

PLAYBACK

No fathoming why 'NYPD Blue' was taken off the air

**By Aneesa
Alphonsus**

THE VHSC (violence, horror, sex and counter-culture) issue is being blown up out of all proportion.

What we have been told so far are the effects of VHSC on viewers, regardless of their age. There is the danger, we were warned, of turning into psychotic axe-wielding maniacs if we continued watching such programmes.

But what we haven't heard are the real reasons why certain programmes have been taken off the air. If the reasons are not pointed out, how are we to know?

When *Acapulco H.E.A.T.* was replaced, the reason could be easily guessed at: some scenes may have been offensive in certain quarters. However, when worthy shows like *NYPD Blue* and *Round Table* were replaced suddenly, all that was left was a big question mark. What could possibly have been so wrong with either programme?

It couldn't have been the language, as this seemed to be taken care of quite effectively: some of us might not have even noticed that large parts of intelligent conversation were periodically snipped off.

Nor could it have been the occasional bedroom and bathroom romps which are shown in *NYPD Blue* episodes in the United States: such scenes were deftly excised here.

Likewise, as regards the horror criterion, there was almost none in *NYPD Blue*.

We sometimes hear and witness worse things.

It has been reported in the foreign media that Jimmy Smits (Victor Sifuentes of *L.A. Law*) will be joining the cast of this excellent series. From the look of things, we won't have the privilege of catching the new season of *NYPD Blue*.

To many of us, serials and movies are a form of escapism from the realities of daily life. At least in the shows, a solution to a problem is more often than not found, and we are placated, for a while at least.

At the rate censorship is progressing, we might just one day be stuck with some really badly produced shows — and that would be a cause for horror.

Just the other day, a friend deplored the VHSC ruling. He said it made him feel like a child whose intelligence was being insulted.

An adult does not need racy and violent movies to be entertained, he agreed, but weren't most of the shows broadcast harmless anyway?

One dreads to think what would happen to Metrovision Channel 8 which has already whetted the appetites of prospective viewers with promises of *Seinfeld* and *MTV*.

It's really funny how the most harmless of jokes and statements can look bad to the censors. It wouldn't be a surprise if, at some point, everyone stopped watching the fare over TV and switched to first-hand experiences. Now that would be a pity.

Wed, April 12