



# PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP,  
HINCH PROGRAM, NETWORK 10, NOVEMBER 25 1992**

**E&OE PROOF COPY**

**DH:** As I mentioned your TV viewing habits are about to change. Sexually explicit and violent movies, even big Hollywood hits will soon be banned before 9.00pm. The man behind the move, Prime Minister Paul Keating, is my guest tonight. Mr Keating, good evening.

**PM:** Good evening Derryn.

**DH:** With a million unemployed, with the economy in such a mess, how come this exercised your mind so much?

**PM:** It's something I've had a bee in my bonnet about for a lot of years, a number of years. I think a couple of things: one that my own children that age, I've got four children - a boy and three girls, and the girls are 13, 11 and 7 - and they are at that age where I think they are being subjected to very explicit violence. It's exciting for some of them and a bad influence on them and I worry about the whole mood of violence, and the desensitisation that goes on in the community as the standards continue to change.

**DH:** Is it true that Caroline, Katherine and Alexandra were sitting at home one Sunday night watching a movie with you and you said, hey I don't like this, don't let my kids see this?

**PM:** No, what they often do is they watch it in a room themselves, but I find myself running backwards and forwards to see what they have on. One of

the things that we had in the recent school holidays was they were switching in between breaks onto a movie which was a horror movie, which had upset the youngest one quite a bit, and it really was a horrible thing. The problem was that they switched. In fact, it shouldn't have been on, in my view, at the time it was on. As well as that, we had these terrible murders against children. It's all I think part of a background to violence which is seeping into our society in part from the transmission of Hollywood product, American film product.

DH: Is it true your wife said, you're the Prime Minister so do something about it?

PM: No, not really. She shares my view about it, but I had mentioned it over the years to various people in television and I just thought it was time to say something about it.

DH: Why shouldn't parents be the arbiters. Why shouldn't parents say to their kids, you're not going to watch this at 8.30pm, it's too grown up, and turn it off?

PM: I think a lot of parents do, and I think that's good that they do. But the problem we had Derryn was that again, the classifications were bad, that 'AO' classification can be from something really quite soft to something quite hard. It was too broad and I don't think that what were up until now the television classifications, did give parents any real guide.

DH: When you talk about what's violent and what should not be shown, are you looking at things like "Lethal Weapon" where policemen kill people, are you looking at Dirty Harry movies, cowboy movies, or are you looking at absolutely extreme violence?

PM: Let me give you one like "Cape Fear", where a woman's cheek was bitten away et cetera, that sort of true-to-life, close-in violence, is I think the stuff that really hurts. But the general obliteration of people, if you have a problem and you can't resolve it, wipe people away - this sort of notion that you pick up in movies these days. OK, adults can put it in the proper context, I don't think children or adolescents can easily do that.

DH: Moving it back to 9.00pm, that was a compromise because there was a push for 9.30pm, and some groups have even said 10.00pm, haven't they?

PM: There's two things that have happened here now. 8.30pm is the most convenient time slot, it means the films finish at about 10.30pm or 10.45pm,

some at 11.00pm, it's about when most people want to give it away watching films, and the audiences drop off quite sharply. What we'll see now at 8.30pm is softer than we formerly were able to see at 8.30pm.

DH: Do you realise the ramifications, though, when things like late-night news programs will be pushed right back and may disappear, that a show like the Vizard Show on the Seven Network will be pushed back and disappear?

PM: That's only if the station takes the option of running a 9.00pm movie for something ... there will now be a split category - 'AO' will be split. For a start, there will be a single category for television, film and video, set by the Commonwealth film censor. So there will be at least, as a result of this change Derryn, one classification system. Now what was formerly 'AO' will now be 'M' and 'MA'. 'MA' can be only shown after 9.00pm. Television stations may choose just to show 'M' films and modified 'M' films, in which case they don't have to change the Vizard Show or any of the other programs. It really means about 70 or 80 films a year out of 500 which the three networks show, they won't be able to show in the 8.30pm time slot.

DH: When will this come in?

PM: Virtually forthwith. We'll have to make the arrangements and see to what extent it needs to be legislated.

DH: Is it voluntary now, have the networks agreed with you?

PM: Yes, they've agreed on this structure, they have.

DH: Because it's going to cost them a lot of money, isn't it?

PM: I don't think so, not necessarily, I don't think so.

DH: They're claiming \$80 million in lost revenue.

PM: It would be \$80 million if the whole thing was put back to 9.30pm. Now I think that probably is right, but we've now kept the 8.30pm slot for the convenience of most viewers and there's a 9.00pm slot if they want to put harder things on.

DH: Mr Prime Minister, we'll take a break, we'll be right back.

- DH: And back with the Prime Minister in our Canberra studio. What about the ABC, what about SBS are they going to be exempt from this?
- PM: I don't think they should be, no.
- DH: Do you have control over them?
- PM: We are going to see to what extent this legislation is required here and where then the self regulatory ... you see basically we are still relying on the self regulatory framework because most 'M' category film which is shown today on television which is called 'AO' but what will be 'M', will be still modified 'M', it's still got to be modified by the stations themselves. So there will be a monitoring role by the Australian Broadcasting, the ABA. The ABA will be looking at how the TV stations modify film, so that self regulatory thing still basically exists.
- DH: Gary McDonald at the Peoples' Choice Awards the other night had a swipe at you about this issue because he made the point that you're saying all these movies should be put back so the little scumbags can watch them at 9:30pm instead of 9:00pm. But he also said you're coming out of Canberra which is the X-rated video capital of Australia - is there an irony there?
- PM: I don't think so, no. This is about free to air television, this is the stuff that people can turn on in their homes and they expect I think, reasonably Derryn, if you turn a television set on at 8:30pm that what you're not shown is very explicit violence and that it's perfectly reasonable. What's happened is that the networks have been pushing their luck on this now for a couple of years they've been pushing the boundaries out and basically what's happened is the political system said hey, hang on, we think this is basically going to far to fast.
- DH: But what about when you see a series like the sex series on the Nine Network, which was very explicit, not a movie obviously, but a series, a very explicit genitalia, the works, where do you stand on that?
- PM: The sexual material ... that was unusual.
- DH: It certainly was.
- PM: It certainly was that's right, it hasn't been shown before nor since. The sexual material I don't see in the general - not that I see that much television - to be that offending to me. What I think is more dangerous and offensive is violence and I think it's a culture of violence that you resolve conflict by basically straightening people up, knocking them out, taking violent action against them.
- DH: Could you see these movies then moving to the pay TV channel?

PM: Pay TV will have basically uncut films. They will be largely uncut films and that's why it was important to get a single ... you see when pay TV begins those films will be classified on the same basis as films at the theatre. So we are going to have one classification system for free to air television and one for pay television, obviously that was absurd. This was the right time to move to a single classification system.

DH: Yes, Mr Keating we are about to run out of time but just briefly the High Court decision today on Phil Cleary, removing the Independent from the seat of Wills. How do you feel about that?

PM: We fought the election hard, I think it is a pretty tough result for Mr Cleary to be disqualified on the technicality of being a public servant on leave. I like winning battles, but I like winning them the right way, up front. I don't think we're taking any political pleasure in this.

DH: Would you like him to stand as your candidate in the by-election?

PM: That's entirely another matter. He couldn't at the moment stand under a Labor Party banner, that would be a matter for the National Executive of the Labor Party should he himself ever choose to be interested.

DH: One final question, what about the issue now of dual citizenship and allegiance to foreign powers that may affect more than thirty members of Parliament?

PM: In practical terms there is an appeal process against these things within a period after the election, that period has passed for members of the current Parliament as I understand it. But it would certainly be a live issue for people nominating at the next general election.

DH: And when is that?

PM: That's sometime in the middle of next year or up to the middle of next year so it means those who do have dual nationality as a result of the High Court's decision today have got time to basically renounce citizenship of another country to be certain that their nomination for the House of Representatives or the Senate is valid.

DH: Yes, Prime Minister thanks for your time.

PM: Thanks Derryn.

ENDS