

VALERIE SMITH
MEDIA VIOLENCE ACTIVISM HIGHLIGHTS

Involved since 1990 in lobbying to reduce the contribution of violent media to real-life violence, advocating at all three levels of government for improved legislation or enforcement of existing legislation.

Founding member, Coalition for the Safety of Our Daughters, a group instrumental in the federal Standing Committee on Communications and Culture's inclusion of a recommendation to curtail slasher films included in their report, *Television Violence: Fraying Our Social Fabric*, and in the introduction of a Private Member's Resolution in the Ontario Legislature on the same issue, endorsed by all 3 parties.

Founding member, Coalition for Responsible Television (CRTV); CRTV members included the Canadian Teachers Federation, Centrale de l'enseignement du Quebec, Association T.R.O.P., Pacijou, and Girl Guides of Canada (Ontario); served as CRTV Vice President; designed and administered a CRTV campaign to convince advertisers to boycott the ultra-violent serial killer series, *Millennium*.

January 1999: Initiated protests against the filming in Toronto of *American Psycho*, a movie based on the ultra-violent book of the same name. Protests cost the production company, Lion's Gate Films, an extra \$700,000

November 1999: organized a conference in Toronto to examine the concept of filing civil lawsuits against entertainment companies for violent crimes caused by their products. Speakers: Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, world-renowned expert on violence and the roots of aggression, and American attorney, Jack Thompson, a pioneer in the filing of lawsuits against video game companies

October 2000: Initiated protests against the appearance in Toronto of misogynist rap performer, Eminem, resulting in Ontario Attorney General Jim Flaherty attempting to have him barred from entering Canada for promoting violence against women

January 2001: Launched *The Free Radical* (www.thefreeradical.ca), a web site devoted to providing information on media violence and strategies for trying to reduce it

April 2002: Submitted application to Court Challenges Program for funding to challenge the federal government's exclusion of women from the *Criminal Code* hate propaganda law (funding denied)

May 2000 to November 2004: provided voluntary consulting services on media violence to the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), an arm's length branch of the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, including:

- Spring and Summer 2000: participated in the CAVEAT/OVC workshops on youth violence in preparation for the VISION conference. Researched and wrote *Media Violence 101: An Introduction to Media Violence* for this project
- August 2000: co-wrote with Scott Newark, OVC Vice Chair and Special Counsel, a submission to the British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General during their public consultation on violent video games
- January 2001: participated in the CAVEAT/OVC VISION conference; wrote the media violence section for the conference report
- May 2002: presented, along with the OVC's Scott Newark and Priscilla de Villiers, to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage during their review of the *Broadcasting Act*

May 2003: Received grant funding from the OVC to research and write the *Action Agenda: A Strategic Blueprint for Reducing Exposure to Media Violence in Canada*, subsequently published by the OVC in November 2004. The *Agenda* is featured on a number of web sites, including the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness, Victims of Violence, Media Awareness Network and the personal web site of Professor Craig Anderson, one of the leading aggression researchers in North America

Fall 2005: Filed complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission against HMV Canada Inc. over their sale of hate rap CDs. Filed complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission against Bell Mobility over their sale of "Pimptones", spoken word ringtones that demeaned women or threatened violence against women

October 2005 – June 2008: Member of the Toronto-based Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) Violence in the Media Coalition

October 2010: Participant on the panel, "Learning from other professionals", moderated by CBC's Wendy Mesley, held at the Ontario Teachers' Federation conference "When violence becomes entertaining... recapturing childhood and adolescence from the toxic influences of media".

Media interviews/appearances/coverage

Studio 2, Jane Hawtin Live, Talk 640, CTV news, Global TV news, City TV News, CBC Newsworld, CBC Cross Country Check Up, CBC Metro Morning, CBC national and local radio news, CBC National TV News, Vision TV, CHML Hamilton, CFRB Toronto, Much Music, National Post, Globe and Mail, Toronto Sun, Toronto Star, Montreal Gazette, Ottawa Citizen, Canadian Press, North Bay Nugget, Hamilton Spectator, Niagara Falls Review, Kitchener Record, Broadcast Dialogue, Pittsburgh Post Gazette, BBC, Reuters, MTV, VH1, Rolling Stone