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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE  
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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## FCC Idiocy -- Warning: Not Appropriate For Minors!

The recent record fines against CBS for an episode of the adult drama *Without A Trace* and other details prove how ludicrous it is for the government to be telling TV networks -- and you and me -- what is acceptable. (The FCC nailed Trace -- even though it's a 10 p.m. show and therefore kids are assumed to be asleep -- by simply fining the stations that showed it at 9 p.m. in the Central time zones.) [Among their "findings" detailed in a Mediaweek story:](#)

1. "Shit" is now just as offensive as "fuck" and would draw an automatic fine, barring extremely unusual circumstances
2. "Dickhead" however, is not as inherently offensive as "Bullshit."
3. "The depiction of female cartoon characters dancing in lingerie" could be indecent but wasn't in an episode of *The Simpsons* because no character was shown completely nude. (No wonder we've never seen Marge do full frontal.) Presumably male cartoon characters can dance around in lingerie as much as they want. (By the way, as foolish as this sounds, a recent rerun of "Family Guy" blurred out the naked butt of the baby because Fox was worried it would draw a fine.)
4. Steven Spielberg can say "fuck" but Martin Scorsese can't. Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* got away with salty language when it aired in primetime because of its artistic merit. But Scorsese's documentary on the blues got fined for using the same word. Obviously, we can't have kids flocking to films about Leadbelly and Robert Johnson in the titillating hope of hearing foul language.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 5:41 PM



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