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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 21, 2000

CONTACT:
William J. Friedman at (202) 418-2300
Maureen Peratino at (202) 418-0506

**FCC COMMISSIONER TRISTANI RELEASES LETTER SENT TO CBS PRESIDENT
REGARDING “SNIPERS WANTED” GRAPHIC BELOW A PICTURE OF
GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH**

Washington, D.C. – Today, Gloria Tristani, Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), released the attached letter addressed to Mr. Leslie Moonves, President of CBS Television, regarding a “Snipers Wanted” graphic which appeared below a photograph of Governor Bush on “The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn.”

- FCC -

445 12th Street, SW
Suite 8-C302
Washington, DC 20554

August 18, 2000

Mr. Leslie Moonves, President
CBS Television
7800 Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90036

RE: "Snipers Wanted" graphic / Governor George W. Bush

Dear Mr. Moonves:

I am writing to advise CBS that many Americans have written to me about the above-referenced appalling broadcast demanding government action. They believe violence suggested on television too easily and too often becomes violence attempted.

The New York Times reported a caller on the Howard Stern radio show threatened to kill Senator Lieberman. After the caller's arrest, the caller's uncle reportedly said it was just a "joke gone bad." A joke gone too far is not a joke. The graphic reading "snipers wanted" below the picture of Governor Bush was similarly not a joke.

Two concerns dominate the calls I have received: the misuse of the public's airwaves to suggest that violence solves problems and the implicit endorsement of vigilante action against those with different opinions.

Perhaps there is no government solution for bad taste or the thoughtless broadcast of misguided humor. However, America's patience with gratuitous violence on her airwaves is perilously thin. Calls for voluntary codes of conduct are changing to calls for enforceable regulatory standards. I urge CBS to meaningfully respond to these citizens and use this incident to assess its public interest obligations.

Sincerely,

Gloria Tristani
Commissioner

cc: The Honorable George W. Bush

