web chooses.

Jody does not consider who takes charge of or controls the VCR, **category five**, "a real life and death matter." Still, she admits that there is "a big argument" about who controls the VCR remote device now that her daughter has returned home. Web thinks that he should control the VCR remote, but her daughter also wants control. "Whoever is near it" usually takes control, Jody admits.

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, is indicated by Jody's discussion of family members' varied tastes in video content. Jody explains that she tries to be aware of the videos that Web brings home to view and tries to make sure that his horror videos are "not too graphic." Still, she finds his taste in videos understandable for his age, and she recalls that they used to watch silly movies like Caddyshack when the children were much younger.

Bonnie Flood is a 46-year-old Caucasian female whose two-parent family is intact. She has two teenage daughters, one who is 14 years old and the other who is 18 years old. Both daughters are living at home. Beth, the 14-year-old, participated in this study.

Bonnie's answers to guided interview questions and her general comments do not consistently agree with her daughter's comments. The greatest area of discrepancy involves the types of videos that mom thinks her younger daughter prefers.

Bonnie has a bachelor of science degree and works part time for a nearby hospital. Her husband works for a federal government agency, and their combined annual household income is approximately \$60,000. There is one VCR available to family members in the living room.

Bonnie's comments reflect **category one**, VCR viewing brings family members together, when she remarks that she and her older daughter are most likely to view videos together. She believes that her younger daughter is more interested in reading, but she does recall that the whole family may watch White Christmas over the holidays.

Category two, viewing separates family members, is suggested when Bonnie repeats that her older teenage daughter is her usual viewing companion, and her younger daughter is usually not too interested in viewing. She adds that her husband "seldom sits down and watches it" [the VCR]. Further, she comments that her husband never goes to the video rental store with her and wouldn't "know how" to rent videos.

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is most apparent during Bonnie's interview. On the positive side, she enjoys

what she calls, "period pieces." Her favorites of this type include The Age of Innocence and Passage to India. She says that she also likes "James Bond type" action-adventures and mysteries, but her tone changes and becomes most concerned when she considers other genre.

On the negative side, Bonnie totally dislikes the horror genre, and she is totally against what she views as violence. She becomes more animated when she mentions Silence of the Lambs, and she explains that the content is too violent; all told, she says, "It's awful." Her older daughter adds that when they were watching that movie, mom "went to the VCR to turn it off."

"Bad language" in video movies is another area that concerns Bonnie. She claims that she tells her daughters that "the movie world is separate from the real world" and "people don't always use language like that in the real world."

Bonnie's remarks indicate **category four**, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs, when she explains that "she tries to watch for what is going on." However, she says that she allows her older daughter to view "R-rated" video content because "she is 18 years old." Even though "bad language" and [mature] "action" are of some concern to Bonnie, she is far more concerned about violence in video fare, which she judges is sometimes "abnormal," and which she does not want in her home.

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, is of little concern based on Bonnie's comments. "We take turns," she says, and "No one's really in charge."

Bonnie's suggests that most VCR viewing in her family is done by her older daughter and herself. It is Bonnie's perspective that her younger daughter is notably absent when VCRs are viewed. Therefore, **category six**, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, is suggested by Beth's absence. Bonnie nods to Beth's boyfriend, who is visiting while we talk, and says, "Beth is more apt to look at theatre movies [at a show house]" and "that's something that they can do together."

Teri Hoover is a 45-year-old Caucasian female, whose two-parent home is intact. Her education includes graduation from high school and beauty college. She continues to work two days a week as a hair stylist because she wants to maintain her skills and to stay up to date. Teri is the mother of two boys including her 15-year-old son, Don, who participated in this study. Her older son is 23 years old, married, and no longer living at home. Teri's husband works for the telephone company, and the family's yearly household income is approximately \$70,000. The family has three VCRs available to family members: one in the den, a second in the master bedroom, and a third, portable unit that is usually in her son's room.

Teri's responses to in-depth interview questions generally supported the remarks that her son offered in his interview. There was one notable exception. Teri described her husband as "Papa Bear," a person who expected to find the VCR remote device next to his easy chair, ready for him to take control of any family viewing. Her son maintained

that they tried to keep the remote away from dad because he tended to replay too many scenes.

Category one, VCR viewing brings family members together, is demonstrated by Teri's comments. She explains that "many times, Donny and I rent a [video] movie together." On other occasions, when Teri stops at the video rental store by herself, she may call her son on her mobile phone to ask if he wants certain titles.

Mr. Hoover does try to watch videos with his wife and his son, but Teri maintains that he is "soooo tired" that he usually falls asleep when he tries to join them. Recently, she went back to the video store and rented the *same* video again so they could all watch it the next night.

Teri's comments significantly relate video content to **category two, viewing separates family members**. For example, when Teri stops by herself at the video store, she may pick out titles that Don suggests but only he wants to view. She adds that even though he likes the horror genre, generally, he "has pretty good judgment."

One movie that Teri refused to watch with her son and her husband is Philadelphia. Teri reasons that life is so sad that she is not entertained by movies that are that sad and "about death."

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is evident in many of Teri's comments. Since she is not personally entertained by sad or tragic plots, she often finds enjoyment in comedies. Mrs. Doubtfire is one of her favorites. When she picks out videos for her son or her family, she avoids those that she suspects include graphic sex and those that she has heard involve graphic sex. However, she says that those adult

themes are not a major concern to her right now since her son really prefers futuristic movies, movies that involve robots.

Evidence of **category four**, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs, is reflected in Teri's responses. She will not rent videos that she determines involve graphic sexual content, but this type of video is not her real concern. On the other hand, there are other types of movies that Don is "forbidden" to see. These forbidden videos depict content with a Satanic influence, especially pure violence for the sake of violence. One title that her older son advises her to avoid is Gates of Hell, which he says has a "real underworld theme," and she respects his view. _

When I ask Teri who takes charge of the remote control for the VCR during family viewing, she laughs and says "that's a silly question; dad has the remote control by his chair." To support who takes charge of or controls the VCR, **category five**, Teri adds, "If he [dad] can't see that remote control there [by his chair] when he comes home from work, he says, 'Where's the remote?' She continues that here are exceptions to dad's VCR control. "If Don's rented the movie, and it's a space story, then Don may have it," and "If it's a love story that I rented, then I may have it." Still, she claims that *"99% of the time," dad is in control*, and "We try to see that no one is in 'Papa Bear's' chair and the remote is next to it when he comes home." Teri also comments that dad likes to replay a scene when he thinks that it is really funny, and she says, "We always do what he wants to do!"

In relation to **category six**, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change, Teri expresses confidence in her son's

judgment of "good" video content. What concerns her more during this interview is the fact that "he'll be getting his driver's license soon," but she consoles herself saying that in general, "he's pretty good at his choices."

Lou O'Reilly is a 44-year-old Caucasian female, whose two-parent home is intact. Her education includes graduation from high school, but at present she is also enrolled in a college degree program where she works. Lou is an administrative assistant for a local college. She is also the mother of three teenage children: a son, 13 years old; a daughter, 14 years old; and a daughter, 15 years old. Her middle child, Cathy, participated in this study. Lou's husband works in real estate, and the family's yearly household income is approximately \$80,000. The family has three VCRs available to family members: one in the family room, a second in the master bedroom, and a third in the family's van.

Lou's responses to in-depth interview questions and her spontaneous comments are most supportive of those offered by her daughter. Like her daughter, Lou's in-depth interview text reveals that VCR viewing brings family members together, category one.

Beginning with the time when the children were young, Sunday dinner was accompanied by a video that the whole family had chosen. Although Lou thinks that they are out growing that practice, she maintains that the teenagers seldom make individual choices at the video rental store. Videos selected are "all geared to everybody watching them." Lou explains further that viewing videos provides a "time-out" for family members, and "what that means in a time to share." She continues that

any family member can suggest a "time-out," and "even on a weekday, there may be an occasion for a movie night, then the school work and dinner work around that."

Category two, VCR viewing separates family members, is not suggested during this in-depth interview. From Lou O'Reilly's perspective VCR viewing is a family activity.

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is expressed when Lou explains that the family looks for video content that is "purely entertaining" whenever videos are rented. The family generally selects new releases or very old movies that Lou and her husband think the teenagers would enjoy. "We don't look to movies for moral messages," Lou adds. "I prefer that the children read those."

Besides rental videos, the family also enjoys some very old family film that has been transferred to tape. Lou comments that the teenagers especially enjoy seeing her mother, their grandmother, as a child. Those video transfers also help the teenagers understand that "mom and dad are really people, too," according to Lou.

Category four, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs, is expressed more in a positive way than in a negative way according to Lou's remarks. She claims that she and her family look for video movies in the rental store that are "purely entertaining." She and her husband do not attempt to "teach values" through movies or use movies for "moral messages." However, they do encourage family "time-outs" to share a movie with the whole family when things seem "crazy," and this almost

ritualistic activity does suggest creating an external boundary, separating the family from the hectic world outside.

Lou does not consider who takes charge of or controls the VCR, **category five**, a very serious matter. She says, "It's not a problem," and she adds with a broad smile, "I usually snatch it to keep the peace--that keeps me happy." But Lou does recall just a short time ago when she regularly used videos to accompany the family's Sunday afternoon dinner, and even today, she says that dinner with the whole family present is a serious goal that she strives to maintain.

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change is reflected in Lou's comments that she "used to use videos as a Sunday matinee" to accompany dinner, and she adds, "We've sort of grown out of that."

When we began the in-depth interview, Lou volunteered family background information that relates to category six. She explained that her family had "not always been a two-parent family." For instance, when the children were younger, her husband worked in Texas for two years while she and the children remained in Tennessee. She commented, "It was a difficult time." Her family's VCR viewing with dinner, especially at that time, appears to have filled a void. The VCR played a companionable role while her husband was away.

Eric Smalley is a 44-year-old Caucasian male, whose intact, two-parent family includes three sons, who are 5, 7, and 13 years old. Will, the oldest boy, participated in this study. Eric's education includes a graduate degree, and he is a guidance counselor for adolescent students in the

public school system. Eric's wife is a teacher, and the family's yearly household income is approximately \$60,000. The family has two VCRs available to family members: one in the living room and one in the master bedroom.

Eric's comments and responses to in-depth interview questions generally support the responses offered by his son.

When he considers who watches videos with him at home, Eric emphasizes the significance of the selection's contents. That VCR viewing brings family members together, category one, is supported by his comments, but which family members watch depends on what is being viewed. Eric remarks that "usually my wife, sometimes the kids watch" with him. Video content determines whether the whole family watches together.

Category two, VCR viewing separates family members, is suggested when Eric explains that the children usually prefer their own type of video content, which includes action and cartoon movies that are designed for children and don't really entertain him or his wife. He explains further that when the whole family goes to the video rental store, the boys pick out their own videos, but he and his wife rent movies for the whole family.

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is demonstrated by several of Eric's remarks. For example, he explains that his main concern is "not with any violent or sexual content *as much as* certain images, like really bizarre or graphic images." He further explains that he does not want his children to disregard violence or to "undervalue

how violence can hurt people in reality." But his major concern with video content viewed by children is "graphic, terrifying images, the kind that can show up in a nightmare." He looks extremely concerned when he mentions his assessment of Jurassic Park, and he says, "that really bordered on what I was comfortable letting my little ones watch."

Eric's personal preferences in video entertainment include movies that he describes as having "structured plots." One example he offers is Remains of the Day. But he also mentions his enjoyment of Forrest Gump, a movie that he selected for himself and his wife, but to his surprise, his 5-year-old joined in the viewing and became enchanted with Forrest. Eventually, Eric purchased a Forrest Gump video especially for his 5-year-old son.

Any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs, category four, is documented when Eric explains that "We're real liberal" on regulating VCR viewing. He explains further that he and his wife believe that the children may see *almost* any video, and "feel free to ask us questions, particularly sexual." He continues, "We're more, I guess, more restrictive on violence than on sexual content."

Category five, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, is not of great importance from the comments that Eric initially offers. "I don't know, gosh," he laughs. Then he thinks about the question and muses, "it's interesting the dynamics that go around a remote." He then supposes that mom is the person who controls the VCR and the remote most often.

Category six, video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change is reflected when Eric comments on why he thinks it is important

to discuss how "movie fantasy" differs with "reality" when he views certain videos with his boys. He suggests further that life differs from the movies because "movie people can just fly away when things get tough." In his view, that is certainly not life as he knows it.

Ramona Ulman is a 42-year-old African-American female, whose two-parent family is blended. She has two children, a 13-year-old son from her previous marriage, and a 7-year-old daughter. Her son, Gary, participated in this study. Ramona's education includes a bachelor of science degree, and she manages a licensed day care center from her home. Her husband works for a federal agency, and the family's yearly household income is approximately \$50,000. The family has four VCRs available to family members: one in her daughter's room, another in her son's room, and a third in the master bedroom; the fourth is in the kitchen.

Ramona's comments and responses to in-depth interview questions usually differed from the responses offered by her son.

The text of Ramona's in-depth interview supports **category one**, VCR viewing brings family members together. She explains that "whoever is at home" from her mom to nieces and nephews "just gathers" and watches video movies in her daughter's room because it's the largest. If the movie is not finished when it's time for supper, "We move to the kitchen, but we may bring the tape with us while we have something to eat."

Content draws family members together, Ramona's emphasizes. When she rented Forrest Gump, she thought that she was renting it for herself and her husband, "but everyone loved it." Her 7-year-old daughter

particularly liked this video and still repeats Forrest's line: "Like my mama always says, life is like a box of chocolates."

Category two, VCR viewing separates family members, is also suggested when Ramona discusses video content. Her daughter and son "go for scary movies," she says, but she and her husband look for "something with more depth." When Apollo 13 is available on video, she thinks that will have the depth she prefers. She adds that when her children are in their rooms alone as a punishment, she realizes that they are "just going to have fun and watch videos."

Category three, interest in or concern for video content, is quite evident in Ramona's remarks. On the whole, she says that the family likes funny movies and "good" scary movies. Ramona expresses great concern for video movies that she claims have a Satanic message. She continues, "I do not go for Freddy Krueger or Jason." Old classics, Disney animation and some action-adventure selections are among the choices that she prefers for family viewing.

Ramona's remarks do demonstrate **category four, any rule or family boundary concerning VCRs**. She explains that although she understands that her children's taste favors "scary" video movies, *she selects the titles* for them. Freddy Krueger "becomes too frightening," so she looks for others like Frankenstein. She also avoids any selections with "Satanic implications or misuse of Scripture." In addition, she mentions her concern for violent video content because she does not want movies "that give children the idea that they can die and come back!" (One of Gary's friends was shot and killed last year.) During the school year, Ramona

also determines when homework is done and when VCR viewing is allowed.

When she discusses, who takes charge of or controls the VCR, category five, Ramona laughs and says, "everybody." She pauses and thinks that answer over then continues and admits that her 7-year-old daughter is most often in charge. She adds that this "drives Gary crazy," but "she really has control." Further, her daughter will "look at previews or stop the tape to see something again and again."

Category six, that video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change is also indicated when Ramona describes her daughter. This little girl is "gifted, and she's bossy," mom admits. Then she reflects that Gary also drove family members "crazy" when he was little.

What is quite apparent, the 7-year-old is Gary's step-sister; her "bossy" manner is accepted by mom, but it does not please Gary.

The following tables compare typical comments made by parents and teenagers who responded to the same questions during their individual in-depth interviews.

Table 1: Open Coding**Category 1: VCR viewing brings family members together.**

Teenagers	Parents
<p><u>Web Carrol, 14 years old:</u> Usually, I'm alone, but sometimes my mom watches 'em with me.</p>	<p><u>Jody Carrol, mom:</u> Umm, oftentimes I watch what they're watching 'cause, I have Web [my son] home, and I, then I have Laura [my daughter] home now for the summer.</p>
<p><u>Beth Flood, 14 years old :</u> Usually, it's just me and my sister [who watch videos together].</p>	<p><u>Bonnie Flood, mom:</u> Janice [the older daughter] is more apt to [watch a video with me] than anyone else.</p>

Table 1 (continued)

<p><u>Don Hoover, 15 years old:</u> Umm, most often, [we watch together] when we just want to relax....or if we just wanna spend some family time together.</p>	<p><u>Teri Hoover, mom:</u> Many times, Donny and I rent a movie together. We did that this past week.</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Does dad ever sit down and watch with you?</p> <p><u>Mom:</u> Yes, but dad is soooo tired. He tried to sit down and watch one last week, and I had to take it back the next day, so I took it back and rented it again....We watched it with him the next night.</p>
<p><u>Cathy O'Reilly, 14 years old:</u> ...We mainly have it like a family thing to view [videos].... When we go on long trips, we watch movies in the van to keep us occupied. ...Both mom and dad sometimes pick out movies everybody can watch. Well, I think it's [viewing videos] a major part of my family 'cause that's what we do to, for fun, mostly, or playing soccer. Mm, well, if our whole family's there, sometimes we eat dinner while we watch videos--we'll like stop to clean up the kitchen or the family room, and then we start it again.</p>	<p><u>Lou O'Reilly, mom:</u> We used to use videos as a Sunday afternoon matinee. We would have our Sunday afternoon dinner with a video that we've all chosen. We've sort of grown out of that....[However] very rarely, do we go and get a video that one chooses this and one chooses that, and we spread our separate ways and watch our videos. They're all geared to everybody watching them. It's different members of our family that will periodically suggest a "time-out." And what we mean is time to share. We look for videos that are purely entertaining. Even on a weekday, there may be an occasion for a movie night; the school work and dinner work around that. We take "time out."</p>

Table 1 (continued)

<p><u>Will Smalley, 13 years old :</u> I go to the new releases, the animation, and the horror [at the video rental store].</p> <p><u>Researcher question:</u> And when you pick out the horror, [videos] does that worry your mom or anything?....</p> <p><u>Will:</u> Nope.</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> <i>Does she mom ever look at 'em with you?</i></p> <p><u>Will:</u> Yep.</p> <p><u>Research question:</u> What about your dad? Does he ever watch videos with you?</p> <p><u>Will:</u> Lots...He likes a lot of the same things I like.</p>	<p><u>Eric Smalley, dad:</u> [When I watch videos at home, those with me are] usually my wife, sometimes the kids, depending on what we're watching.</p>
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Table 1 (continued)

<p><u>Gary Ulman, 13 years old :</u> We'll start out watching a movie together, but something'll come up, like the phone'll ring. We'll wind up having to leave.</p>	<p><u>Ramona Ulman, mom:</u> <u>Researcher question:</u> Who is with you when you watch videos at home? <u>Ramona:</u> Whoever is at home!--my mom, Gary, Ciara, nieces, nephews. ...We just gather there [in the daughter's room, because it's the largest] or sometimes, we start looking at a movie, then it's time for supper, so we move to the kitchen, but we may bring the tape with us and finish looking at it while we have something to eat.... Yes, there are times [that VCR viewing brings the whole family together] like when I rented <u>Forest Gump</u>. Everyone loved that, and I thought that I rented it just for me and Mr. Ulman, but "CiCi" really loved Forest! She still says his lines..."Like my mama always says"...</p>
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Table 2: Open Coding

Category 2: Viewing separates family members

Teenagers	Parents
<p><u>Web Carrol, 14 years old :</u> Usually, I'm alone...[when I watch VCRs]</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Where is dad in all of this?</p> <p><u>Web:</u> He's just not into this, I guess.</p>	<p><u>Jody Carrol, mom:</u> Uh, if I want one, [a VCR to view] they don't usually watch it with me, because I like romantic stories. (laughs) I don't do horror.</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Does Mr. Carrol ever watch any of these with you?</p> <p><u>Jody:</u> He doesn't do videos at all.</p>
<p><u>Beth Flood, 14 years old :</u> Umm, sometimes I just go into moods, like I want to sit home by myself, [and] watch a good movie....</p> <p>It's very rare we all [mom, sister, and I] get something, [a video] all three of us (laughs)...agree on, but me and my sister are a lot alike.</p>	<p><u>Bonnie Flood, mom:</u> Uh, my husband seldom sits down and watches it [a VCR]. He just is not interested in that type of entertainment....Janice is more apt to than anybody else....</p> <p>Once in awhile, Janice and Beth will go, [to Blockbuster's to get videos] but I go some....David [her husband] never goes with me....He doesn't know how [to rent videos].</p>

Table 2 (continued)

<p><u>Don Hoover, 15 years old :</u> [We] all have diverse tastes....My mother doesn't like action adventure, and my dad doesn't like horror....I like movies like <u>Helter Skelter</u> and <u>Natural Born Killers</u>. I [also] like comedies,... abstract/symbolic movies,...and "Janimation."</p>	<p><u>Teri Hoover, mom:</u> I sometimes pick out movies for Don to watch during the day while I'm at work [in the summer]....I just call him up on my mobile and say, "Have you seen...?"I don't usually sit down and watch those I rent for him....But Don has pretty good judgment now even if he likes horror movies....I refused to watch <u>Philadelphia</u> [with Don and my husband] because it's about death, and it's so sad, and life is so sad.</p>
<p><u>Cathy O'Reilly, 14 years old :</u> ...my brother rented <u>The Mask</u>. He was in the family room [viewing it] by himself. ...Me and my brother are really into <u>Top Gun</u>, and we love that movie.... My dad likes those <u>Natural Born Killers</u>.... My mom's into comedy.</p>	<p><u>Lou O'Reilly, mom:</u> [Lou O'Reilly, mom, does not at any time suggest that family members view VCRs separately when she answers questions during her in-depth interview.]</p>

Table 2 (continued)

<p><u>Will Smalley, 13 years old :</u> Uh, I usually watch the animation by myself because they're not kind of like....They're the kind of things kids watch. We're not talking about adult animation....</p> <p>Japanese animation, that's that's usually what I rent. I, I'll watch that by myself....I do often watch with friends, <i>but I never watch it with my family.</i></p>	<p><u>Eric Smalley, dad:</u> <u>Researcher question:</u> Do, do you have your own selections so you and your wife might prefer one type of video entertainment?</p> <p><u>Eric:</u> Oh sure. The kids tend to like the action movies or cartoon type movies, you know, kids' movies.</p>
<p><u>Gary Ulman, 13 years old :</u> I usually go in my room and watch 'em on my own.</p>	<p><u>Ramona Ulman, mom:</u> "CiCi" and Gary go for the scary movies. Mr. Ulman and I would rather watch something with more depth.</p> <p>Oh, yes, [family members watch videos alone.] like when the children are on punishment, and I say, "Go to your room," and they say, "Sure, I'll get out of your face for the whole day." But you know that they are just going to have fun and watch videos!</p>

Table 3: Open Coding

Category 3: Interest in content

Teenagers	Parents
<p><u>Web Carol</u>, 14 years old :</p> <p>I'm partial to comedy. That's one of my favorite kinds....I can get "R" movies, too....[But] When I'm by myself, I tend to prefer horror....I have a whole big collection of Godzilla movies.</p>	<p><u>Jody Carol</u>, mom:</p> <p>I tend to prefer romantic stories..."happily ever after" stories [like] <u>The Butcher's Wife</u> and <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u>. With other family members, I like to watch adventure, Indiana Jones stuff, and newer Disney like <u>Beauty and the Beast</u>.</p>
<p><u>Beth Flood</u>, 14 years old :</p> <p>I like the old musical movies--classics!--<u>The Wizard of Oz</u>.</p> <p><u>Researcher</u>: And if the two of you [sisters] were going to look at something?....</p> <p><u>Beth</u>: It'd probably be more like <u>Pulp Fiction</u>. My sister likes movies like that.</p> <p>....I love Disney movies.</p>	<p><u>Bonnie Flood</u>, mom:</p> <p>I like more of the uh, I like period pieces. I do like <u>The Age of Innocence</u> and <u>Passage to India</u>.</p> <p>And uh, I do like some of the mystery, James Bond type things....Mysteries I like, horror I don't like....And then <u>Silence of the Lambs</u>...(Janice interrupts.)</p> <p><u>Janice</u>: She went to the VCR to turn it off....</p> <p><u>Bonnie</u>: The movie is too violent....It's awful.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

<p><u>Don Hoover, 15 years old:</u> I like movies like <u>Helter Skelter</u> and <u>Natural Born Killers</u>.I [also] like, uh, comedies... [or] abstract/symbolic movies...[or] Japanimation.....</p>	<p><u>Teri Hoover, mom:</u> If I see something that is just graphic sex or someone has told me one is graphic, I just don't rent that one, but he (the teen) is most interested in the future or robot type things, so I don't usually have a problem with what he wants to see....When he was younger, Don watched some of those (Freddy Krueger) type movies and got really frightened. I don't like those.... <u>Researcher:</u> Any types of movies you just like to watch by yourself? <u>Mom:</u> comedies....I refused to watch <u>Philadephia</u> because it's about death, and it is so sad, and life is so sad.....I used to watch Robin William's but he's got terrible with his language!....<u>Mrs. Doubtfire</u>, I love.</p>
<p><u>Cathy O'Reilly, 14 years old :</u> She [mom] doesn't like us to watch movies that are really bad, but we can watch "R" movies as long as they [parents] preview it first or as long as they're sitting there with us. Me and my brother and sister, we don't like those, [slasher type movies].</p>	<p><u>Lou O'Reilly, mom:</u> Umm, most of our videos are all family choices, and the whole family watches. We don't look to movies for moral messages. I prefer that the children read those, so we look for videos that are purely entertaining. I really do think that we do watch today's new releases as well as very, very old movies with the children also.</p>

Table 3 (continued)

<p><u>Will Smalley, 13 years old :</u> ...new releases, the animation, and the horror [are my usual favorites]. I like the, <u>The Shining</u> by Stephen King. That was really good. I, I like the <u>Star Wars</u> movies a lot. Yeah, those kind about space.</p>	<p><u>Eric Smalley, dad:</u> Well, I, my main concern would not be with any violent content or sexual content as much as certain images, like really bizarre or graphic images. For instance, <u>Jurassic Park</u>....I mean, that really bordered on what I was comfortable letting my little ones watch because of the real graphic terrifying images, the kind of things that can show up in a nightmare. Interestingly, Umm, right now, our 5-year-old's favorite movie is now <u>Forrest Gump</u>.</p>
<p><u>Gary Ulman, 13 years old :</u> <u>Researcher question:</u> What do you enjoy? <u>Gary:</u> Horror... We have like some scary movies. <u>Question:</u> What makes you enjoy the scary or horror movies? <u>Gary:</u> It keeps me from going to sleep.</p>	<p><u>Ramona Ulman, mom:</u> We like funny movies and "good" scary movies [as a family]. I do not go for Freddy Krueger or Jason....I like the comedies, the old classic ones...[also] adventure movies and movies that have meaning.</p>

Table 4: Open Coding

Category 4: Family Rules/Boundaries Related to
VCR Viewing at Home

Teenagers	Parents
<p><u>Web Carrol</u>, 14 years old :</p> <p>Me and my mom pick out videos to view....As long as they're not X-rated, they [parents] don't care [what content I select]. My recent movies, she's let me watch 'cause I can get "R" movies, too.</p>	<p><u>Jody Carrol, mom:</u></p> <p>I usually look at the name of it, [the video movie Web selects] and if I've read of it or heard of it, [negatively] I say, I don't think we need that one today.</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Are you aware who Freddy Krueger is?</p> <p><u>Jody:</u> Yes...[But] I don't think that he's ever rented any of those; I don't think that's been an interest....It's been more of the science fiction type horror, not the bloody gory, "now" horror.</p>
<p><u>Beth Flood</u>, 14 years old :</p> <p><u>Natural Born Killers</u>...She [mom] thought it was bad and disliked the previews of it...so it was not rented.</p>	<p><u>Bonnie Flood, mom:</u></p> <p>I try to watch for what's going on...the language, the action....</p> <p><u>Silence of the Lambs</u>, the movie is too violent. It's awful. It's abnormal...and Janice rents some "R" rated movies, but she's 18...I don't want Beth to see them.</p>

Table 4 (continued)

<p><u>Don Hoover, 15 years old:</u> As far as movies go, my parents have never restricted me 'cause they don't believe in that. And they trust me to make, you know, a good choice. I don't rent anything that I think is garbage so far.</p>	<p><u>Teri Hoover, mom:</u> If I see something that is just graphic sex, or if someone has told me one is graphic, I just don't rent that one, but he (Don) is mostly interested in the future or robot type things, you know, so I don't usually have a problem with what he wants to see....There are some movies that Don has been forbidden to watch like <u>Gates of Hell</u>. Don's brother told me that the movie has a real underworld theme, but there are no really rigid rules....Don has pretty good judgment now even if he does like horror movies.</p>
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Table 4 (continued)

<p><u>Cathy O'Reilly, 14 years old :</u> A couple of times, there are movies that me, my brother and sister would like to go see, and we go and pick out one, and then my parents pick out one for them to watch.</p> <p>She [mom] doesn't like us to watch movies that are really bad, but we can watch rated "R" movies as long as they preview it first or as long as they're sitting there with us....</p> <p>We all [the whole family] go in there [to the video store] and we pick out a movie, and we show it to my mom, and if she is like, "No, I don't think I'll rent you that," then we're like, "Oh, mom!"</p> <p>But if there's like, the killing and the blasting people away, that's not a problem. It's just like the nudity that they don't want us exposed to, but some movies they do.</p>	<p><u>Lou O'Reilly, mom:</u> [We pick out] probably new releases, some old movies that, of course my husband and I would enjoy, and think the children should see.</p> <p>There are no attempts to teach values; we don't really look to movies for moral messages....So we look for videos that are purely entertaining.</p> <p>Well, we just, you know, someone will say, "This has been crazy for this amount of time, and we need a time out, and let's all watch a movie with everybody."</p>
<p><u>Will Smalley, 13 years old :</u> I mean it's like, they won't let us watch anything in the world, but they are really loose. I mean there are some things we don't watch...real bad violence.</p> <p>They [mom and dad] usually have to be with us to watch some things.</p>	<p><u>Eric Smalley, dad:</u> We're real liberal [on regulating VCR viewing.] We believe that if they see something they can feel free to ask us questions about it, particularly sexual. Now, obviously, we wouldn't go with anything extremely explicit--graphic.</p> <p>We're more, I guess, more restrictive on violence than on sexual content.</p>

Table 4 (continued)

<p><u>Gary Ulman, 13 years old :</u> <u>Researcher question:</u> Is there any type of a rule about watching videos like how much do you watch or any rules about the content, the type of videos?</p> <p><u>Gary:</u> Just keep your mouth shut while the movie's on!</p>	<p><u>Ramona Ulman, mom:</u> Since there are two children, 7 and 13, they like scary movies, but I select for them, and I do not go for Freddy Krueger or Jason....</p> <p>They can have others, but Freddy becomes too frightening. <u>Frankenstein</u> is "O.K."</p> <p>With Freddy Krueger, it's like a dream becomes reality. If they work on it long enough, through dream analogy, they can bring it back to life. I don't like that....</p> <p>During the school year, I determine when homework is done, and I do not want movies with Satanic implications or misuse of Scripture! Violence is something else that I think about. I try to avoid getting movies that give children the idea that they can die and come back! Gary's friend WAS shot and killed last year, and I try to tell him that being shot is usually fatal, not a sign of distinction--or to brag about.</p>
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Table 5: Open Coding

**Category 5: Who takes charge of/controls the VCR
and the remote?**

Teenagers	Parents
<p><u>Web Carrol</u>, 14 years old :</p> <p><u>Researcher</u>: Do you run the VCR for your mom?</p> <p><u>Web</u>: Yeah, 'cause sometimes the remote control will get out of whack with the VCR. We've got one of those all purpose remotes, and she doesn't know how to fix it....So if I want her to do something for me, I won't fix it until she does. (spoken jokingly)</p>	<p><u>Jody Carrol</u>, mom:</p> <p>There's a big argument about that. Web thinks that he should be it, be there, but Laura thinks that she should be, have it now that she is home, so whoever's near it....It's not going to be a real life and death matter.</p>
<p><u>Beth Flood</u>, 14 years old :</p> <p>When I go to the video store, they [mom and sister] go with me. They have to drive me there. When it comes to the VCR remote control, whoever gets to it first uses it.</p>	<p><u>Bonnie Flood</u>, mom:</p> <p>We take turns [running the remote control]. No one's really in charge.</p>

Table 5 (continued)

<p><u>Don Hoover, 15 years old:</u></p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Who's in charge of the remote when you watch with your mom and dad? Anybody?</p> <p><u>Don:</u> whoever picks the movie , I guess.</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Do you ever rewind it or review it to look at it again?</p> <p><u>Don:</u> Yeah, Yeah, if it's funny. My dad, that's why we don't give him the changer. He loves to do that.</p>	<p><u>Teri Hoover, mom:</u></p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Who's in charge of the remote control for the VCR at your house?</p> <p><u>Mom:</u> Oh, that's a silly question! (laughs) Dad has the remote control by his chair. If he can't see that remote control there when he comes home from work, he says, "Where's the remote?"....Still when we are all watching, if Don's rented the movie, and it's a space story, then Don may have it. If it's a love story that I rented, then I may have it. But 99% of the time, dad has it; he's in control....He [dad] just freaks when he can't find the remote, so we try to see that no one is in "Papa Bear's" chair, and the remote is right next to it when he comes home.</p> <p><u>Researcher:</u> Does anyone ever stop the tape, rewind and look at it again?</p> <p><u>Mom:</u> Dad does that, especially when something is really funny. He'll say, "That's great, let's see that again," and we always do what he wants to do!</p>
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Table 5 (continued)

<p><u>Cathy O'Reilly, 14 years old :</u> My dad normally has the VCR remote control; he doesn't trust anybody else with it 'cause we always lose it. We've bought a couple of TV remote controls 'cause we've lost it.</p>	<p><u>Lou O'Reilly, mom:</u> Umm, actually the remote control is not a problem, and I usually snatch it to keep the peace--that keeps me happy. We still have the family dinner that I will not let go, and we do have the family dinner every day. We used to use videos as a Sunday afternoon matinee. We would have our Sunday afternoon dinner with a video that we've all chosen.</p>
<p><u>Will Smalley, 13 years old :</u> Whoever gets to it first [is in charge of the remote]. But then again, we do have a bunch of controls. I mean, we've got like a control for the cable box, a control for the TV, a control for the stereo, a control for the VCR, and then we've got a control that controls them all. Yeah, but I don't let my friends know about it [the master control] because if I did and if I like grabbed the control of the TV, then they could just grab the all purpose controller, and it'd be a big control battle. [When I control the remote] I, I also get to, uh, fast forward through any commercials.</p>	<p><u>Eric Smalley, dad:</u> <u>Researcher question:</u> And who's in charge of the remote if your family were to watch? <u>Eric:</u> Oh, uh, one or, one, I don't know, gosh. (Eric laughs.) It's interesting the dynamics that go around a remote. Probably the mother is.</p>

Table 5 (continued)

<p><u>Gary Ulman, teen, 13 years old:</u></p> <p><u>Researcher question:</u> And who's in charge of the remote if your family were to watch a VCR?</p> <p><u>Gary:</u> It depends on whose room you're in....One [is] in each bedroom.</p>	<p><u>Ramona Ulman, mom:</u> Everybody [is in charge of the VCR remote]....No, really CiCi [the 7-year-old] is most often in charge.</p> <p>She is wild, and Gary, she'll drive him crazy with it. She drives all of crazy sometimes, but Gary was the same way. CiCi really has control. She'll look at previews or stop the tape to see something again.</p>
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Table 6: Open Coding

Category 6: Video content and VCR use indicate family growth and change

Teenagers	Parents
<p><u>Web Carrol</u>, 14 years old : Mom lets me watch "R" movies.</p>	<p><u>Jody Carrol, mom:</u> He [Web] watches some, but not...usually I try to make sure its not too graphic... [referring to horror movies in particular] if I know about it...I usually know what he has. If there is something that I really don't like, I say, "I don't think we need that one today." We used to watch [movies like] <u>Caddyshack</u>, but I'm not real fond of such antics.</p>
<p><u>Beth Flood</u>, 14 years old : It's very rare we all, we get something all three of us [mom, sister, and I] agree on...(laughs) [But] Me and my sister are a lot alike....When I watch by myself, it relaxes me...if I'm not going to do something, just sit there and "pigout!" (laughs)</p>	<p><u>Bonnie Flood, mom:</u> Beth is more apt to look at theatre movies (at the movie theatre)....And that's something they can do together. (nods to Beth's boyfriend, who's visiting) In fact, the four of us (mom, Beth, Janice, and the boyfriend) went to see <u>Congo</u> last, the other week, and we four sat separately.</p>

Table 6 (continued)

<p><u>Don Hoover, 15 years old:</u> I do learn a lot from movies because I was homophobic. Yes. It's just the way I was raised. And, and movies bring me closer, and I guess I understand a lot more. When I saw <u>Philadelphia</u>...I could understand, because I had always pictured homosexuals as really bad people, and that's how I've been raised, and I can't help that. But I view them a lot differently now.</p>	<p><u>Teri Hoover, mom:</u> He'll be getting his driver's license soon. I don't know if I'll be able to stand it. But he's pretty good at his choices.</p>
<p><u>Cathy O'Reilly, 14 years old:</u> Most of the time we do [watch VCRs as a family]. Except when my brother rented <u>The Mask</u>. Yeah, he was in the family room by himself. We can watch R-rated movies if they [mom or dad] preview it or sit there with us. It's just like nudity in movies [concerns mom and dad].</p>	<p><u>Lou O'Reilly, mom:</u> We used to use videos as a Sunday afternoon matinee. We would have our Sunday afternoon dinner with a video that we had all chosen. We've sort of grown out of that.</p>
<p><u>Will Smalley, 13 years old:</u> [refers to Japanese animation VCRs] It's like heroes and people. Uh, I watch that by myself, but I do often watch with friends. But I <i>never</i> watch it with my family.</p>	<p><u>Eric Smalley, dad:</u> [If Eric and his wife talked about a video movie with the kids] Typically, it would be us discussing the difference between reality and fantasy. You know, with the kids, or something like that. Yeah, remember this is a movie, and movie people can just fly away when things get tough, or, you know, whatever.</p>

Table 6 (continued)

<p><u>Gary Ulman, 13 years old :</u> <u>Researcher question:</u> Is your home a two-parent household with both mom and dad living at home?</p> <p><u>Gary:</u> Yes, but it's mom and step-dad.</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Do you ever watch [VCRs] as a family?</p> <p><u>Gary:</u> No, 'cause we're kind of a busy family. We're all working and doing different things.</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Where do you usually watch videos?</p> <p><u>Gary:</u> My room.</p>	<p><u>Ramona Ulman, mom:</u> She [his sister] is 7-years-old, and she's gifted, and she's bossy.</p> <p>[Ramona's 13-year-old son, Gary, was born of her first marriage; her daughter, CiCi, who was 7, was born after she married Gary's step-dad.]</p>
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Axial Coding Results

In this study, the axial coding paradigm disclosed the following information consistently throughout the analysis of in-depth interviews with young teenagers and participating parents:

Causal or Antecedent Condition

Family boundaries underwent developmental change (usually stretching) as young teenagers and their parents began the process of gaining mutual autonomy and reorganizing family roles, rules, and relationships as described in earlier studies (Preto, 1989, p. 255).

Phenomenon

The family's VCR viewing at home provided a pervasive resource, which served the diverse and changing needs of parents and their teenagers, who sometimes selected controversial video viewing content or content that was suited only their own individual tastes while the family reorganized its rules, boundaries, or limits.

Strategy

Families viewed videos together or individually to create a "time-out." This time-out gave family members a welcome break from the world outside their family and, on occasion, a welcome break from each other. Family members sometimes demonstrated differences in taste by selecting specific video content that appealed only to them and their peers. However, diverse lifestyles, values, and controversial issues were also examined by some families through video content.

Consequence

VCR viewing at home offered the family a convenient, pervasive, and potentially powerful resource that could bring family members together or separate family members by the video content selected. It provided family members with an opportunity to choose from a wide variety of video content, which represented many different types of entertainment that included some selections that the whole family could enjoy. In addition, different family values, philosophies, and lifestyles were sometimes explored through video selections. Family members could select video content that reinforced the values that their own family system had established and, perhaps, inherited from previous generations, or reach beyond old boundaries to investigate new values, outlooks, and lifestyles.

What became most notable during axial coding was the importance of video content. All categories considered in open coding were significantly related to the content selected for viewing at home. For instance, the content of the video itself could bring the family together or separate family members. As one mom stated during her interview, "I don't do horror;" however, she was aware that her teenage son sometimes watched what she considered horror videos for entertainment.

Interest in content also related significantly to family boundaries. Although several parents in this study suggested that they sometimes let teenagers select more mature video content, parents usually reviewed what was chosen at the video rental store (or brought home from other sources including mail order) by looking at the description on the tape box

before approving. (Teenagers in this investigation were too young to drive to a video rental store, but one purchased videos through a mail order outlet.)

The parents in this study did not demonstrate a rigid approach to approving video selections for young teenagers, and all allowed "R" rated content if they could view the material with their teenager(s). On the other hand, video content that concerned all participating parents included graphic violence, graphic sexual content, and content that misrepresented reality in the parents' view. For example, one teenager related that her mom allowed her to watch any video, "but just no intercourse." Another parent discussed a concern with the false "reality" demonstrated by some videos. She explained that she did not want her son to get the impression that a young gang member could be brutally shot, then live on with little ill effect to become a hero of the neighborhood. She said, "I try to tell him that being shot is usually fatal not a sign of distinction."

One teenager herself expressed a growing respect for the cautions her mom and dad had given her about the content of video movies that she might view. She recalled that when she was younger, her parents would sometimes say, "...You really don't want to see that." But she said, "If I, like, [would] try to see it behind their backs, then I'd be like, *they're right*, I didn't want to see that."

Selective Coding Results

Throughout these data, video content encouraged all coding categories to combine. Video content motivated families to view together

or separately. Video content reinforced or stretched family boundaries and limits depending on what was chosen. Finally, video content could influence who "took control" of the VCR remote, since most often, the person who chose the video controlled its playback by using the remote. However, who controlled this device was not of great concern to most participants in this study with the notable exception of one mom. It was she who believed that the remote control belonged to "Papa Bear," her husband, and she claimed that he looked for it beside his chair when he came home from work.

The most significant and **core category** emerging from these data was **interest in and concern for video content**. During this family life stage when children were young teenagers, video content viewed at home reflected the roles, rules, boundaries, and relationships demonstrated by the total family system in transition.

Mothers in this study particularly appeared to extend nurturing roles when they expressed concern for video content. From their perspective, approval of video content was part of their job as mothers, and similar findings were noted in Jordan's research (1990, 1992). Mothers were also the persons who most often made themselves available to drive young teenagers to the video store. Yet, all mothers in this sample were working mothers.

Rules and family boundaries were also affected by video content, since individual family systems in this investigation demonstrated adjustment to more liberal or more mature guidelines. For example, families or family members might select controversial video content that

stretched family limits or caused family members to examine values that were handed down for generations. In one family a father and his 15-year-old son confronted the issue of homosexuality by viewing the new release Philadelphia, which influenced the son to recognize how inherited family values had molded his views. In his interview, the teenager admitted, "I'm homophobic," but he said that he realized the human nature of homosexuals after viewing the video.

Bonding relationships among family members can be created or strengthened by VCR viewing. As one teenager observed, her dad and her step-brother were "bonding" (her descriptive word) and enjoying being together while they watched a favorite type of VCR entertainment...the horror genre. If she and her mom didn't like their movies, that pulled dad and step-son closer together.

The father's relationship with the family's VCR viewing at home was not consistently described through interview data. However, a descriptive pattern emerged through adult and teenage responses. In this study, the typical father was described by his wife or teenager as uninterested in watching videos with family members. One father in particular was described by his wife as "sooo tired" that he could not stay awake long enough to watch an entertaining video with the family. Another mom said simply that VCR viewing with the family at home was "not dad's thing." When it came to VCR viewing at home, most fathers did not *want* to stay awake long enough to watch a video according to the inference of several participants. The mother, who spoke for the majority

interviewed, said that VCR viewing with the family was "just not dad's thing."

The notable exception to the disinterested father was the one adult male who volunteered to participate in this study. He was the only dad who directly participated, and he seemed interested in this research because his work as a school counselor made him aware of VCR use in homes. He said that the adolescents with whom he worked and his own boys often spoke of favorite videos.

Diary Results:

Initially, six teenagers and six of their parents volunteered to keep separate VCR viewing diaries over a consecutive five-week period. Five teenagers and five of their parents actually returned diaries with individual entries at the end of five consecutive weeks during the summer of 1995. Three teenagers who kept diaries were 14 years of age: Web Carrol, a Caucasian male, Beth Flood, a Caucasian female, and Cathy O'Reilly, a Caucasian female. Don Hoover, a 15-year-old, Caucasian male, also kept a diary as did Will Smalley, a 13-year-old Caucasian male. Don was the oldest teenage participant in this study, and Will was the youngest teenage participant.

Parents who kept diaries ranged in age from middle to late forties. All diary entries began on June 25, 1995, with one exception. That exception was provided by the Hoover family who elected to begin their entries on July 2, 1995, and to continue entries for the next five-week period. Appendix D offers detailed and complete information from the diary entries of each participant.

When diaries were returned, individual data reported by a teenager and a parent in the same family provided a picture of how VCR viewing fit into each family system during the five-week period documented. Each diary page asked the date a VCR was viewed; the title and type of material viewed; when and where viewing took place; with whom viewing took place; and any other activity while viewing. A review of diary entries follows next with reports from teenage and adult members of each of these participating families: the Carrols, Floods, Hoovers, O'Reillys, and Smalleys. Results are reported alphabetically and begin with Carrol family data.

Web Carrol and his mom, Mrs. Jody Carrol, agreed to keep individual VCR viewing diaries for five-weeks beginning Sunday, June 25, 1995. However, no VCR viewing entries were made by parent or teen until week three, beginning July 9, 1995. The death of Jody's mother and Web's grandmother made it difficult for them to keep diaries during the first two weeks, so they decided to wait until week three.

During week three, Web documented watching the comedy, Dumb and Dumber. He watched this video movie in the family's living room by himself after midnight. (The Carrol family had only one VCR, and it was available to family members in the living room.) He noted eating while he viewed. Web also noted watching a horror video, The Evil Dead, with his friend, who spent the night at the end of week three. Both boys talked while they viewed.

During week four, Web recorded watching three VCRs: Toys, a comedy that he watched late at night by himself; Junior and Star Trek:

Generations, both of these VCRs viewed earlier in the evening when he noted watching with his mom and his sister. Eating was primary activity Web reported whether viewing alone or with others.

During week five, Web reported watching one VCR, Stargate, on Saturday evening with his mom and sister. They watched in the living room where they ate and talked.

Jody Carrol, Web's mom, also began recording data in her VCR viewing dairy during week three. She reported watching just one VCR that week, The Return of Jafar, and she described this video as an animation. Jody viewed this selection with her daughter on Sunday evening as they ate supper in the living room.

In her earlier in-depth interview, Jody commented that her daughter was graduating from college and coming home for the summer. Jody attended the graduation, which was a great distance from home, and she said that she looked forward to her daughter's return.

During weeks four and five, Jody watched VCRs with her teenage son, Web, her older son Bruce, who came home for a visit, and her only daughter, Laura. The selections they watched were Junior, Star Trek: Generations, and Stargate, the same titles reported by her teenage son, Web. However, Jody Carrol's entries varied considerably from her teenage son when she reported other activities while viewing.

While she watched Junior, Jody reported that she "looked through documents." While she watched Star Trek: Generations, she ironed, ate, and talked. When Stargate was playing, Jody reported painting, eating, and talking. None of her entries reported simply sitting and watching.

What was notably missing from Web's diary entries and his mom's entries was any mention of dad. In her in-depth interview, Jody previously explained that VCR viewing was just "not dad's thing." These entries supported that comment and observation.

Beth Flood and her mom, Bonnie, began keeping VCR viewing diaries during the week of June 25, 1995. Like the Carols, the Floods viewed VCRs in the living room where the only VCR playback unit was located. Each reported watching only an exercise VCR during the first diary week, and each reported exercising in the living room while viewing. Both mom and teenager reported using the exercise VCR, but each noted exercising alone during weeks one and three. Mom and teenager did exercise together with the VCR on two occasions during week five.

During week two, Beth reported watching two VCRs. The first, Apollo XI, was a documentary that she watched while talking with her sister; she noted that mom "came in." The second, Quiz Show, Beth watched alone although she commented on talking to those who passed through the living room as she watched and ate.

Bonnie Flood also documented viewing Apollo XI with her daughters during week two. She commented on sewing while she viewed. She reported viewing Quiz Show, but recognized this more as a chance to visit with Beth, to eat, and to feed the family pets.

During week three, Beth watched three entertainment selections in addition to watching the exercise video. First, she watched The Doors

with her sister. Next, she reported watching The Lost Boys by herself, and finally viewing Poison Ivy with her sister while reading a magazine.

Bonnie Flood noted the same three entertainment VCRs reported by Beth during week three, but Bonnie admitted not really watching The Doors or The Lost Boys. Her diary comments said that she just "stopped-in" to visit with the girls, to talk rather than watch. When the girls viewed Poison Ivy, Bonnie recorded that she was present but read a magazine.

During week four, Beth reported watching the exercise video and Natural Born Killers. She reported watching Natural Born Killers at first with her older sister but later, "alone mostly." Beth continued to view this movie on a second evening.

Bonnie Flood reported Natural Born Killers in her viewing diary, but she discussed this entry with me when I collected the diary. She said that she did not approve of this type of VCR, and she said that she only looked at it briefly. Further, she said that she realized that her older daughter, Janice, who was 18-years-old could select any video content. Still, Bonnie commented that she preferred nonviolent content for her teenage daughter, Beth.

During week five, both Beth and her mom watched the exercise VCR on three occasions, and both noted watching two other selections. The first, Beetlejuice, was reported by both, but both also reported that they read a magazine while it played. The second, Dream a Little Dream, was viewed by mom and teenage daughter with no other activity noted.

Although mom and teenage Beth seemed to share an interest in the content of the exercise VCR, concern over the content of Natural Born Killers was clearly expressed by mom when I came to collect diary reports. Beth did not seem concerned. What was also notable, dad had not been present during any VCR viewing reported by mom or teenager.

Don Hoover and his mom, Teri, began keeping individual VCR viewing diaries on July 2, 1995. Their later start date was requested by Mrs. Teri Hoover. However, they did keep diaries for the next five consecutive weeks.

During week one, Don Hoover's VCR entries were plentiful and varied in content. His selections included a western, two comedies, and one drama. As the first diary week progressed Don watched Wyatt Earp and Ace Ventura: Pet Detective by himself. In addition, he reported watching PCU with a friend, and The Client with his dad. Most VCR viewing was done in the late evening and talking usually accompanied viewing.

During week one, Teri Hoover, mom, reported watching only one VCR, Star Wars. She watched this video with her husband and her teenage son on the first evening of their vacation. She also reported eating and talking while the VCR played in their motel room.

In-depth interview information from Don and his mom provided information that three VCR units were available to this family. This data related to how the family could watch VCRs in a motel room. One of the family's VCR units was described as "portable," and it was often carried

around the house, especially to the basement. It could be taken on vacation with the family.

Family vacation continued through diary week two, and the entire family watched the comedy, Stripes as reported in diary entries. Don and his mom also noted eating and talking while the video played back. Don also commented on sleeping while Stripes played. During this same week, Don watched one VCR by himself on Saturday night: Wolf, a science fiction adventure.

Back at home from vacation, neither Don nor his mom reported watching videos during week three. But during week four, Teri noted watching the drama, Nell with her husband and talking about this movie while it played. She also reported watching the comedy, Houseguest, with the whole family. Don reported watching only the comedy, Houseguest, with his parents during this week. Both mom and teenage son reported eating and talking while the comedy played.

During week five, neither mom nor teenage son reported viewing any videos. However, teenage Don reported tuning-in television movies while he painted a room.

Cathy O'Reilly and her mom, Mrs. Lou O'Reilly, agreed to keep VCR viewing diaries beginning June 25, 1995. During week one, Cathy reported watching Dumb and Dumber with her sister and her best friend. The girls started watching in her parent's bedroom after 10 pm, then moved to the family room. Cathy noted that they all ate, laughed, and talked while the video played. Cathy's mom, Lou, made no VCR viewing entries during the first week.

During diary week two, Cathy and her mom made only one entry. Each reported watching Backdraft then Safe Passage with the whole family on the same evening. The family watched together in the master bedroom and ate while they watched the video movies.

Cathy attended soccer camp away from home during weeks three and four, so she reported no VCR viewing. However, her mom reported watching part of Under Siege during week three. In her diary, Lou O'Reilly noted watching part of this video movie with her husband and her son while she exercised on the Nordic Track. She noted further that when she "made fun of the macho movie," her husband and son asked her to leave, which she thought was funny.

During week four, Lou made one viewing entry again. She reported watching Father of the Bride with her husband and two children, a daughter 15 years old and a 13-year-old son. As they watched the VCR in the family room, the 13-year-old boy said he thought the movie was "disgusting," and he left before the movie ended. Still, Lou reported that watching this VCR offered the family some "R and R," rest and relaxation.

During week five, Cathy returned from soccer camp, and she and her mom made the same single entry. Each reported watching Mrs. Doubtfire with the whole family in the master bedroom. The family watched and ate a Kentucky Fried Chicken supper while the movie played.

Will Smalley and his dad, Mr. Eric Smalley, agreed to keep VCR viewing diaries beginning June 25, 1995. Mr. Smalley said that he was especially interested in my research because he worked with families and

adolescents. As a counselor, he said that he often heard adolescent teenagers talk about VCR games and movies.

During week one, Will Smalley reported watching the Arnold Schwarzenegger comedy, Junior, with his parents. While he watched, he talked, played with his hamster, and drank a beverage. Will reported watching only one other video during the five-week period. During week three, Will noted viewing The Evil Dead, a "scary" movie, which is set in Tennessee where teenagers revive demons one weekend. During the movie, he and his friend talked.

During week one, Will's dad, Eric Smalley reported viewing Forrest Gump with his wife. He noted that his 5-year-old and his 8-year-old joined them as they watched this movie, and the children continued to look at it "a portion at a time" until it was returned. Eric also joined his wife to watch the last half of Cobb during week one, and he taped Wimbledon tennis matches as the first week progressed to be able to watch at a more convenient time.

During week two, Eric watched Disclosure with his wife "in one sitting." He also reported watching Dumb and Dumber by himself because "the children had already seen it." He noted that his wife may have looked at a part of this movie.

During week three, Eric reported giving a copy of Forrest Gump to the 6-year-old for his birthday because the child really like the tape. The 6 and 8-year-old both watched this movie "off and on" for a week following the birthday celebration. In addition, during this week, Will taped three

Star Wars movies off television, and all three children watched these movies "off and on, a portion as a time" for about two weeks.

During week four, Eric noted that he and his wife watched four video movies. Three of these were viewed by Eric and his wife only: The Producers, Lost in America, and Murder in the First. The fourth selection, Harold and Maude, was viewed by Eric and his wife, then he noted that Will watched it later.

During week five, Eric made an interesting entry. His wife and children went to visit her mother, and Eric reported that she took one of the family VCRs with her and rented seven or eight videos to watch with her mother. Movies included: Fried Green Tomatoes, Nell, and Sleepless in Seattle. His wife had never done this before according to Eric's entry.

At the end of week five, Eric was by himself and watched Speechless, a dramatic comedy featuring two political speechwriters who meet as they try to buy the only remaining bottle of Nytol in a convenience store. He noted that his wife watched this video the next day when she returned home from visiting her mother.

Ethnographic Results

Two participating families agreed to let me join them when videos were viewed in their homes. Both families had kept video viewing diaries for five-weeks before this phase of my study, and both had participated in interviews, so I had gained some insight into when and how viewing fit into each family's routine. I depended on mom in each family to let me know when I was welcome to join the family and watch a

tape, and I joined each family on three separate occasions during August 1995.

Video Viewing in the Carrol Home

The first family, whom I will call the Carrol family, (renamed) is a two-parent family with both mom and dad working outside the home. Dad is a computer programmer for a major insurance company in a mid-sized, Southern town, and mom works as an administrative assistant in a local high school. Their son, Web, is 14 years old, the youngest of four children, and 13 years younger than their oldest child. Web has two older brothers and one older sister. Annual family income averages around \$65,000.

As I drive up to the Carrol home, I notice that the exterior is modest compared with other homes in this old neighborhood. Most homes are stone or brick, but this two story home is frame, yet it looks like it provides comfortable surroundings. I notice that live oaks and tulip trees in the front yard are so large that they must have been planted at least 100 years ago.

Web has told me something about his family and himself in our face-to-face separate interview at his school. Most significantly, he says that he loves computers, but he thinks that someday he would like to be a movie director or an actor. However, he explains that his family cannot afford a camcorder although he does have his own computer. The family does have one VCR in the living room. Right now, Web looks like a long-haired, 1960s' hippie.

Observations of the Family and Video Viewing, 8/04/95, Friday.

9pm:

Mrs. Jody Carrol motions me to come-in as I walk toward the open front door; she is finishing ironing a piece. Mrs. Carrol seems happy with my arrival--an interruption to ironing, and she calls Web and Laura, her daughter who's come home for a visit, after graduating from College. She mentions that dad is probably watching a ballgame upstairs or may have fallen asleep. "That really doesn't matter," she says, "because dad never likes to watch movies with us anyway."

Web comes downstairs into the living room and begins to "take charge" of getting the tape ready for playback. Laura joins us from the kitchen, and after I have a chance to officially meet Laura, Mrs. Carrol asks me to call her, "Jody." Laura, Jody, and I sit down on the living room sofa to watch. Web has the remote, and no one seems to mind; he lets the previews play, but he explains that this movie is one that his mom likes and wants him to let Laura see. It's not his favorite type of movie, he adds. I ask which movie it is, and Jody says, The Butcher's Wife. Web explains that he has other movies that he can watch by himself later tonight.

Actually, Web seems fairly amenable to letting this movie play--as if he wants to please his mom. But before this rather bizarre and romantic picture ends, Web is taking a nap on the floor surrounded by huge pillows while Laura and mom are enjoying every scene.

When the movie ends, Jody and Laura comment what fun that movie is, but Web (now wide awake) asks me if I want to come back and see a movie that he really likes, and I say, "sure."

The only "rule" that seems apparent in this family routine is some understood agreement that Web runs the VCR and takes charge of the playback. That seems to suit everyone.

Jody offers us all some "Crystal Light" and some pretzels, and conversation turns away from movies to jobs before I say good night. Both Jody and Laura compliment Web on his computer skills and tell him that he will probably get a good job someday, which seems to please him. (Of course, what Web told me is his own career goal to direct movies or be an actor, but I'm not telling.)

Observations of the Family and Video Viewing, 8/05/95, Saturday, 8:30pm:

Jody, Laura, and Sam (dad) are obliged to attend a wedding reception this evening, and both Jody and Web have let me know that I am welcome to return to their home to watch videos with Web this evening if I want. I certainly do. What I don't expect is the "new look" that Web has given himself.

Web, who just yesterday looked like a '60s hippie, has now shaved his head. I comment that he looks really different, and he explains that he just wanted a "new look," especially "since school is out, and it's hot, and who cares." Web has also asked his friend to stay over, so I feel a little like a baby sitter even though these boys are teenagers.

Once again, Web takes charge of the remote, and tonight he announces the videos that he wants us to see. The first, Godzilla, he taped off-cable, the other is Wayne's World, which he rented when he and his mom went to Blockbuster's. He says that he's seen most of it before, but that doesn't matter, " 'cause it's funny."

Web seems very pleased to show me how he entertains himself when the rest of his family is away. He explains that he usually asks a friend to stay over, so they can both watch movies. He and his friend, Tommy, seem like old friends.

When Godzilla plays back, both Web and Tommy laugh and imitate the giant lizard. They are on the floor laughing and acting silly. (Their attention seems totally directed to the video and their imitation of the lizard; I think that I have become unobtrusive, which is good.) Both boys tire of Godzilla quickly and decide to switch tapes to Wayne's World after a short pause to get Coca Colas and chips.

During Waynes' World, the boys stay on the floor with a good supply of cokes, chips, and pillows, while I stay on the sofa. Both boys try to fill me in as the movie proceeds; apparently, they've watched this movie before, and they love it. They talk to it and with it, "party on!"

Still, there is something more insightful expressed by the way that these boys look at this video. They seem to see it as "fun" but pure silliness. Web says that his mom would "pound on him" if he acted like the movie because the characters are too "cheesy." We talk a little about what he means by "cheesy," and Web and Tommy agree that it means "cheap" and "pretty dumb." With this insight, I say "good night."

Observations of the Family and Video Viewing, 8/08/95, Tuesday,
8:15pm:

Jody called to let me know that her grown son, Bruce, would visit this evening, and he, Web, and Laura often watched a video when he stopped-by. Jody told me that I could join them if I wanted, so I made arrangements to join them and arrived around 8:15 pm.

When I arrive, the family is involved in a lively conversation in the living room. As Jody motions for me to sit down, Bruce is telling Laura about his new job. It sounds like he is very proud of finding a job in public relations, and he is working at non-profit agency. Jody comments to Laura and me that now Bruce even irons his own shirts. Laura also works in a few remarks about her recent graduation and her concern with finding a job.

Web sticks his head around the corner and asks who wants popcorn. He's busy making microwave popcorn in the kitchen, and the smell of it even brings dad downstairs. Web brings out several small plastic bowls and two huge bags of popcorn. Shortly after arriving with the popcorn, Web says that he and Laura have found a movie that everyone should like, so he wants us to see what we think of it. Bruce asks which movie, and Web answers, Maverick.

No one seems to mind that Web is taking charge of the evening, but dad says that he thinks he'll go upstairs and read. Web loads the tape and reaches for the remote. No one seems to mind that Web is taking care of the tape details. In fact, Laura, Web, mom, and Bruce just seem to enjoy being together.

Mom does pick up the tape box to look for a description of the movie plot, but the tape is now in a rental box with the Blockbuster's logo and little description. Bruce assures mom that this one really does have very funny parts--even if it's "sort of" a Western. That seems to satisfy mom.

As the previews are rolling, Bruce decides to sit on the floor with Web, then he kids him about his shaved head. (Web and Bruce seem close even though Bruce is ten years older than Web.) Laura and I sit on the sofa, but Jody decides on sitting in a rocker this evening where she can be near a stand light and do some mending.

When the movie gets underway, Laura and Jody tend to comment about how the movies always make the women look glamorous even if they are supposed to be a part of the old West. Bruce, who says that he's seen this movie before, makes comments to Web like, "Wait 'til you see how he gets out of this." Mom seems least "into" this type of movie, but she does seem to enjoy being with the others, and she does pick up her mending/sewing now and then.

One rule that seems apparent is mom's approval of what is viewed. Mom's interest in content was indicated when she picked up the box to look for a description of this movie. It makes me wonder how often she is the person who establishes at least some family boundaries.

Total amount of time spent viewing with the Carrols: 7 hours

Video Viewing in the O'Reilly Home

These notes focus on the second of two participating families who agreed to let me join them when videos were viewed in their homes. Both families kept video viewing diaries for five-weeks previous to this phase of my study, and both families participated in earlier interviews, so I had gained some insight into when and how viewing fit into each family's routine. I depended heavily on "mom" to let me know when I was welcome to join this family while they watched a VCR, especially because mom described VCR viewing as a "time-out" for family some members in this home, and she mentioned that the family sometimes watched a VCR and ate a meal, especially on weekends. I did not want to "barge in" unless mom thought that the family would be comfortable with my presence, so I depended on her judgment and her call.

This second family is renamed the O'Reilly family in this report, and they are a two-parent family with both mom and dad working outside the home. Dad is an executive involved with real estate. Mom works as a secretary at a college nearby. Their daughter, Cathy, is 14 years old, the second of three children, with a sister who is 15 years old and a younger brother who is 13. Annual family income averages around \$80,000. There are three VCR playback units available in this home.

As I drive up to the O'Reilly home, I notice that their yard and tri-level home are both well maintained, and the neighborhood itself seems recently established and fairly affluent. Some yards are "sod," and most trees and shrubs appear to be recently planted. This general area is

considered one of the town's "up and coming" sections, and some major businesses are expanding to open offices here.

Observations of the Family and Video Viewing, 8/06/95, Sunday,
6:45pm

Earlier today, Mrs. Lou O'Reilly called and let me know that I was welcome to join the family for a "KFC" fried chicken supper while the family watched whatever movie the kids rented after evening Mass. I asked if I could bring cokes and other cold drinks, and she said, "sure." That made me feel like I was contributing something to this family gathering.

When I arrive, Cathy and her younger brother Christian are in the yard trying to play Frisbee while they teach their Collie pup to catch. Cathy is very outgoing, and she is laughing as they play. She hollers "Hi!" as I get out of the car. Both she and her brother seem to be having a great time. She introduces me to her brother and her Collie, Mike, and tells me that her mom asked us all to come inside as soon as I arrive.

We walk through the living room, which looks too perfect to be in regular use and through the kitchen, which looks like a major family gathering place. Lou O'Reilly calls "Hello" from the adjoining porch where she has covered a picnic table with fried chicken, rolls and, "fixings." I add my cold drinks to the table while Lou introduces me to her husband, Paul, then she asks us all to take a paper plate, help ourselves, and get ready to watch what she thinks looks like a good movie, Angels in the Outfield. This selection seems to please both Cathy and Christian, but their 15-year-old sister, Whitney, seems less enthusiastic.

As each of us finds a place to sit and to balance our plate, dad puts the video into the playback unit, and mom picks up the remote. (As mom told me in her interview, she likes to be "in charge" of the remote control to avoid bickering in the family.)

Cathy and Christian have seated themselves on the wooden floor of the porch. Dad and Whitney are seated on a "glider" (metal type porch swing that rocks slightly), and mom and I each have deck chairs. Small foldup tables give those of us in chairs and on the glider a place to put our plates.

As the movie begins and continues, family relationships seem to emerge. Cathy and Christian are not only brother and sister but friends. They laugh at the same parts of the movie and seem to enjoy each other's company, sometimes whispering to each other and laughing. On the other hand, Whitney seems more private.

Whitney is seated next to her dad, and I get the impression that Whitney feels 10 years older than her brother and sister. But she does offer a smile now and then as the movie progresses, and she is anything but sullen.

Mom and I sit side by side to eat and watch the movie. In the background dad and Whitney talk quietly now and then, and he teases her by saying that if the phone rings, he's certain it will be for her.

No one stays seated throughout this whole movie, and everyone gets up and down to help themselves to "seconds." There is a comfortable feeling among these family members, and they seem to give one another a sense of well being.

Dad volunteers to "do the dishes" as we all finish eating, which means that he gets up and finds a large garbage bag in the kitchen and asks us to deposit our paper plates in the bag. Mike, the dog, follows dad around hoping for some tidbits of food. Mom asks Cathy if she has given Mike some of his own food today, and Cathy assures her that she has.

As the movie ends, Whitney says that she would like to pick the next movie even though she admits that this one was better than she expected. Mom says that she thinks that can be arranged, and Christian and Cathy say that's all right, since this movie was their choice. (Dad says jokingly that he wonders when he's going to get to make a choice!)

All told, this family seems to negotiate well and to demonstrate respect for one another. Mom seems in charge of negotiations--and the remote control, but there appears to be a healthy sense of "give and take" among family members.

Observations of the Family and Video Viewing, 8/12/95,
Saturday, 7pm:

I return to the O'Reilly's the following Saturday evening, and Whitney greets me at the door and invites me into the family room. Mom and dad are already in the family room watching what looks like national and international news on television; they're also talking and glancing through the paper at the same time. Both mom and dad invite me to find a place to sit down, and both say that they are so tired of the "O.J." trial that they've looked forward to some entertainment. Mom comments that Whitney has picked the video that we will see this evening, and I ask where Cathy and Christian are.

Almost as soon as I ask, Cathy and Christian bound through the front door. Both have been playing soccer in practice games. Each plays on a church team, and both say that they are "starved." Mom suggests that we could order pizza and start to watch the video that Whitney has selected. This idea meets with total approval.

I'm very curious what video Whitney has chosen, and it turns out to be The Music Man. Once again, dad loads the tape, but later mom takes over the remote--after she phones for pizza.

I ask Whitney why this movie was selected, and she explains that she wants to tryout for the part of "Marian" when her school puts on the play this fall. Mom and dad exchange a concerned look. Dad comments that Whitney has a way of trying to do too many things, but she thinks that she wants a career in the theater. Whitney answers mom and dad by saying (good naturedly but seriously) that she can keep up her grades and go to play rehearsals. First, she says, "I have to get the part."

Mom tells Cathy and Christian that they look a little like the cartoon character Pigpen, but they can cleanup later. They have already settled on the floor in huge plastic beanbag pillows. They seem to communicate like twins, apparently trading ideas without talking.

Mom, dad, and Whitney sit on the couch opposite the TV, and I sit in a Tennessee rocker next to the couch. As the evening continues and Whitney gets more interested in the movie, she moves to the floor and sits closer to the TV with Cathy and Christian.

When the pizza man comes, about 40 minutes into the movie, mom stops the tape and asks everyone to help themselves. Cathy and

Christian dive into the pizza; they are obviously very hungry. Then she begins the tape again.

Whitney, Cathy, and Christian have never seen this movie, but mom and dad say that they have. They also mention that "there is so much detail that you forget." Since mom and dad have already seen the movie, they particularly enjoy watching their teenagers enjoy it, and the teens do.

When the movie ends, dad asks Whitney why she really wants a part in the school play. In the meantime, mom asks Cathy and Christian to get cleaned up. Whitney explains to dad that the part of Marian, if she could get it, would show everyone that she can sing and act. Whitney explains further that participation in this play could help her get into a college that has a good theatre program. Dad quietly reminds Whitney that grades in all subjects count for college admission.

Mom starts to clean up the pizza leavings, and I offer to help. Cathy rejoins the family, and comments that The Music Man is "a cool movie." After Cathy's review, I decide to say good night, and I leave. Once again, family members have seemed concerned for one another and respectful. Mom continues to seem a key person "in control" of this family, but dad seems to try to reach Whitney and to show interest in her future.

Mom suggests that I am welcome to return tomorrow for a "silly" Sunday afternoon movie.

Observations of the Family and Video Viewing, 8/13/95, Sunday, 4:30pm:

Mr. O'Reilly is finishing washing the family van when I arrive, and he tells me to go on into the kitchen where "Lou is making us some iced tea," and that seems like a great idea on this humid afternoon.

When I find Lou, she and Cathy are in the kitchen. Whitney is on the phone, and Christian is in the back yard playing with Mike. Lou asks if I "got a look at" the VCR in the van, and I admit that I did not. Well, Lou says, "it keeps me sane" when I drive any distance with the kids. They love it, and it keeps them occupied while I drive. (This is truly a VCR family.)

Dad comes into the kitchen, and Lou says that iced tea is ready, and we should help ourselves. Mom also suggests that we move into the family room where we can watch a video and relax.

Dad says that this video movie, Ferris Buehler's Day Off, is one that he and Christian picked out. They saw it the first time several years ago, and they liked it so well that they bought it. Lou comments that she told me this is "silly" movie day.

Before we sit down, dad calls Christian and tells him to come in and see Ferris. Mom motions to Whitney to hang up the phone and to join everyone in the family room. Mom tells me, "You know it was a lot easier to get this group together a few years ago; now, everyone wants to go off in different directions."

This evening, dad and Christian sit on the floor, and Whitney sits down in the rocker. Mom, Cathy, and I sit on the couch. Dad loads the tape, and mom picks up the remote as if this were the beginning of the family's "viewing ritual."

Christian has a twinkle in his eye as he tells us all that he always likes to see this movie because it gives him great ideas about how to fool people. Dad says that "only in the movies" could Ferris get away with so much, and he emphasizes that Ferris does not live in the "real" world--where people get caught.

Whitney asks dad why he likes this movie, and he says that he likes to see the scenes of Chicago and Evanston, since he went to high school on the North Shore. Whitney says that she bets that the principal at dad's old high school was not as "dumb" as the principal in this movie. Dad laughs and agrees that no principal can really be like the man in the movie.

Cathy, who seems comfortably seated next to her mom, asks mom to "scratch her back." Mom says "sure" and reminds everyone that there is plenty of iced tea.

As the movie continues, the family gets several really good laughs from the characters and the plot. It doesn't seem to matter that everyone has seen the movie at least once before this evening.

Family members do not stay "static" as the movie plays back but make bathroom stops and sometimes play with the dog.

When the movie is rewinding, Whitney says that she would like to visit Chicago, and dad agrees that the whole family might enjoy taking a vacation to see what's there. Mom says that she would like to go, especially if they could get away this time of year!

Cathy asks if soccer is a "big deal" for kids around Chicago, and dad says that he's pretty sure that soccer is a big deal for kids around the world.

As the evening ends, I am particularly interested in the remarks that dad made to Christian at the beginning of this movie. Dad was definitely trying to distinguish the "movie world" from the "real world," and Christian seemed to listen. I also was impressed that Whitney rather quickly paid attention to her mom and hung up the phone to join the family. All told, this family does seem to respect one another.

Total amount of time spent viewing with the O'Reillys: 8 hours

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Four different research components contributed to this study and allowed me to triangulate data as Denzin suggested (1978). These distinct sources provided evidence that was compared on each point of interest, and these data corroborated information related to the basic research question: How does VCR viewing in the natural setting of the home reveal family roles, rules, and relationships within the family system when the children are young teenagers? Based on the corroboration of evidence offered by these data, the influence of my presence during in-depth interviews and participant-observation of family viewing was minimized, and I attained a high level of confidence in my findings.

Focus on Rental Videos

Young teenagers and their parents consistently commented on regular viewing of rental videos in their homes. Seldom were videos purchased, but on two occasions when a purchase was made, families had rented the same video movie first, then decided to make its purchase. Almost exclusive use of rental videos was supported by participants' responses to my guided interview question: How are videos selected for viewing in your home? Family emphasis on rental videos was corroborated by data from in-depth interviews, VCR viewing diaries that were kept separately by teenagers and parents, and by my own participant-observation when families viewed videos at home. Based on these data,

the discussion and conclusions in this chapter reflect family use of rental videos.

Sources of data included the following: twelve individual, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with young teenagers who were 13 to 15 years old; six separate, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with their parents; ten individual VCR viewing diaries kept by five parents and five teenagers; and my own participant-observation in two family homes during their VCR viewing on six separate occasions. A summary of findings follows.

A Summary of Teenagers' In-depth Interview Responses

Textual analysis of in-depth interviews with all teenage participants revealed distinct patterns in their responses and comments. All teenage participants responded that their homes were two-parent households, and every teenager with one exception indicated that mom played a significant role in the selection of videos viewed in the home. (The teenager who provided an exception mentioned that he could make mail order selections on his own, but he appeared to be trying to make an impression that he was "grownup" with this response.) In most cases, the teenagers related that mom drove them to the video rental store and approved all video selections before they were rented. This finding complemented earlier studies that described the mother's role as VCR/television monitor and guide, the parent most concerned with television and video content (Jordan, 1990; Krendl et al., 1993a).

Fathers seldom accompanied teenagers to the video rental store, but this was influenced by the time of day and day of the week that was most convenient for many mothers and teenagers to visit the store. Friday afternoon after school was generally convenient for mothers and

teenagers, although all mothers were employed outside the home. Most mothers held positions with hospitals or school systems, and these positions allowed them to leave work on Friday at the end of the school day. Dads usually held jobs that required them to remain at work during this time.

Video content influenced which videos were chosen for viewing at home in all cases. Teenagers generally enjoyed what they called "scary" videos, the horror genre, but young males also selected Japanese animation or futuristic adventures. Young females occasionally selected "scary" videos, but they favored new releases, old musical comedies, and Disney selections.

Responses revealed that only one teenager enthusiastically claimed that VCR viewing was *most often* a "family thing," which involved *all* family members in her home. More often, teenagers explained that they watched videos alone or with a sister or brother. When viewing alone, they could express their own taste in video content, eat and drink without supervision, and view at times that suited them. Participants seemed to assess viewing alone as a relaxing break, and no teenagers inferred that this was a lonely experience.

When parents and teenagers did view together, mom was usually the person who sat down and watched videos with the teenager. Dad was notably missing during much VCR viewing at home, but when he did join in family viewing, the videos were usually comedies or new releases. On holiday occasions, classics like White Christmas could draw the whole family together for VCR viewing.

Teenage participants did *not* seem to seek "R-rated" selections, but they were more interested in letting me know that they were now mature enough to view these selections with parental approval. All admitted parental interest in and concern for video content and recognized certain parental boundaries related to content. Most notably, they recognized parental boundaries concerning explicit sexual activity or extreme violence, but these concerns were not perceived as rules.

Earlier findings indicated that families from less affluent social economic strata were very concerned with media content (Jordan, 1992). However, no strict or rigid family rules limiting when to view videos or for what length of time were recognized by teenagers. On the contrary, earlier research suggested that upper-middle class families with young children created rules that placed definite time limits on media use (Jordan, 1992). However, young children seldom followed these rules (Jordan, 1992).

Most often teenagers mentioned light hearted discussions of videos with sisters and brothers while the video played or later with classmates at school. However, one teenage male recalled talking over a controversial video, which concerned homosexuality with his dad after the video was finished. This more serious discussion occurred after Philadelphia, the movie concerning a homosexual attorney who contracted AIDS. Discussions with parents occurred most often when teenagers wanted to understand the meaning of a word in the dialogue or when they wanted to comment on how effective a scene was, especially when it was funny.

Every one of the twelve teenage participants agreed to keep an individual VCR viewing diary over a five-week period. Diaries were

given to each participant with an explanation of how to keep the diary. Each diary provided pages that could easily be filled in on a daily basis. Participants were asked to enter pertinent information including the titles of videos viewed at home with family members or viewed alone. (Diary data are available in Appendix D.)

A Summary of Parents' In-depth Interview Responses

All parents who participated in this study described their homes as two-parent households with both parents living at home. However, fathers were not typically described as regular participants in the family's total VCR viewing process, which usually began with a trip to the video rental store. The process continued with the selection of video movies, which was followed by parental approval of titles, then rental. The process concluded with viewing selections at home.

Parental data confirmed teenagers' comments. Fathers were often missing when videos were selected at the rental store although this might be attributable to the time of day and day of the week that family members reported visiting these stores. For example, Friday afternoon after school was mentioned most often as the convenient time to rent videos. Still, the majority of mothers emphasized that fathers rarely chose to join in family viewing. The inference was that dads were usually not interested in video movies or just too tired to watch with family members.

Criteria for parental approval of video selections were not described by parents in a rigid fashion, and parents allowed their teenagers to make some "R rated" selections, which was confirmed by teenagers. But genuine parental concern was expressed over video content. Videos with explicit sexual content or extreme violence, which was also described as

"unnatural" or "Satanic" violence by some parents, were rejected. To make this type of decision, parents usually read the description of the plot that was written on the tape box before approving or rejecting a video. Other than a genuine concern for content, parents expressed no strict rules related to when VCRs were viewed or for what length of time.

Parental concern for video content suggested a need for external boundaries. Such boundaries separated the family and its humanistic values from a world depicted as unnaturally violent or explicitly sexual as demonstrated on some video selections.

The majority of parents also expressed concern over the "movie reality" portrayed by some video selections. They did not want their young teenagers to apply what some videos presented as "reality" to the actual day-to-day problems of life. One parent pointed to a specific example. She described a video movie that portrayed a character who survived a gun shot wound to become a hero in his neighborhood gang. When she watched this movie with her son, she said that she tried to help him understand that this was not a likely outcome; in real life as she knew it, those who were shot did not survive.

Parents, especially mothers, were apt to view videos with their young teenagers (or at least to sit down with them for a little while) when the videos were playing. No parents expressed a preference for viewing videos alone, and two parents mentioned that they did view videos with the whole family on a fairly regular basis.

Certain types of video movies were favored when the whole family did view at the same time. These included new releases, comedies, and

Disney offerings. The most usual family selections were comedies; however, the action-adventure genre was also enjoyed.

Parents were also aware of the types of video movies that teenagers selected for themselves since one parent usually accompanied young teenagers to a rental store and reviewed selections. Among the types of videos that teenagers selected were examples of the horror genre and futuristic movies, comedies, some new releases, and some old movie classics. However, the horror genre was predominantly favored, especially among male teenagers.

Summary of Diary Results

All participating teenagers and parents initially agreed to keep separate daily VCR viewing diaries over a five-week period beginning June 25 or July 2 during the summer of 1995. Each diary recorded what video title and type of video was viewed at home, when videos were viewed, who joined in family viewing, where VCR viewing was done, and any other activity that accompanied viewing. Five teenagers' diaries and five adult diaries were actually completed. A summary of their diary entries follows.

Individual diaries kept by teenagers and their participating parents revealed that video cassettes were often selected for viewing at home on the basis of *genre* or type. Certain types of videos typically appealed to the whole family. Others appealed to certain family members, and differences in taste often reflected maturational levels. For example, diaries of parents and teenagers reported that viewing shared by the whole family or the majority of family members often featured comedies or action-adventure dramas available as *new release* selections. Video content was very

important to family members since diary entries reported consistent preferences, and family boundaries were evident in family selections. Extremely violent or explicitly sexual content was never chosen as parents also reported in their interviews.

Titles that were selected for the family audience viewing during the summer of 1995 included Robin Williams' comedy, Mrs. Doubtfire and Tom Hanks' comedy, Forrest Gump. Action-adventure titles that attracted family viewing included Under Siege, which portrayed terrorists who attempt to take over a United States naval vessel.

When teenagers reported viewing alone or with peers, the horror genre, Japanese animation, and bizarre comedies were noted, which complemented their interview data. Representative titles included a horror story, The Evil Dead and Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels' comedy, Dumb and Dumber. The *whole* family was not drawn to these selections according to adult and teenage diaries, but these selections were often shared by the teenager with siblings, which was suggested in earlier reports of adolescent viewing (Gunter & Levy, 1987; Lindlof et al., 1988).

Family Members View Together and Separately

Both in-depth interview data and diary data indicated that video cassette viewing by the family at home most often included shared family viewing and individual (private) viewing. This mix was consistently noted. Predominance of private or shared viewing was not demonstrated by entries in this study. However, earlier Gunter and Levy suggested that VCR use in the family was generally a "privatized media experience," according to their analysis of diary reports (1987).

Evidence from the current study more closely complemented previous findings that 50% of VCR viewing was shared in the company of family members and that VCR viewing offered opportunities for family sharing and interaction (Einsiedel & Savage, 1988; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Still, in the present study, adolescent viewing of "scary" or bizarre comic video, Japanese animation, or old classic movie fare strongly suggested that teenagers enjoyed private moments when they could view their own selections alone.

I interpreted this mix of shared and individual VCR viewing as one demonstration of the family's challenge to work through the process of redefining itself when the family included young teenagers. This challenge was previously noted by family researchers who emphasized how the family as whole and individually sought redefinition when children reached the teenage years (Barber, 1992; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). In-depth interview data and data from diaries suggested that the VCR assisted in this process since parents and teenagers programmed the VCR with different video content to match both personal and family preferences.

Diaries also indicated that it was very unusual for a parent to view a video alone, but quite usual for a teenager. One adult diary provided the exception and suggested that when the spouse and children were away from home, solitary viewing attracted that parent's interest. Studies by earlier researchers indicated that electronic media, especially television, took different roles in family life and sometimes took the role of companion for family members (Goodman, 1980; Jordan, 1990, 1992). The

VCR was also capable of taking the role of companion according to diaries in the present study.

Diaries also reported co-viewing, which suggested a bonding between teenage siblings or a bonding between a parent and teenager that was prompted by sharing an interest in the content of a video cassette.

Patterns of VCR viewing were strongly connected to video content, and family selections were viewed at times when the whole family was at home. Teenagers and parents reported that shared VCR viewing took place in the evening, often beginning around 9 PM and ending before midnight. On the other hand, individual viewing was reported at odd times: during the late night or early morning and at times when the whole family was unavailable, especially during the day in the summer when school was not in session.

A family pattern of **eating** and viewing videos was highly apparent from teenage and parent entries, however talking was also noted. In addition, diaries of three female participants recorded exercising while fitness videos played back. Entries also reported viewing patterns by the location of VCR units.

Viewing shared by family members was most often reported in the living room, family room, or den. However, entries made by one teenager and parent noted regular viewing by the whole family in the master bedroom. The mother in that family described VCR viewing as a family "time out" during her interview. Her comments indicated that the family felt unity and mutual support when they viewed in the master bedroom.

Private or individual viewing was usually reported in the teenager's bedroom if the family had more than one VCR unit available to

family members. When only one unit was available, solo viewing often took place at odd hours during late night or early morning wherever the unit was located.

Summary of Ethnographic Observations

Two families invited me to watch video movies with them in their homes through the mother's invitation. These mothers and their teenagers had previously participated in this study by giving separate in-depth interviews, and each had previously kept an individual VCR viewing diary. I accepted the invitations to join these families, and my participant-observations reflected viewing sessions with each family on three separate occasions during August 1995 for a total of six visits. Field notes provided insight into each family's VCR viewing patterns in the natural setting of their homes.

Observations of the first family that I joined are reported as observations of the Carrol family; observations of the second family that I joined are reported as observations of the O'Reilly family. Both surnames are pseudonyms used to preserve anonymity.

The Carrol family and the O'Reilly family watched rental videos with regularity in the evening, especially on weekends, and both families enjoyed eating snacks or eating a meal while videos played back, however these families demonstrated different approaches to taking time out and sharing video viewing. For example, the Carrol family's VCR viewing appeared to be a diversion that complemented weekend relaxation. It gave family members a chance to sit down together, to laugh and to talk about scenes as they played. Yet, the father never joined in viewing.

Earlier both his wife and teenage son agreed that VCR viewing was "not his thing" during in-depth interviews.

In the O'Reilly family VCR viewing seemed to mean more than relaxation. It engaged every family member: mother, father, and three teenage children while it promoted communication among family members and suggested positive family bonding.

On one occasion, the father talked with his teenage son about how the pranks he had just viewed on the screen would not translate into acceptable behavior in real life. On another occasion, the 15-year-old teenage daughter selected the musical classic, The Music Man, for family viewing. She explained that she wanted to act in the school play and that this musical had been chosen for production. Both mother and father exchanged a concerned glance in reaction, but father and daughter talked about her interest in the play.

The mothers' interest in and concern for video content was observable both in the Carrol and O'Reilly homes. In the Carrol home, when family members wanted to view a video movie that the mother did not recognize by title, she looked at the description on the tape box, then was verbally assured by an older son that the selection was "O.K." These observations were supported consistently by in-depth interview data that stressed the mother's role as viewing guide.

In the O'Reilly family, the three teenage children and their parents seemed to have an agreement that family members would "take turns" selecting videos for family viewing with the mother's final approval. For example, following the family viewing of the baseball comedy, Angels in the Outfield, the 15-year-old daughter announced that she would make

the next selection. Family members agreed with her without argument as if "taking turns" with video selections was part of their usual routine.

In each family, the content of the videos selected was significant. When family members viewed together, they seemed to agree on new releases, especially comedies and action-adventure selections, which was noted previously in interviews and diaries. But in the Carrol family, the teenage son expressed distinct personal tastes in choosing what videos he watched alone. The horror genre and Japanese animation were among his favorites. The mother deferred to family viewing preferences with the exception of horror. Both agreed on new release, action-adventure and comedy. However, her personal taste called for Shakespearean portrayals or "happy ever after" romantic dramas according to in-depth interview data. A similar difference in taste was noted by women in Great Britain, who formed their own video viewing clubs and watched their own selections without the influence of other family members (Gray, 1987).

Technical aspects of VCR playback were demonstrated differently by the Carrols and the O'Reillys. In the Carrol home, the young teenage male took charge of all technical requirements of the VCR. From loading the tape into the machine to using the remote, then rewinding and unloading the tape, this teenage male was observably in control. However, in the O'Reilly family, the father often loaded the tape into the machine, but the mother took charge of the remote device.

The whole technical process did not appear to be an important issue in the O'Reilly home, but it did seem an important issue in the Carrol home where the young teenage male identified himself as most capable with the technical aspects of the VCR, and the mother encouraged him.

Communication among family members about the content of videos occurred most often while the videos were played back. Generally, family members remarked about how movie portrayals differed from life in the real world, but comments were usually light hearted. For example, a mother and daughter commented and laughed about the glamorized appearance of early American settlers who appeared in a Western. A somewhat more meaningful communication did take place in the O'Reilly home on two occasions. Once following the playback of Ferris Buehler's Day Off, the father cautioned his 13-year-old son not to imitate Ferris Buehler's pranks, but he made his remarks with a smile.

The whole family never watched videos together in the Carrol home while I joined them for viewing. But in-depth interview data from the mother and teenage son prepared me for this and suggested that the father's absence was usual. I did join the mother, daughter, teenage son, and older brother during their video viewing, and I joined the teenage son and his teenage friend on a separate occasion.

When the majority of the Carrol family gathered to view videos, family members often talked and sometimes ate snacks while the video played back. What these family members seemed to enjoy most was simply being together, and no family member appeared to be obliged to pay strict attention to the video movie playing back on the television screen. For instance, on one occasion, the teenage male fell asleep in front of the television screen; this seemed to be his nonverbal assessment of the movie chosen by his mother and his sister.

Other members of the Carrol family seldom attended the screen with rapt attention. The mother sewed while one video played back, and

the older brother teased his teenage brother about his hair then joined his younger brother on the floor where they sat to watch a video selection.

When the teenage male in the Carrol family allowed me to join him and his male teenage friend for video viewing, I observed that both boys liked to make fun of their "monster" video selection. They imitated the actions of the monster on the screen and mocked what they called its "cheesy" attempt to frighten them. Both male teenagers seemed to enjoy being free from parental supervision, and they did not seem to acknowledge my presence when the video continued to play.

Joining the O'Reilly family for video viewing in their home allowed me to observe the *whole* family: mother, father, and three teenage children, who were 13, 14, and 15 years of age while they watched video movies. The attention of family members generally drifted from watching the video movie to talking and eating. No one appeared to pay strict attention to the television screen as the movie played back, but the family often smiled and looked like they enjoyed this opportunity to be together. It also seemed that VCR viewing meant different things to different family members.

By the mother's content or happy expression, VCR viewing brought family members together so they could share entertainment, some food, and a break from the demands of work or school. Conversation was most often light hearted, but it could take on a somewhat serious tone.

When the oldest O'Reilly teenager, a 15-year-old daughter, selected The Music Man for family viewing, she had more than family entertainment in mind. She wanted to communicate her interest in trying out for a part in the upcoming school play, a portrayal of this same

musical. Choosing the video movie was one method of initiating discussion with her family, and she seemed to me to be seeking personal autonomy and family approval simultaneously.

My participant-observation with the O'Reilly family always included viewing with the whole family, but my in-depth interview with the 14-year-old daughter revealed that she and her sister did watch certain video content like the comedy Dumb and Dumber without the entire family present. This suggested that there were also video selections that the teenagers liked to watch at home by themselves, free from parental influence.

In the Carrol family, body language sometimes expressed individual autonomy and sometimes indicated a bonding between family members. For instance, the mother and daughter usually sat side by side on a sofa and chair in close proximity or both sat on the sofa. The young teenage male always established his territory on the floor, and this was where his older brother sat down with him to tease, yet to express what I interpreted as a brotherly bond.

In the O'Reilly family, the body language expressed by the two youngest teenagers, a male 13-years-old and a female, 14-years-old, suggested their closeness since they most often sat side by side on the floor and seemed to share what looked like the nonverbal communication of twins with nods, gestures, smiles, and frowns. The mother sat on a chair near her family on one occasion, but moved to the sofa with her 13-year-old daughter on another occasion where she could scratch the youngest girl's back.

Family members tended to change seating from movie to movie, but mother and father could communicate with a glance. On the other hand, the father moved physically closer to his teenage son or daughter whenever viewing prompted discussion. From my observation, the O'Reilly's collective body language demonstrated positive family relationships that encouraged communication, which seemed to encourage the 15-year-old to disclose her desire to be in a school play.

The Basic Research Question

The basic research question asked in this study--how does VCR viewing in the natural setting of the home reveal family roles, rules, and relationships within the family system when the children are young teenagers?--was answered through observable family structure, discovery of family communication processes, and viewing patterns in participating homes.

The mother's role as video viewing guide was consistently acted out when videos were selected for viewing in the home. She was the ultimate judge of which selections were welcome in the home, and all teenagers in this study respected the mother's judgement. In-depth interviews with parents and teenagers confirmed mother's role as video viewing guide.

The father's role varied with families. Two fathers, who participated directly in this study, acted as mentors to their teenagers after video viewing. They joined or led family discussions prompted by viewing content according to in-depth interviews and participant-observation. However, most parents and teenagers agreed that the father's

role was typically less involved. Most fathers were described as too tired or uninterested in VCR viewing unless the family was on vacation.

The teenager's role consistently reflected a need to find independent identity and to move toward autonomy. This role was acted out as teenagers made their own video selections. In-depth interviews, diaries, and participant-observation confirmed that teenagers looked forward to viewing videos alone or with peers. Still, teenage participants in this study also joined the whole family on occasion for shared family viewing, which indicated a desire to retain identity within the family.

No rigid family rules surrounded VCR viewing as in-depth interviews and participant-observation confirmed. For example, when videos were viewed or the length of time devoted to viewing did not merit any family rules. On the other hand, video content created parental concern.

In-depth interviews revealed that "R-rated" material was shared by families, and parents and teenagers included some "R-rated" titles in their diaries. But parents expressed great concern for extremely violent content, Satanic content, or explicit sexual content, which they found unacceptable by any standards. Yet, evidence of some "R-rated" selections viewed at home suggested that family boundaries were stretching and allowed more mature themes during this family life stage.

Family relationships were positively encouraged by video viewing whether it was shared by the whole family or certain family members. Preference for the same type of video prompted bonding between family members. For instance, parents and teenagers might bond as they viewed Westerns; siblings might bond as they viewed horror videos. However,

what was most apparent from in-depth interviews and participant-observation, video viewing required interaction and communication among family members from the time a selection was made.

Family structure, processes, and viewing patterns revealed the family system in transition, especially when family members came together for video viewing. Shared viewing required mutual decision-making, and agreement on video content sometimes reflected the mother's arbitration. Without agreement, selection of content often reflected maturational differences in taste.

Family viewing patterns also included separate viewing sessions for young teenagers who intentionally selected movies that were quite different from family preferences. These teenagers sought autonomy with selections like "scary," horror movies, outrageous comedies, or animations.

Mothers very occasionally vetoed teenage selections when they recognized some titles or read a tape box description of extreme violence. Such violence was not acceptable to any participating family according to in-depth interviews with parents, and the mother's veto power was respected. Mother acted as a kind of content referee, and teenagers in this study described her decisions as "liberal," even "loose."

Although the mother usually took the responsible role of media viewing guide, one mother in this study was not always able to approve video selections. This mother's in-depth interview and her young teenage daughter's corresponding diary revealed that an older sibling with a driver's license could easily accompany the younger teenager to a rental store and influence video selections. This clearly expanded the young

teenager's opportunity to explore video content without parental supervision.

Three teenage males who participated in this study expressed their sincere interest in dominating VCR control. Their in-depth interviews emphasized a need to take the controlling role, especially to take charge of the VCR. This was supported by my participant-observation of the young teenage male in the Carrol family, who managed VCR use so well that family members encouraged him.

Earlier studies agreed that fathers controlled the TV sets (Lull, 1982; Morley, 1986). However the majority of adult and teenage participants in the current study did not consider control of the VCR a major family issue.

Mothers generally communicated approval of video content in the store before a tape was rented, but every family member commented on scenes while the movie played back according to in-depth interviews and diaries. Many comments were limited to the entertainment value of a scene. However, the two fathers who participated in this study also assumed mentoring roles when they participated in family discussions after videos were viewed; both discussed movie "solutions" with their teenagers, and both separated movie solutions from real life solutions. In this way, father's contributed a steadying hand in the family system.

A third father's discussion with his 15-year-old son was vividly recalled by that teenager during his in-depth interview. Prompted by the movie Philadelphia, both father and son stretched long established family boundaries to reach a greater mutual understanding of homosexuality and

AIDS. More often in-depth interviews, diaries, and my own participant-observation noted that far less intense video content was viewed at home.

An Emerging Model Describes Shared and Private Family Viewing

Results of textual analysis of in-depth interviews, analysis of diary entries, and analysis of my own participant-observation of families viewing videos suggested the importance of video content during the family's adolescent years. Parents acted out guiding roles as they redefined relationships within the family system that allowed teenagers more autonomy. "Concern for or interest in video content" became the core category suggested by textual analysis of all in-depth interview data.

Content was capable of drawing family members together for a shared viewing experience, and content was capable of dividing family members into different audiences. This phenomenon was supported by the earlier finding that adolescents preferred viewing with peers (Gunter and Levy, 1987). However, my research did **not** find evidence that VCR use was *most often* a "privatized media experience" for individual family members as previously suggested (Gunter and Levy, 1987).

My findings, which reflected the viewing of families with young teenagers, supported previous evidence that VCR viewing of rental videos was shared in the company of family members (Einsiedel and Savage, 1988). However, Einsiedel and Savage also suggested that 50% of rental viewing was shared by family members in their study (1988). The percent of viewing shared by family members in my study varied significantly with the family. One family viewed rental videos with all family members significantly more than 50% of the time, but shared family

viewing accounted for only a part of the total viewing reported for all participating families. A mixture of shared and private viewing was evident in each participating family.

Each of these families included young teenagers who viewed their own video selections privately, although they joined family members at other times to share selections. Such coming together and separating for viewing was typical of every family in this study. Individual viewing allowed teenagers to make their own decisions from what to view to when to view as they took a step toward autonomy, and every teenager in this study said that s/he looked forward to viewing videos in private. However, teenagers' private viewing appeared to be done in functional family homes where parents were interested in helping the teenagers explore decision-making options.

Types of Families Reflected in the Model

Individuals and families who participated in this study were solicited with the cooperation of The Chattanooga Public Schools. Participants were self-selected volunteers who represented intact or blended 2-parent households, and their willingness to participate may have indicated their ability to function as healthy families. In addition, all participants were associated with The Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences, a magnet school that advocates quality education for children from every neighborhood, a mission grounded in *The Paideia Proposal* (Adler, 1982).

Members of African American and Caucasian families were included in this study and reflected ethnic diversity, although their annual household incomes were similar. These incomes usually fell into

a comfortable mid-range that made it possible for participants to own VCR units and to regularly rent videos.

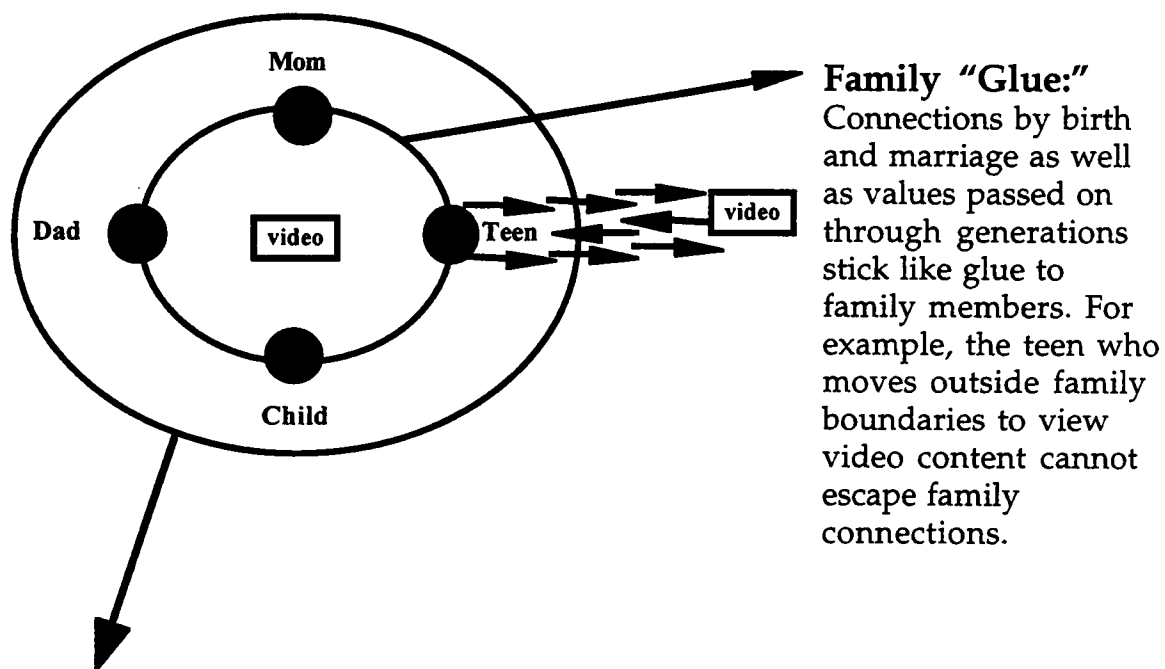
VCR Viewing Resembles Use of the Family Piano

The VCR viewing phenomenon in my study resembled the phenomena surrounding family gatherings in the era when the family piano offered Americans an entertainment option that could draw family members together. In the early part of the 20th century, the family piano offered a gathering place where family members came together for entertainment and relaxation.

Such a use of the family piano became a tradition in my own family, and this tradition passed from earlier generations to the present. Still, when children became young teenagers, the drawing power of the piano and its music diminished. At that time, tastes appeared to change. Parents and teenagers no longer agreed on the type of music everyone would enjoy.

Teenagers of an earlier day ventured beyond their family's musical boundaries. They discovered "Ragtime," just as many years later, their descendants discovered "Rock and Roll." What young teenagers did in those times is similar to what young teenagers and their families are doing now with the VCR: exploring and examining boundaries.

The following figure offers a graphic representation of how video content relates to the family system, especially family boundaries.



Family Boundaries:

Internal boundaries separate family members from one another and the generations from each other; **external boundaries** separate the family from the rest of the world (Galvin & Brommel, 1991, p. 27).

As the family system moves through adolescence, video content viewed in the family home offers a potentially powerful resource that encourages the family to recognize internal family boundaries and to explore external boundaries.

Figure 1. Model of Adolescent Family Lifestage demonstrated through VCR Viewing

Summary:

- Video content both brings family members together **and** separates family members during this life stage.
- Video content allows families to recognize boundaries, to create boundaries, and to explore beyond traditional family boundaries.
- Video content helps the family grow through the adolescent life stage by offering a convenient resource that meets a variety of family needs and tastes.

Video Content Becomes a Family Resource

The content of videos selected for home viewing enables families to move through the transition of adolescence (when children are young teenagers) with a convenient and pervasive resource. This allows families to explore and examine changing as well as established roles, rules, and relationships. Those who prefer the same content can view together or separate themselves from other family members. This elected separation may indicate a healthy bonding between family members or a bonding between siblings.

Besides the potential for bonding relationships, video movies can promote family discussions that help teenagers distinguish movie "solutions" and movie "reality" from the reality of day to day life. Such discussions may encourage teenagers to develop a clearer understanding of what to expect in day to day life.

VCR Viewing by Participating Parents and Young Teenagers Creates Meaningful Interaction and Communication

In-depth interviews with all but one teenager and one parent in this study described regular visits to the video rental store as a routine step in

the family viewing process. One teenager and parent, who offered an exception, purchased mail order video movies. Diaries also confirmed the viewing of rental titles, and additional evidence of video rental titles was apparent during participant-observation.

Previous studies reported that American adolescents considered VCR use in their homes essential and that the dominant use of VCRs by American families with young teenagers was the viewing of rental videos (Morgan et al., 1990). My current investigation supported those findings but also revealed that the VCR viewing process encouraged healthy family interaction and communication within participating families.

VCR Viewing of Rental Videos Unlike Television Viewing

The present study distinguished VCR viewing by American families from television viewing particularly because VCR viewing most often involved the process of renting a video movie. Regular family use of rental movies was revealed by guided interview questions, and the video rental process required family interaction and communication. Both were encouraged since participating teenagers in the 13-to 15-year-old age range were not old enough to have a driver's license and usually were accompanied by their mother to a rental store. In contrast, television programming was available immediately whenever the set was turned on and was often targeted at specific demographics, which could easily exclude young teenagers or their parents.

A highly significant finding from the in-depth interviews was that the mother generally read a description of the video on the tape box and *then* paid for its rental whether the selection was intended for family

viewing or individual viewing. Therefore, the video cassette became an **invited guest**, not an intruder in the home.

From video selection through viewing at home, the content of the rental video promoted negotiation, discussion, and occasional compromise among family members. The communication process itself remained open during this period of family transition, a period which had potential to become stressful (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989; Duvall & Miller, 1985; Hill, 1949; and Hill & Mattessich, 1979).

The forceful statement that the "process of making human beings human was turned off when the family television was turned on" was not supported by my current VCR viewing evidence (Bronfenbrenner, 1973, p. 20). On the contrary, participating families and family members communicated with one another and interacted in response to videos delivered through the television screen. For example, my participant-observations of the O'Reilly family documented how the father interacted with his teenagers in relation to their shared video viewing. In each instance, he offered mentoring related to what they had viewed.

The mother's role was consistently significant in this study from the beginning. Every participating mother accepted responsibility for the video content that she rented with her teenager. Still, parental guidance of video selections was not perceived as "rigid" when teenagers were interviewed, and they generally perceived the mother's guidance in a positive light. (This perception could be interpreted to mean that teenagers recognized how approval often meant a loving concern.)

Family boundaries were loosened as reflected by video content allowed into the home. No teenage participant was forbidden to select or

forbidden to view "R-rated" material, but most had other preferences. A continued loosening of boundaries was also reflected through the use of the remote control device.

Only one father in this study was described by his wife in her in-depth interview as expecting to see the remote device next to his chair, but her teenage son did not support her view in his in-depth interview. Most teenagers and parents indicated that control of the remote device and the VCR in general was not a major family issue. Yet, during in-depth interviews, three teenage males expressed interest in controlling the VCR and its remote as if this gave them a sense of personal power.

My ethnographic observations of the Carrol family documented how family members encouraged the young teenage male in that family to take charge of the VCR and the remote device because he did it well. In that family, the young male was proud of his expertise and happy to take control of viewing.

Previous studies demonstrated how boundaries must stretch as families work through adolescent years and attempt to gain mutual autonomy while reorganizing family roles, rules, and relationships (Preto, 1989, p. 255). VCR viewing in the family home can help family boundaries stretch and help family members adjust to changing roles, rules, and relationships. It assists developmental change with the opportunity for a shared "time out" that brings the family together or a separate "time out" that meets individual needs. Video selections can ease transitions during this developmental period in which the family system adjusts, stretches, and grows.

Limitations

This study reported findings in a case study format that reflected my own observational family data along with in-depth interview data of participating family members who viewed VCRs at home. Five parents and five teenagers provided additional data through their individual VCR viewing diaries.

I do not suggest that these data can be generalized to the entire population of American families with young teenagers at home, and I recognize that my sample was comprised of self-selected volunteers. These volunteers may represent healthier American families who work at communication in their homes. My personal bias may also affect interpretation of data. However, these data can be compared to all previous data concerning media use at home that has been analyzed from a family systems perspective. These data may also open new areas for research exploration.

Implications for Further Research

Findings from this study reflect highly functional patterns of communication and interaction that were demonstrated by participating 2-parent families during the VCR viewing process, which usually started with video movie rentals and proceeded to viewing videos in the home. These functional patterns were especially significant since all participating families included at least one young teenager who was 13 to 15 years old, the family life stage renowned for its volatile potential and lack of communication.

All participating families were financially able to rent video movies on a regular basis, and all participants were self-selected volunteers.

However, ethnic heritage provided some diversity since participants represented African American and Caucasian families.

The need for additional research by communications and family scholars is apparent. Future studies should address the family systems demonstrated by VCR viewing in single parent families, low income families, and families in various life stages. The video movie may take a significant role as companion for members of single parent families or offer nostalgic entertainment and companionship for families entering their later years, but more research is needed.

Additional studies may also reveal how VCR viewing reflects family systems created by American families of diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. Although earlier studies have certainly opened the door with inquiries concerning VCR viewing by families of various ethnicity, more research is needed (Dobrow, 1989, 1990).

In my own study, it was highly significant that patterns of communication and interaction demonstrated by family members enhanced teenagers' progress toward autonomy. For example, video rental required decision-making by family members, and family members negotiated what content they would share. On the other hand, teenagers were allowed to make some independent video selections, and these were often video movies that they would view alone, although all selections were subject to the mother's approval.

To guide video selections, mothers generally read descriptions on video movie boxes in the rental stores before approving selections and expressed concern for extremely violent content. In my study, fathers also

expressed concern for extreme violence, and all families avoided rental of extremely violent content.

With such consistent parental attempts to avoid extremely violent video content, policy makers, television programmers, and video store owners should be apprised. Each of their positions can influence the development of a universal rating and ranking system that facilitates selection of television programs or movies available on video cassette. The development of such a system could alert television and video viewers to recognize extremely violent viewing content, perhaps, based on a numerical scale, but this system should be the same for television programming and video cassette content. This would allow viewers to block extremely violent content with television's V-chip (violence sensitive) technology, or to avoid extremely violent video rentals.

A guide of this sort might rank violent viewing content on a scale that indicates the range of violence from mild to extreme. Such a universal rating and ranking system would provide valuable assistance for families or others concerned with levels of video violence, and these violence ratings could be printed in newspapers along with television program guides and on video movie boxes. If a system of this type is implemented, future studies should investigate how families and individuals determine their own tolerance for viewing violent content.

In addition, policy makers should expand the funding of public library collections to include video movie selections. This financial support could provide for the inclusion of video movie classics that complement literary classics, and this would particularly benefit lower income families, who would enjoy but could not afford video rentals.

With this inclusion, all families would benefit, and public libraries would offer a powerful video resource that encourages family growth, communication, and interaction.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY FORMS

**CHATTANOOGA SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS AND SCIENCES**

865 East Third Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403
Elementary Division 757-4835 • Secondary Division 757-5495

RE: Letter of Cooperation

The purpose of this letter is to formally state that the Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences will cooperate in a study of the video viewing habits of eighth and ninth grade students and their families. All participants will be volunteers. The group will be a random sample of twenty to thirty student volunteers who are socially, economically and ethnically diverse. Privacy safeguards for our students are to be strictly maintained. The principal investigator will be Sarah M. Regan, Ph.D candidate at the University of Tennessee. Results of the study will be available to the participants.

We look forward to participating in this study. Thank you very much for inviting us. If there are any questions, please contact me at 757-5508.

Very truly yours,

Everette R. Correll
Assistant Principal
February 1, 1995

Parental Consent Form
For *Voluntary* Student Interviews
Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (1995)

Permission is hereby given to Sarah M. Regan, a Ph.D. candidate in mass communication at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, to interview:

(name of voluntary interview student)

at Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (CSAS) concerning VCR viewing in our home.

It is understood that only students who are volunteers will be interviewed and that answers recorded on audiotape will be confidential; the identity of respondents will not be revealed. Interview responses will provide data for Regan's dissertation titled: VCR Viewing by American Families with Young Teenagers: A Family Systems Perspective.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss of benefits. The subject may also drop out at any time or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

I understand that the interview will be approximately one hour in length and will not interfere with any classes at CSAS. Interviews will be held outside class periods during tutorial periods (study halls). The only anticipated risk to the student is the loss of study hall time. Further, I understand that no monetary compensation will be provided to students or parents who participate in interviews for this study. However, upon request, a summary of dissertation findings will be provided.

Parent Signature:

Date

Would you be willing to answer telephone survey questions concerning VCR viewing in your home to provide data for this study? Please, circle:

(YES)

(NO)

Phone # _____ Best time to call: _____

A2. Parent Consent Form for Student Interview

Participants' Confidentiality and Informed Consent
Student Version

Research Title: VCR Viewing by American Parents and Young Teenagers:
 A Family Systems Perspective

This research is being conducted to fulfill partial requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communications at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The purpose of this research is to study American family roles, rules, and relationships as they relate to VCR viewing in the home.

Your voluntary participation as a student at The Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (CSAS) involves an in-depth, face to face interview about video cassette viewing in your home. This interview will last about one hour during your tutorial period (study hall), and your interview will be audiotape recorded for accuracy of transcription. Your answers will provide data for Sarah Regan's dissertation, and your identity will be kept completely confidential. The only risk that you might encounter is a loss of time. No monetary compensation will be paid for your participation in this study, but a summary of research findings will be made available to you upon request.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you may drop out at any time without penalty. You will not be identified in this research, and only the researcher and the typist (transcriptionist) will have access to the audiotape-recordings or transcriptions of the interviews. The tape-recordings will be stored in a locked file at the location where the typist works, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. These recordings will be destroyed upon completion of transcription. If you have any questions about the research, either now or later, please contact Sarah M. Regan, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Communication Department; 615 McCallie AV; Chattanooga, TN 37403; phone 755-4400, 755-5201, or

**Dr. Barbara Moore, Head, Broadcasting Department;
 333 Communications Building, University of Tennessee, Knoxville;
 Knoxville, Tennessee 37996;
 phone (615) 974-4291.**

I have read and understand the explanation of this study and agree to participate.

 Name

 Signature

 Date

Participants' Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Parent Version

Research Title: VCR Viewing by American Parents and Young Teenagers:
A Family Systems Perspective

This research is being conducted to fulfill partial requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Mass Communications at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The purpose of this research is to study American family roles, rules, and relationships as they relate to VCR viewing in the home.

Your voluntary participation as a parent involves an in-depth telephone interview answering the same questions presented to your CSAS student at school. Your interview will be audiotape recorded for accuracy of transcription; your answers will provide data for Sarah Regan's dissertation, and your identity will be kept completely confidential. The only risk that you might encounter is a loss of time.

Following your telephone interview, you may be asked to continue contributing to this study by allowing the researcher to join your family at home on a weekly basis over a two month period for participant-observation of video cassette viewing. Following this stage of the research, your family would be asked for a final interview in a casual setting at your home to comment on the researcher's observations of family member's viewing.

No monetary compensation will be paid for your participation in this study, but a summary of research findings will be made available to you upon request.

Your participation in this research at all stages is voluntary, and you may drop out at any time without penalty. You will not be identified in this research, and only the researcher and the typist (transcriptionist) will have access to the audiotape-recordings or transcriptions of the interviews. The tape-recordings will be stored in a locked file at the location where the typist works, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. These recordings will be destroyed upon completion of transcription.

If you have any questions about the research, either now or later, please contact Sarah M. Regan, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Communication Department; 615 McCallie AV; Chattanooga, TN 37403; phone 755-4400, 755-5201, or

Dr. Barbara Moore, Head, Broadcasting Department;
333 Communications Building, University of Tennessee, Knoxville;
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996;
phone (615) 974-4291.

I have read and understand the explanation of this study and agree to participate.

Name

Signature

Date

VCR Viewing by American Parents and Young Teenagers:
A Family Systems Perspective

Principal Investigator:

Sarah M. Regan (Doctoral Candidate)

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(615) 629-5189

Advisor:

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Knoxville, TN 37996

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CONFIDENTIALITY FORM FOR TRANSCRIPTIONIST

I, _____, (NAME) agree to keep
the audiotape-recordings of this research project stored in a locked file in my locked
office at:

_____ (Office Location).

I also agree that no one else will have access to these tapes or transcriptions. The
tapes will be returned to the principal investigator immediately upon completion of
the transcription process for each tape.

Name

Signature

Date

A5. Transcriptionist's Confidentiality Form

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEENS AND PARENTS

In-depth Interview Guide for Volunteer Teens and Volunteer Parents

Respondent Information:

Age _____ Gender _____
 Number of children at home _____ Ages _____
 Education (student grade level/parent # of years) _____
 Current Occupation (parent) _____
 Approximate, annual household income: _____

1. Is your home a two-parent household with both parents living at home?
 (If "NO," which parent is head of the household?)
2. How do you decide to watch videos?
3. Do you have a regular time to watch videos?
4. How are videos selected for viewing in your home?
5. Who is with you when you watch videos at home?
6. **Tell me about any rules that your family has concerning VCR viewing or the type of videos you watch at home...Are there any understandings like the following:**
 - Videos may be viewed only when homework is done.
 - Videos may be viewed for no more than 2 hours/day.
 - No "horror" videos like *Freddie Krueger* or *Friday the 13th* will be viewed in this home.
7. What types of videos/films do you like to watch with other family members, and what types do you like to watch just by yourself?
8. Where do you usually watch videos at home?
9. Tell me about VCR viewing in your home.
10. Do you ever fast forward, stop the tape, or rewind/review before you are finished viewing? For example:
 to move through promotions at the beginning?
 - to get a snack?
 - to use the bathroom?

B1. In-depth Interview Guide for Volunteer Teens and Volunteer Parents

- to look at a scene again?
11. Do you ever discuss the videos/films that you watch?--when?-with whom?
 12. When (if) you do discuss videos with family members, what do you talk about?
 13. Would you be willing to keep a daily video cassette recorder (VCR) viewing diary noting what videos you view at home; when you view; who is with you--if anyone--when you view; where you view in your home; and other activities you may be engaged in while you view?

Thankyou, for helping me understand what videos mean to you.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTS: TEEN AND PARENT

CSAS Interviews with Teens
Transcription of Study #19 (Don Hoover)
Record Date: 6/8/95
Researcher: S. M. Regan

- 1 S: Don, I believe you told me you are completing the 10th grade,
2 really as of today and you are going to be in the 11th grade.
- 3 D: Yes ma'am.
- 4 S: And you're 15 years old.
- 5 D: Yes ma'am.
- 6 S: And how many children are in your home?
- 7 D: In my home, or in my family?
- 8 S: In your family.
- 9 D: Um, I've got an older brother, and he's married.
- 10 S: He's, OK, so how many children are at home right now?
- 11 D: Just me.
- 12 S: Just -- OK. And your older brother who's married. How old is
13 he?
- 14 D: Um, he's 24.
- 15 S: And there are you two boys, is that right?
- 16 D: That's it.
- 17 S: OK. And do both your mom and dad live at home with you?
- 18 D: Yes ma'am.
- 19 S: And does your mom work outside your home?
- 20 D: Yes ma'am.
- 21 S: What does she do?
- 22 D: She's a hair stylist.
- 23 S: I've always thought that would be a wonderful -- that has to be a
24 hard way to make a living, too. You probably run into some
25 grumpy people.

- 26 D: She just does it to occupy her time.
- 27 S: So she probably has a good time. How about your dad? Does he
28 work outside the home?
- 29 D: Yes, he works for the phone company. He's an engineer.
- 30 S: And when you go to think about entertaining yourself or when
31 your family thinks about entertainment, do you sometimes
32 decide that you'd like to watch videos, say movies that either
33 you make or that you rent?
- 34 D: Yes, we rent a lot of tapes.
- 35 S: And do you have any particular favorites that you like to rent?
- 36 D: Do you mean style or particular titles?
- 37 S: Um, both I'm interested in, actually.
- 38 D: Anything that's thought-provoking, I guess. I like movies like
39 Helter-Skelter and um, Natural Born Killers.
- 40 S: Ooooh.
- 41 D: That's, um, not that I'm sick or anything, but...
- 42 S: No, no, I understand.
- 43 D: . . .serial killers is something my brother did for his thesis and
44 it's just a theory we've always had, and watching those kind of
45 movies, um. . .
- 46 S: It is, it is a curious area.
- 47 D: I like, uh, comedies.
- 48 S: Uh, does your family, do you and your mom and dad ever watch
49 anything as a family, the three of you?
- 50 D: Yes. Um, most often when we just want to relax.
- 51 S: That's, that's interesting. Most often the three of you do "relax,"
52 when you rent a movie. And, um, when you all, all three of
53 you watch, then, um, what would you usually select?

- 54 D: It's either a comedy, or, 'cause that's all, that's what we can agree
55 on. . .
- 56 S: Right.
- 57 D: My mother doesn't like action adventure and my dad doesn't
58 like horror, so comedy or a mild action picture.
- 59 S: You mentioned that your brother's thesis was to do with serial
60 killers.
- 61 D: Um-hum.
- 62 S: What area was he studying when he did that?
- 63 D: Just psychology, basic psychology. Not criminal or anything. He
64 got, he a degree in psychology.
- 65 S: Like a master's or something?
- 66 D: (Over S.) Yes, just a. . .
- 67 S: A bachelor's?
- 68 D: A bachelor's, I think that's what it was.
- 69 S: Where'd he go to school?
- 70 D: UNC, Chapel Hill.
- 71 S: Oh, that's a good school. Good for him. And you were saying
72 that when you decide to watch, one thing you all can agree on is
73 comedies. Is there anything else that sort of prompts you and
74 your family to watch a movie? Maybe looking for
75 entertainment?
- 76 D: Just boredom, I guess, or if we just wanna spend some family
77 time together. My dad has been working a lot lately. And if we
78 can go out and see a movie, it's just something we can all agree
79 on.
- 80 S: It makes sense.
- 81 D: Um-hum.

- 82 S: I guess what I think is nice about being able to go and rent a
83 movie is that it can be cost efficient, you can save, over going to
84 the show, although going to the show is fun. And you can dress
85 however you want in your own house, which is nice.
- 86 D: I agree.
- 87 S: Yeah. And you don't have to pay, wow, for the popcorn (both
88 laugh) It's outrageous! I still like to go to the movie, but it's
89 costly. And you were saying your dad's been working really. . .
- 90 D: Yeah, and they go out, I guess. . .if we go out to eat sometimes
91 we'll go out to a movie, but just with all our schedules put
92 together, we don't, we rarely get time to go to a movie.
- 93 S: Besides, in your own home you can manage your own time and
94 your own business, and you're very interested in computers.
- 95 D: Yes, ma'am.
- 96 S: And do you and your mom and dad have any regular time that
97 you watch movies?
- 98 D: Not particularly. Just whenever. It's really not that big of a deal,
99 like we plan it or anything.
- 100 S: Right. It just happens.
- 101 D: Yeah.
- 102 S: I understand. And sometimes, uh, do you have friends come
103 over?
- 104 D: Yes, all the time.
- 105 S: And when your friends come over, do you all rent, uh, when I
106 say "rent", when I think you're 15, you're still in a position
107 where you don't have a driver's license yet.
- 108 D: Oh, but all my friends do.
- 109 S: Oh, do they?
- 110 D: I'm about the only one in my little group that doesn't.

- 111 S: Oh, OK. So you can go to a Blockbuster's or wherever on your
112 own.
- 113 D: Um-hum.
- 114 S: OK, and you guys can get titles that particularly interest you. Do
115 you find that, that more of your friends would go for the real
116 action, like the serial killer or horror or anything like that?
- 117 D: A horror is, I mean, not like terribly gross, but thrillers, I guess,
118 are particularly popular with my friends.
- 119 S: I think that's, that's normal as pie.
- 120 D: Just action, not any of the super gory ones.
- 121 S: (Laughs) And golly, when you are 15 years old, I wouldn't think
122 that, uh, I think back to those days. There were many rules that I
123 could figure out in my house, but can you get the feeling that
124 there are any rules in your house about using the VCR or types
125 of movies that are played at home, or when they're played or
126 anything like that?
- 127 D: Not particularly. Uh, when we watch a movie we usually watch
128 it in the den because that's where the huge TV is. And I've got
129 my own VCR in my room. As far as movies go, my parents
130 have never restricted me 'cause they don't believe in that (says
131 this almost as if to ask S. if she understands.)
- 132 S: Um-hum.
- 133 D: And they, they trust me to make, you know, a good choice. And
134 I don't, like, rent anything that I think's garbage so far.
- 135 S: I think you sound like a very responsible person. (Pause - - Don
136 looks embarrassed.) Well, I think you do!
- 137 D: Tell my parents that.
- 138 S: (Laughs) How many VCRs do you have? You said you've got
139 one in your room.

- 140 D: Three.
- 141 S: All told?
- 142 D: Yes.
- 143 S: So you've got one, um. . .
- 144 D: My parents have one in their bedroom, too.
- 145 S: OK. And you've got one when you all, when your mom and
- 146 dad and you watch, you've got one in the family room, did you
- 147 say?
- 148 D: Yeah, just a den.
- 149 S: Or the den. And it's got a big screen TV.
- 150 D: Yes, a big screen.
- 151 S: And the one in your room, and one in mom and dad's room.
- 152 Um, you were saying that you would probably watch like a
- 153 comedy when you watch with mom and dad, or like a light
- 154 adventure, something like that?
- 155 D: Um-hum. Something we can all agree on because we all have
- 156 diverse tastes.
- 157 S: And more of, more of a thriller type for yourself or with your
- 158 friends.
- 159 D: Or abstract.
- 160 S: No kidding.
- 161 D: Yes, I enjoy that very much.
- 162 S: Help me understand "abstract." I understand it from painting,
- 163 what an abstract painting is, but I'm not sure I understand it
- 164 from the movie point of view.
- 165 D: (Over S.) There was a movie shown here yesterday that we used
- 166 for a seminar called Dreams.
- 167 S: OK.

- 168 D: And it was, it was depicting seven dreams that this man had
169 (says again, as if to see if S. understands.)
- 170 S: Interesting.
- 171 D: And it just, it symbolized society and everything. And it makes
172 a lot of sense if you think about it. I think that was the name of
173 the movie. Don't quote me.
- 174 S: Right. Right.
- 175 D: Um, there's just several movies like that that have just a lot of
176 symbolism in them.
- 177 S: (Over D.) I'm thinking there was one, Don, that I, um, I could
178 put in that category called Occurrence at All Creek Bridge.
- 179 D: Um-hum.
- 180 S: That one, I guess, could go into abstract because of the way we're
181 getting into the man's mind?
- 182 D: Exactly.
- 183 S: Yeah, OK.
- 184 D: And the way it leaves things open. Everybody. . . I can watch, I
185 can watch a movie like that with a group of twenty friends and
186 we'll each understand it differently, and they'll all make sense.
- 187 S: Interesting. That makes very good sense. Each of you has your
188 individual interpretation.
- 189 D: There is also "Japanimation" is something that has popped up
190 lately that I enjoy, just because. . .
- 191 S: (Cuts in) Tell me more about that. I've heard a little about that
192 from another young man.
- 193 D: It's. . . it's just amazing, I, I think. It looks, you know you'll just
194 forget you're watching a cartoon? And it's just animation that is
195 so realistic and so well done. . . that. . .

- 196 S: (Cuts in) I'm going to have to rent some of that because I just
197 want to see it.
- 198 D: Most of 'em are subtitled 'though because they do come from
199 Japan.
- 200 S: And, I'm just filling in that you usually watch in the den, like
201 when you watch with mom and dad. And if you were to
202 describe using or viewing VCRs, um, video recordings in your
203 home, um, would you say that as far as you know you are
204 probably pretty much like all the other people you know? Or is,
205 or is there anything unique about the way your family looks at
206 videos? Little bitty things, I'm thinking of, like some
- 207 D: (Over S.) Well, I notice, I notice some people that, you know,
208 will watch movies in total silence.
- 209 S: Um-hum.
- 210 D: And that's a big thing. I mean, you know, we like, talk about
211 stuff.
- 212 S: (Over D.) While, while it's on?
- 213 D: Um-hum.
- 214 S: That's interesting.
- 215 D: And we'll help each other understand it. Or just make fun of
216 something.
- 217 S: Right. (Laughs)
- 218 D: No one has to sit there and say nothing!
- 219 S: (Continues to laugh) Oh, total silence!
- 220 D: Oh, I hate that, I hate that, when I have to sit there. . .
- 221 S: (Over D.) It's pretty rigid. (Laughs)
- 222 D: I mean, you just look around and everybody is just staring at the
223 screen blankly and. . .
- 224 S: It sounds to me like you get along well with your mom and dad.

225 D: Oh, great.
226 S: You trade ideas.
227 D: My parents are great.
228 S: I was blessed with being raised in a household like that. And it
229 is a blessing, when I think of some of my friends.
230 D: Yeah, my dad, he was a Nazarene, and it's really strict. And he
231 never got to see movies or anything.
232 S: Oooh.
233 D: To go along with this.
234 S: Right.
235 D: And just stuff like that. And so when we do watch a movie or
236 something like that, he's just got a whole lot to say 'cause it's,
237 you know, not something he's seen all his life, I guess you could
238 say.
239 S: Exactly.
240 D: But I am really close to my parents.
241 S: Communication is a serious subject, and I, I think, uh, I sure, I
242 sure am glad to hear that from you on the more serious side,
243 that you get along well with the family. And on a less serious
244 subject, um, just thinking on the practical side, who's in charge
245 of the remote when you watch with your mom and dad?
246 Anybody?
247 D: Whoever picks the movie, I guess.
248 S: Oh, OK.
249 D: So if we rent two or three, if I grabbed one, I'll go up there and
250 grab the remote, or, I mean. . .
251 S: OK.
252 D: I don't, I don't know why, that's just how it's always worked.

- 253 S: It sounds like you have a sense of cooperation in your home,
254 um-hum?
- 255 D: I guess so.
- 256 S: And do you ever fast forward through those promotions that are
257 sometimes at the beginning? Upcoming movies?
- 258 D: Mostly. Most of the time.
- 259 S: Or...
- 260 D: Unless it's a newer movie.
- 261 S: Might be curious to see what, what's coming. . .
- 262 D: Or we just fast forward so that we can like watch it and see if
263 something's, I guess, just thoughtless things like, um. . .
- 264 S: Do you ever stop the tape? Like for an intermission, and. . .
- 265 D: Not really.
- 266 S: How about, if you saw a scene, do you ever rewind it or review it
267 to look at it again?
- 268 D: Yeah, yeah, if it's funny. My dad, that's why we don't give him
269 the changer. He loves to do that.
- 270 S: (Laughs) And as far as this note that I made, "Do you ever
271 discuss films or movies that you watch?", you said, "Yes, while
272 they're playing."
- 273 D: Um-hum.
- 274 S: Do you ever talk about 'em after they play, after they're over.
- 275 D: Especially yea, uh, yes, um, more so when it's my parents going
276 to see something without me, I, I get a full report, even if I don't
277 ask for it. I guess it's kind of good, so I know about it.
- 278 S: When you talk about the movies, like you're saying they watch
279 one in their bedroom or something like that and then maybe
280 they talk about it later?

- 281 D: Um-hum. If it's a drama or something, I usually just leave,
282 'cause I don't watch those.
- 283 S: And do you talk about the plot or anything in particular to do
284 with the movie?
- 285 D: My mom always talks about specific scenes.
- 286 S: Oh, does she?
- 287 D: And my dad always talks and constantly abuses the only funny
288 jokes in the movie. And I always talk about the overall stuff, I
289 guess.
- 290 S: And I couldn't quite understand. I heard that mom
291 talks about specific scenes.
- 292 D: Yes.
- 293 S: But what's dad talk about?
- 294 D: He abuses the only funny jokes in the movie.
- 295 S: Ooh.
- 296 D: He'll stop every time, every time somebody's laughing, he'll
297 bring it back. It gets annoying sometimes.
- 298 S: (Laughs) Abuses the funny scenes.
- 299 D: (Drags this out) Yes.
- 300 S: And you talk about more like an overview?
- 301 D: Yes, I guess so.
- 302 S: Or...
- 303 D: The idea is, or I just like to argue about it, 'cause my mother will
304 interpret something some way. I guess that's what they teach
305 the students here. I guess that's where I've got that from.
- 306 S: And maybe another word for "argue". . .what you're being. . .is
307 analytical.
- 308 D: Analytical?

- 309 S: Yeah. And you're being analytical, I think. I think you're trying
310 to understand and take something apart and say, "Well, look at
311 it this way." And that is what you are being taught. To turn
312 something around and study it from another angle. And I think
313 that helps us grow instead of just having one tiny interpretation
314 and sticking to it and not looking around. Like you observed
315 about the movie, Dreams, or whatever it's name properly is,
316 which probably is Dreams. Um, each person in the group who
317 viewed that has a way of interpreting. . .
- 318 D: (Cuts in) And I like to hear what other people think. It's a big
319 thing.
- 320 S: I do too. And do you find that there are any answers that you get
321 in watching certain types of videos? We've talked about
322 entertainment videos. Do you ever go and get videos for other
323 purposes, like there are travel videos and there are sports-
324 oriented videos, um, how-to, all that sort of thing.
- 325 D: I don't do that, but I do learn a lot from movies because I was
326 homophobic.
- 327 S: Is that homophobic?
- 328 D: Yes. It's just the way I was raised.
- 329 S: Right.
- 330 D: And, and movies bring me closer and I guess I understand a lot
331 more. When I saw Philadelphia. . .
- 332 S: Ooooh.
- 333 D: . . .I could understand, you know, because I had always pictured
334 homosexuals as really bad people, and that's how I've been
335 raised and I can't help that. But I view them a lot differently
336 now. But for me personally
- 337 S: (Over D.) It was very humanizing. Yes, yes.

- 338 D: Yes, very. But I can learn from it that way, which is (he breaks
339 off)
- 340 S: Well, it's a way that we can investigate why we are like we are,
341 and you've already analyzed that. And I was brought up in a
342 religious home as well, that we are brought up to view things
343 one way, and then you go and see a movie like Philadelphia and
344 it opens a door and shows you this is how somebody else has
345 grown. And I think part of what at least helps me understand is
346 you see the tremendous suffering that comes to some people,
347 um. . .
- 348 D: Right.
- 349 S: (Responds to whatever he said) Umm. Well, if. . .
- 350 D: If, if they say you don't know a person until a mile in their
351 shoes. . .
- 352 S: How true.
- 353 D: And that's probably not the easiest way to, to see it. It's from a,
354 sort of a external position, is to see it through their eyes.
- 355 S: Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time, and I'm
356 interested if you would keep a, um, viewing diary for me for
357 several weeks and just mail it to me when you're done with it.
358 I, I've got one that tells type and title, time of day, where viewed,
359 with others, anything you were doing. And, as I say, I brought
360 an envelope with postage already on it. If you would keep this,
361 it just adds more data to the information I've collected. And it's
362 all confidential. Yes, it's for five weeks.
- 363 D: Oh, OK. Yeah, that's cool.(??? Not sure that's what he said)
364 When I'm on vacation it's not going to work too well. I'd better
365 start in a couple of weeks because I'm going to be out of town
366 and I'm not gonna be watching too many movies.

Interview with Parent

Transcription of Study #19 (Terry Hoover)

Record Date: 7/01/95

Researcher: S. M. Regan

- 1 S: This is Saturday, July 1, and I'm talking with Teri Hoover,
2 who is Don Hoover's mom. We're in Hixson, TN, where
3 the family lives. Mrs. Hoover, is your home a two-parent
4 household with both parents living at home?
- 5 T: Yes, I'm happy to say it is.
- 6 S: Thank you for agreeing to answer the same questions that
7 Don answered at CSAS about video viewing in your home,
8 especially since you are planning to have surgery on Monday
9 and trying to get things in order...
- 10 T: Well, this does give me something else to think about. As
11 far as the surgery, I just want to get done with it; it's gall
12 stones and they use laser surgery now. I should be home in
13 five days.
- 14 S: That seems better than a few years ago...when my mom had
15 that, too. Now, let's think about how you would answer the
16 same questions that your son answered at CSAS about
17 viewing videos at home. (There are no "wrong" answers.)
18 As I recall Don is a very serious minded young man.
- 19 T: He is. We're real proud of him.
- 20 S: Well, here's the first question that he answered, and now I'd
21 like your point of view:
22 Do you have a regular time that you watch videos in your
23 home?
- 24 T: No, I can't say that we do. But we usually watch at
25 night...during the school year, it's always at night, but during

26 the summer--I work Thursdays and Fridays--I sometimes
27 pick out movies for Don to watch during the day while I'm at
28 work.

29 S: When you select videos for viewing, you say that you go and
30 pick out videos for Don--umm, especially when he has to be
31 home by himself?

32 T: Right.

33 S: Does he go with you sometimes?

34 T: Yes, but most times, I just call him up on my mobile and say,
35 "have you seen...? You know, and if I see something that is
36 just graphic sex, or if someone has told me one is graphic, I
37 just don't rent that one, but he is mostly interested in the
38 future or robot type things, you know, so I don't usually have
39 a problem with what he wants to see. (Pause) They also
40 watch videos at our church, for youth group entertainment..

41 S: Oh, uh huh.

42 T: He gets ideas of videos we might want to see.

43 S: Who's with you when you watch videos at home? Do YOU
44 ever get to watch any?

45 T: Sometimes, if there's one that I really want to watch. I don't
46 usually sit down and watch those that I rent for him, (I just
47 don't usually care about watching those.) but many times,
48 Don and I rent a movie together. We did that this past week.
49 We just took a day and watched a movie that we really
50 wanted to see.

51 S: What was the title of that movie--you watched together?

52 T: Interview with a Vampire, a real bloody one!

53 S: (laughing)

- 54 T: I had just heard so much hype about it, and I said, "Don, do
55 you really think that I can watch it?" And he said, "I will
56 cover your eyes at the real bloody parts."
- 57 S: Oh, he's protecting you.
- 58 T: He just puts his hand across my eyes and says, "Don't look,
59 mom."
- 60 S: (laughing)
61 Does dad ever sit down and watch with you?
- 62 T: Yes, but dad is usually sooooo tired. He tried to sit down and
63 watch one last week, but he fell asleep, and I had to take it
64 back the next day, so I took it back and rented it again. That
65 was Guarding Tess with Shirley McLaine; it was so good, and
66 we watched it with him the next night.
- 67 S: Oh, that is a fun movie.
- 68 T: I thought it was a cute movie, and we all watched The River
69 Wild. I thought that was good, and my husband was
70 interested because he and Don go white water rafting, and he
71 loves to trout fish...
- 72 S; Ooooh!
- 73 T: So that was a good family film.
- 74 S: I think that's a beautiful movie. The scenery, the story,
75 everything about that is better than average.
- 76 T: Yes. My husband bought a mobile home a little while ago,
77 and we all went out West for six weeks, and my husband,
78 well, he wanted to stay in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.
- 79 S: It is "other worldly" out there. But I love Chattanooga, too.
- 80 T: We are like that. We were away for fourteen years, but we're
81 glad to be back. We were in Florida for awhile and think

- 82 we'll retire there, but Gary, that's my husband, was born in
83 Lafayette, (GA) so this is home.
- 84 S: But your trip out West--that sounded really interesting.
- 85 T: It was, and I don't know how long you got to talk with Don,
86 but out there I wondered about the Grand Canyon and how
87 beautiful it was and how long it must have taken to create it--
88 and what the Bible says about creation, then Don, he knows
89 his Bible real well; he said, "mom, you just have to believe
90 what's in the Bible because God said it that way, so it's that
91 way."
- 92 S: Don is a very serious boy and a religious boy.
93 He is trying to think these things through, and I think he
94 may decide that there are different interpretations...Who's to
95 say, who interpreted the Bible from which languages?
- 96 T: We've talked about that, too. The Word has been translated
97 many times. But Don is very black and white.
- 98 S: Related to that, are there any rules from your point of view
99 about video viewing in your home? --about types of videos
100 or whether homework needs to be done before a movie is
101 played???--as far as rules, I don't mean rigid written down
102 things....
- 103 T: There are some movies that Don has been forbidden to watch
104 like Gates of Hell. Don's brother, who is 23, Dax, told me that
105 movie has a real "underworld" theme, but there are no really
106 rigid rules. Dax just told me that this movie was real graphic,
107 like real car crashes and something like that...
- 108 S: And probably others that you would say are inappropriate are
109 like Freddie Krueger movies and movie like that?

- 110 T: When he was younger, Don watched some of those, and got
111 really frightened. I don't like those.
- 112 S: Maybe, he was going through that time when he just had to
113 do what the other kids do...watch "scary" movies...
- 114 T: Uh, huh. But Don has pretty good judgment now even if he
115 likes horror movies.
116 He'll be getting his driver's license soon--I don't know if I'll
117 be able to stand it. But he's pretty good at his choices.
- 118 S: Tell me more about you. Are there any types of movies that
119 you just like to watch by yourself?
- 120 T: Comedies. When I watch a movie I just want to relax. Now,
121 I refused to watch Philadelphia because it's about death, and
122 it is so sad, and life is so sad, and I said, "I just don't want to
123 see it, you know."
- 124 S: As far as types of movies, if the whole family watched, it
125 would probably be something like The River Wild or
126 something like that?
- 127 T: Or stupid slapstick! Gary, that's my husband Gary, takes Don
128 and they see Hot Shots and all that series and Naked Gun,
129 but they go to the movies to see that, and that's too silly for
130 me.
- 131 S: What about over Christmas, do you look at any special
132 movies at home?
- 133 T: I don't rent any traditional ones, No. Most of the traditional
134 ones are on television anyway, you know.
- 135 S: True, that's true.
136 And where do you usually watch videos in your home?
- 137 T: In the den, the den, that's where we spend most of our time.
- 138 S: And do have one video machine that plays back the movies?

139 T: We have three. We have one in the bedroom, one in the
140 den, and one that moves around to Don's room or he can
141 take it to the basement rec room if he wants to watch with
142 friends.

143 S: It sounds like there are some times that viewing brings the
144 family together--it depends on content and how tired dad is.

145 T: Right. Now dad does like to watch with Don; they get into
146 Monty Python and The Blues Brothers.

147 S: Oh, Geee! (laughing)

148 T: And Dax, he'll come over; he's married, and they'll all sit
149 down and watch 'em. and they know 'em all by heart, and
150 they'll say the lines, and Bob Nelson.
151 Do you know Bob Nelson?

152 S: Uh uh (No)

153 T: He's a hilarious comedian who's not nasty. They know all
154 his lines, too.

155 S: We need that kind of fun.

156 T: And they'll watch Sinbad.

157 S: Yes, yes.

158 T: Well, his father was a minister, so I guess that he didn't want
159 to be too bad!
160 I used to like Robin Williams, but he's got terrible with his
161 language!

162 S: He's changeable.

163 T: Mrs. Doubtfire, I love. We got that movie, and we all loved
164 it. That was Robin at his best. And Good Morning, Vietnam,
165 we all watched that, but I don't watch him on HBO because
166 he uses that "F" word, and I don't allow that word in my
167 house.--Oh, oh, I hate that!

- 168 S: Thinking about remote controls for movies, who's in charge
169 of the remote control for the VCR at your house?
- 170 T: Oh, that's a silly question! (laughs) Dad has the remote
171 control by his chair. If he can't see that remote control there
172 when he comes home from work, he says, "Where's that
173 remote?"
- 174 S: Oh! (laughs)
- 175 T: Still, when we are all watching, if Don's rented the movie,
176 and it's a space story, then Don may have it. If it's a love
177 story that I rented, than I may have it. But 99% of the time,
178 dad has it; he's in control!
- 179 S: (laughs)
180 My sister told me that they make remotes now that you can
181 hear if you lose 'em--
- 182 T: They "beep," and we need one!
183 (Both laugh)
- 184 T: He just freaks when he can't find the remote, so we try to see
185 that no one is in "Papa Bear's" chair and the remote is right
186 next to it when he comes home.
- 187 S: Oh, that's a riot...and does he or anybody fast forward
188 through the previews and promotions at the beginning?
- 189 T: He does, but I like to see what's coming up. Don does that,
190 too, but I rent the tapes, and I want to know what's available.
- 191 S: When you are all watching, do any of you ever stop the tape
192 to get a snack or use the bathroom?
- 193 T: Oh, yes, we have "pause" time, and when our oldest is with
194 us, he smokes, but he has to go outside.
- 195 S: And you wait?

- 196 T: Well, for a little while--we usually wait, and some use the
197 washroom or get a snack.
- 198 S: Does anyone ever stop the tape, rewind, and look at
199 something again?
- 200 T: Dad does that, especially when something is really funny.
201 He'll say, "that's great, let's see that again," and we always do
202 what he wants to do!
- 203 S: I understand that.
204 And do you ever discuss the films, the movies, that you
205 watch with the family or those at work?
- 206 T: Oh, yes, especially at work because I'm a hair dresser, and
207 everyone talks about movies and asks "what did you see this
208 week?" and "was it good?"
- 209 S: Do you talk about video movies at home, too?
- 210 T: Oh, sure. We'll talk about the plot, like what did it mean?
211 And actors, whether they were best for the part. Sometimes,
212 we talk about possible religious implications, like
213 Philadelphia.
- 214 S: But you said that you refused to watch that one.
- 215 T: That's right because it involved death, and I think that life is
216 far too sad anyway, but Gary and Don watched it and talked
217 about it.
- 218 S: Did you listen to their comments or discuss anything with
219 them?"
- 220 T: A little.
- 221 S: Did they discuss the homosexual content?
- 222 T: Yes. Don was interested in why people get like that.
- 223 S: Homosexual?
- 224 T: I think so; you know, how does it happen?

225 S: Don is fortunate to have a mom and dad like you who talk
226 these things over with him and let him see what's out there.
227 Chattanooga is pretty provincial at times.

228 T: Chattanooga may not be New York City, but we can let kids
229 know what's out there.

230 S; That's true.
231 Would you help me by keeping a diary of what videos you
232 view at home? I would like to compare one that you
233 (parents) keep to one that Don keeps if that's all right with
234 you?

235 T: We can do that; I just have to get this surgery out of the way.

236 S; And that's Monday?

237 T: Right, day after tomorrow.

238 S: You'll be in my thoughts! Thank you, for talking to me.

239 T: Will you come back or call about the diaries?

240 S: I'll call then come back after the first week in August.

241 Thank you. I'll cut the machine off now.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE DIARY PAGES: TEEN AND PARENT

**Daily Diary of Don Hoover (teen)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/02/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/02	"Wyatt Earp"	4:00 P.M.	Home		
Monday 7/03					
Tuesday 7/04	"PCU" Political/comedy	10:00 P.M.	Home	Friend	Talking
Wednesday 7/05					
Thursday 7/06					
Friday 7/07	"Ace Ventura" Comedy				
Saturday 7/08	"The Client" Drama	8:00	Home	Parents (dad)	Talking

D1. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Don Hoover
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/09/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/09					
Monday 7/10					
Tuesday 7/11					
Wednesday 7/12	"Stripes" Comedy	8:00 P.M..	Motel	Parents	Eating, sleeping
Thursday 7/13					
Friday 7/14					
Saturday 7/15	"Wolf"	8:00	Motel		

D2. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Don Hoover
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/16/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/16					
Monday 7/17					
Tuesday 7/18					
Wednesday 7/19	"Monty Python's Quest for the Holy Grail"	1:00 A.M.	My room	Friend	Talking
Thursday 7/20					
Friday 7/21					
Saturday 7/22					

D3. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Don Hoover (teen)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/23/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/23					
Monday 7/24					
Tuesday 7/25					
Wednesday 7/26					
Thursday 7/27					
Friday 7/28	"Houseguest" Comedy	8:00 P.M.	Home	Parents	All...
Saturday 7/29					

D4. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Don Hoover (teen)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/30/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/30					
Monday 8/01					
Tuesday 8/02					
Wednesday 8/03	"The Crow" Deep	12:00 A.M.	Home	Friend	Nothing
Thursday 8/04	"Rad" Teenage	1:00 P.M.	Home	Mother (for mine)	painting
Friday 8/05					
Saturday 8/06					

D5. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Teri Hoover (parent)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/02/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/02					
Monday 7/03					
Tuesday 7/04					
Wednesday 7/05					
Thursday 7/06					
Friday 7/07					
Saturday 7/08	"Star Wars"	Evening	Motel on vacation!	Guy (husband) Teri (self) Don (son)	All

D6. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Teri Hoover (parent)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/09/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/09	"Regarding Henry"	Evening	Motel - on vacation!	Guy Teri Don	All
Monday 7/10					
Tuesday 7/11	"Stripes"	Evening	Motel - on vacation!	Guy Teri Don	All
Wednesday 7/12					
Thursday 7/13					
Friday 7/14					
Saturday 7/15					

D7. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Teri Hoover (parent)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/16/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/16					
Monday 7/17					
Tuesday 7/18					
Wednesday 7/19					
Thursday 7/20					
Friday 7/21					
Saturday 7/22					

D8. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

Daily Diary of Teri Hoover (parent)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/23/95

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/23					
Monday 7/24					
Tuesday 7/25					
Wednesday 7/26					
Thursday 7/27					
Friday 7/28	"Nell" Drama	Evening	Home	Guy & Teri	Commenting on movie
Saturday 7/29	"Houseguest" Comedy	9:00 P.M.	Home (den)	All three Hoovers	All

D9. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented VCR viewing at home

**Daily Diary of Teri Hoover (parent)
Family Video Cassette Viewing at Home
Week Beginning Sunday 7/30/95**

Date	Title/Type	Time of Day	Where Viewed	With Others? If So, Who?	Other Activity While Viewing (Eating, Talking, Etc.)
Sunday 7/30					
Monday 8/01					
Tuesday 8/02					
Wednesday 8/03					
Thursday 8/04					
Friday 8/05					
Saturday 8/06					

D10. Dairy pages of teens and parents who documented
VCR viewing at home

APPENDIX E

CHECKLIST OF VIEWING BEHAVIOR

Observable Family Behavior During Participant-Observation

The following check list suggests family viewing patterns through observable family behavior and indicates family roles, rules, and relationships:

1. How are videos selected for viewing, especially if several are available?
 - a. How do parents make a choice?
 - b. How does the teenager make a choice?
2. By whom and with whom are videos viewed?
3. Where do viewers sit (and with whom) during playback?
4. Who "takes charge" of VCR viewing by operating the remote control such as playing the tape, *zipping* through commercials, rewinding and reviewing a specific segment, or *zapping* to an alternate source of video?
5. Who seems *most interested in or worried about* video content?
6. How do viewers react nonverbally by gestures, body language, or glances during viewing?
7. How do viewers react verbally with comments, remarks, or exclamations during viewing?
8. What other activities do viewers carry on during viewing?
9. How is video content perceived and discussed before/after viewing—if any discussion precedes or follows?
10. Are any family rules apparent during the selection and playback of a video?
11. How does the family establish viewing patterns, possibly making a routine of *when* or *where* a video is viewed?
12. When do parents and teenager(s) view separately?

E1. Observable Family Behavior During Participant Observation

VITA

VITA

Sarah M. Regan was born in Washington D. C. on December 17, 1942. She attended public and parochial grammar schools in Gary, Indiana and graduated in 1960 from William A. Wirt High School, which is part of the Gary public school system.

In 1966, her Bachelor of Arts degree was awarded by Marian College in Indianapolis, Indiana with teaching certification in secondary education. Her majors included philosophy, theatre and English. After teaching at Scecina high school in Indianapolis, Indiana and Lake Central high school in St. John, Indiana, she entered the Master's program in speech: radio and television in 1969 at Indiana State University. In August 1970, she was awarded the Master of Arts degree following defense of her thesis, which outlined funding methods for public television stations.

From 1970 through 1978, she worked as a professional broadcaster and television director at WGN, Chicago. There she became the first woman to regularly direct live telecasts including "Ray Rayner and Friends" and "Bozo Circus". In addition, she was the first woman to co-ordinate the telecast of Cubs baseball. During this time she became a guest lecturer at Chicago's Columbia school of broadcasting and Mother McCallie High School.

In October 1978, family ties prompted her move to Chattanooga, Tennessee. From 1978 through 1988, she worked as production manager of WDEF television then writer-producer-director at WTVN television in Chattanooga. During that time, she also taught advertising copy writing at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC).

In August 1988, she joined the faculty of UTC as a teacher on a full time basis. Her position in the communication department continues to the present. She joined the doctoral program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in May 1991 and was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in Communications in August 1996.

The author is a member of Kappa Tau Alpha, the Broadcast Education Association, and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.