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How 25 Years of Gay Activism in Hollywood Has Paid Off by Robert Knight

If you're noticing your TV screen turning pink, it's not just your imagination.

The new broadcast TV season includes 22 series featuring a total of 35 openly gay characters, according to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). GLAAD, which rides herd over all Hollywood scripts dealing with homosexuality, says the number of series with homosexual characters is a record. These series are on ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox and the CW networks. The total figure does not include shows on cable, like *The L Word* on Showtime, or MTV's all-gay LOGO network.

A new Eye on Culture report from the Culture and Media Institute, "Lavender Propaganda," reveals the depth and breadth of the current media campaign to promote homosexuality to average Americans. But Hollywood became a uniformly pro-gay industry well before *Will & Grace* or the slew of 2008-9 network shows.

In 1996, the year before Ellen DeGeneres "came out" as a lesbian on *Ellen*, Los Angeles magazine writer David Ehrenstein boasted in a May cover story, "More than Friends":

"There are openly gay writers on almost every major prime-time situation comedy you can think of ... In short, when it comes to sitcoms, gays rule."

Here is an excerpt from my book *The Age of Consent: The Rise of Relativism and the Corruption of Popular Culture* about the gay influence on TV:

"Ehrenstein, a professed homosexual, cheerfully admits that gay writers are attempting to influence viewers with a homosexual agenda:

'The gay and lesbian writers of today have been pushing

the envelope any chance they get. In fact, they're encouraged to do so. Since current comedies are positively obsessed with the intimate sex lives of straight young singles, who better to write them than members of a minority famed for its sexual candor ... as a result of the influx of gay writers, even the most heterosexual of sitcoms often possess that most elusive of undertones – the “gay sensibility”—‘Frasier’ being a case in point.’

“The ‘gay sensibility consists, according to two homosexual writers, of ‘a very urban, very educated, ironic, detached, iconoclastic attitude.’ Plus, a deliberate overdose of sexuality.”

In her 1989 book *Target: Primetime: Advocacy Groups and the Struggle over Entertainment Television*, Kathryn Montgomery explains why homosexual activists have been particularly effective in Hollywood:

“Gays had one important advantage over other groups. They referred to it as their ‘agents in place.’ According to gay activists, there were a substantial number of gay people working in the television industry who were not open about their life-style. Some held high-level positions. While unable to promote the gay cause on the inside, they could be very helpful to advocates on the outside, especially by leaking information. These ‘agents in place’ became one of the linchpins of gay media strategy.”

In January 1973, Ron Gold, the New York-based Gay Activist Alliance’s Media Director, wrote to all three networks, requesting meetings. Gold, who had been a reporter for *Variety*, also helped stage a hostile confrontation at ABC that was strikingly similar to the strong-arm tactics employed at the American Psychiatric Association convention in 1971, when gay activists openly threatened psychiatrists who viewed homosexuality as a treatable disorder.

As Montgomery reports:

“Before a meeting had been scheduled with ABC, GAA members were smuggled a script by one of their agents in place. It was for an upcoming episode of *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, entitled ‘The Other Martin Loring’ and it concerned a married man who asked Dr. Welby to help him with his homosexual tendencies. Welby assured the man that as long as he suppressed his homosexual desires, he would not fail as a husband and father.

“As Gold remembers, GAA leaders ‘blew a cork’ when they read the script.Instead of waiting for an appointment with ABC executives, the activists – with the help of another network insider – ‘took over’ the network executive offices. Recalls Gold: ‘We knew somebody who worked there who gave us a kind of place of the place and we did a little scouting in advance and we managed to sneak into the offices. The confrontation at ABC headquarters was hostile and explosive.’”

It ended with the arrests of several activists. Montgomery notes that although the program in question still aired, "it did have an impact on later decisions....ABC executives decided to invite gay activist comments on any new scripts dealing with homosexuality. Since gays had their own ways of getting scripts anyway, this approach was even more essential than with other groups."

The other networks soon followed, and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation now routinely vets all TV scripts dealing with homosexuality to make sure that the public sees only what the activists want. That means, among other things, no programs showing "ex-gays," people who have overcome homosexual temptations, unless it is to mock them.

Montgomery summarizes: "In time, the gay activists gained a reputation within the industry as the most sophisticated and successful advocacy group operating in network television."

The stakes go far beyond television. A September 2008 fundraising mailer from GLAAD proclaims:

"History proves that social change drives legal and political progress. To succeed as a community, we must transform the way millions of Americans feel about us."

With a record number of homosexual characters on television, and only pro-gay story lines, it's not surprising that polls show that Americans are becoming increasingly accepting of homosexuality.

The activists are well on their way toward their goal of recasting traditional sexual morality as a form of bigotry. The next step will be to bring government muscle down on traditionalists – just like they're doing right now in Canada and Europe.

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