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The New England Code

Controlling Female Agency in Contemporary American TV Drama

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Introduction

As documented by Kathryn C. Montgomery in her book on TV advocacy movements: *Target: Prime Time* (pp. 154-160), the early 1980's saw the emergence of a political pressure group in possession of some unusual bargaining power. The CBTV (the Coalition for Better Television) was a shared enterprise of the Moral Majority, The National federation for Decency and several 'new right' organizations with a vested interest in influencing American TV programming. According to the leader Donald Wildmon the organization was backed by 5 million families, and had vowed not to play by the rules[1] to reach their ends. While earlier pressure groups had targeted limited areas within programming, like TV violence, this new coalition aimed to address what was perceived as *'an entire value system.'* (Montgomery p.160)

Despite this massive effort from major players among conservative pressure groups, the next decade would see the successful airing of a radically different new crime series, *NYPD Blue*. The difference, when compared to other TV crime drama, lay both in the gritty depiction of the life of police officers at a precinct in New York, and in the alleged overuse of sexual exposure, violence and harsh language. Admittedly, a 1997 survey by Barbara K. Kaye and Lucia M. Fishburne showed that the frequency of sexual exposure in *NYPD Blue* is significantly *below* that of comparable shows; the fact that it *did* raise eyebrows lay in the explicitness of the sex whenever it occurred, as Kaye and Fishburne concede (1997, pp. 84-

[1] Mainly by sending letters to the broadcasting networks (Montgomery p. 158)

103). With the sexual exposure rate of *NYPD Blue* being half that of comparable shows, had the CBTV failed altogether in their efforts?

It is true that the CBTV had suffered a setback in 1982 when they attacked the TV movie *Sister Sister* and it turned out that the movie contained no offensive material worth mentioning (Montgomery p. 172). But overall their strategy of organizing mass boycotts against advertisers had proved effective. One could suspect, of course, that a certain amount of the content typically targeted by advocacy groups is healthy for broadcasters in terms of ratings, and advertisers might reason that an increased number of viewers would counteract, to a degree, any boycott of their products. Furthermore, according to Montgomery the network production community is operating '*within a tightly knit society, where interlocking social relationships are an integral part of the structure and operation of business*' (p. 176). At the end of the day, what to broadcast was out of the hands of organizations like the CBTV. Even the issue of control and censorship would be addressed at an entirely different level.

Sexual Exposure and Death: Observations, Assumptions

In an episode of the TV police procedural *Cold Case* ('Who's Your Daddy', season 2, episode 5) a Cambodian couple is under siege by an employer who is attempting to exploit their status as illegal immigrants to gain sexual favors from the woman. In a pivotal scene he barges into their apartment, holding them at gunpoint and, starting with a boot fetish, receives the attention he craves. The scene, although devoid of nudity, is perceived as intensely charged, much because it is preceded by a lengthy tension build-up. The incident ends with the invader shooting and killing the couple.

In *Lost*, troubled former police officer *Ana Lucia Cortez* (Michelle Rodriguez) has sexual intercourse with *James 'Sawyer' Ford* (Josh Holloway) in order to get access to a gun ('Two for the Road', season 2, episode 20). Later in the episode she is executed by another

regular cast member. Similarly, in an episode of horror drama series *Supernatural* ('Bugs', season 1, episode 8) a woman is pictured inside a house; the narrative suggests that she is about to become the next victim of a bug invasion terrorizing the neighborhood. She sits on her bed, as if waiting; the shot is from behind, making her look vulnerable. One might expect her death to be associated with that moment of vulnerability; it is postponed, however, until a few frames later, when she has undressed and stepped into the shower.

To the casual viewer of American TV drama, in particular crime series, it may sometimes appear as though there is a correspondence between occurrences of women having sex, or being sexually exposed, and their subsequent death. If examples of such correspond-dence appeared with a significant frequency, it would suggest an ethical code to be operatio-nal 'behind the scenes', as it were, deciding the outcome of actions involving women's sexual behaviors. The existence of such a code would trigger questions about its narrative functions in modern TV drama, as well as whether its presence is due to the production team's insertion of a preferred set of moral values, that is, conscious *pre-meditation*, or whether the sex / death occurrences are set structures within the narrative.

To assume that Hollywood production teams make a conscious effort to relate instances of sex to a narrative response, dealing death to the 'transgressors', seems far-fetched. Such a 'narrative code of conduct' would have to be embraced by every link in the storytelling chain: the scriptwriter, the director and the producer; and it would be fair to assume that some evidence of such an agreement would have reached the general public. It is true that there is a consensus to restrain sexual actions on prime time TV, mainly to protect children from sex-related material. A Congress statement is cited in the *Telecommunications Act of 1996* to the effect that children 'are affected by the pervasiveness and casual treatment of sexual material on television, eroding the ability of parents to develop responsible attitudes and behavior in [them].' If pre-meditation was spurred by moral concerns, the ensuing death

after sex could be interpreted as a warning against such behavior. One would, however, expect both sexes to be treated with a comparable rigor. Observations suggest that the 'death correspondence' (DC) is directed mainly against women.

As it can be established that a significant occurrence of the sex / death correspondence exists (Chapter 2), the next step is to make sense of its consistency. One would have to assume that the narratives in question share some trait or quality producing a cohesive outcome from a closely related array of causes, that is, sexual exposure in different guises. Like subtext, these traits are not part of the plot. However, the fact that they remain outside of the plot structure, does not automatically relate them to subtext, as they do not exhibit the interplay with meaning which is common to subtext analysis (Chapter 3). One would have to look beyond interpretation and towards the possibility of a primitive structuring mechanic allowing for a promotion of social values, even when these are not evident in the storytelling framework.

The Survey: Candidate Group, Method and Presentation

If the value system behind the 'death correspondence' is not typed out as a written code of conduct, or silently agreed upon, one would have to assume that it has, at least, a foundation in the culture of the society in which it appears. Of the several value systems converging in the USA, those based on a Protestant-Catholic ethic, corresponding to a predominantly European immigration would be dominant. The foundation proper of a North American, non-native culture were the early East Coast colonies in which formerly repressed Puritans could establish a new hegemony of faith. Is it possible that a Puritan sub-current of thought, or emotion, persists beneath the exteriors of 21st Century American lifestyles? And if not thought or emotion, perhaps a non-cognitive set of responses?

The observations of the death correspondence are not free from ambiguities. In the case of the Cambodian couple, not only the woman, but also the man is killed. To be sure, only the woman engaged in sexual activity and her death may thus be separated from that of her husband by classification, but the proximity of their deaths to each other, linked intimately to the same incident, blurs the picture somewhat. In the case of the woman in her bedroom unaware of an imminent bug invasion, one could argue that her nudity in the shower adds to her vulnerability. Because of these and similar ambiguities, a systematic, statistical survey of a selection of American TV drama series has been undertaken in order to test the assumption:

‘When a female character in an American TV drama is sexually exposed, she will die at some point later in the narrative.’

In order to enable a statistical verification or falsification of the assumption, three series have been selected for reading of sexual content and incidents of death: *Cold Case, Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*. Each of the series is represented by its two first seasons, making the total number of surveyed episodes 114. Based on initial observations suggesting a high ‘death correspondence’ (DC) rate, *Cold Case* has been selected for closer analysis, while *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue* provide an opportunity to compare similar incidents in variable settings – for instance, the distinction between frame narrative and secondary narrative within each series has proved to influence the distribution of sexual exposure between regular and non-regular characters (Chapter 2).

The statistical material has been collected by registering every incident of sexual exposure, ranging from passionate kissing to intercourse and full nudity; as well as every occurrence of death. For the latter it is understood that it would have to be death of a violent or unnatural kind (car crashes, poisoning), in order for it to be connectable to separate

episodes of sexual exposure. (A natural passing away is without cause and can not be employed as 'punishment'.) Based on the recorded instances, tables documenting and comparing the numbers relative to the DC occurrences have been worked out and are included as an attachment to this thesis; the survey results are also treated extensively in Chapter 2.

The Uncounted Blessing of Exceptions

Not every character in a narrative can be treated with the same disregard for consequence as the *extra*. In a TV drama series, the death of any regular character would have a great enough impact on the show that it would have to be planned well in advance of the character's exit episode – anyone who has read about TV stars suddenly deciding to abandon their role in a series will recognize this situation. In the episode of *Lost* mentioned earlier the character *Ana Lucia Cortez* was indeed among the regular cast, but her stint had ended and killing her would not upset the plot. Normally, one would not want to lose a regular, let alone a *main* character. Consequently the DC is disabled; as there is no way death can be the end result of a continuing character's sexual exposure.

Based on this reservation, it was predicted that the regular characters would generate a void in the statistics, as any sub-structures ought to meet a 'plot requirement override' when dealing with them. Furthermore, exceptions arise also for sex professionals and even 'bad guys' – not, this time, for plot requirement reasons, but, if indeed a Puritan value system influences the sub-structure, rather because these have already been branded as 'unfortunate' persons and no further branding is needed (Chapter 2). The classification of character types has verified that there are different rules governing regular and non-regular characters, the main distinction, then, being *expendability*.

A Short Abstract of the Thesis

In an attempt to contextualize the DC observations, the overarching super-genre of *melodrama* has been given particular attention. The relevance of melodrama is evident as the main 'corpus' of the survey, *Cold Case*, embodies a range of melodramatic traits. Furthermore, as will be seen in Chapters 1 and 3 particularly, melodramatic and Puritan value sets tend to overlap, especially in the attitude towards family. All chapters include analyses of individual *Cold Case* episodes, and each analysis comes with a description of scenes within the episode written in a slightly more subjective language. This has been done in order to provide the reader with an opportunity to assess the author's subjective experience of each episode, which has bearing on the analysis.

Chapter 1 introduces *Cold Case*, evaluating the show in terms of melodramatic content, comparing traits; drawing further comparisons between the show's main character Lily Rush and the heroines of classical melodrama. Puritan attitudes towards sex and New England legislation are given a brief examination.

In Chapter 2 the results of the survey are analyzed to determine whether the DC can be corroborated statistically, as well as presenting a few of the premises for the data collection. Chapter 3 examines the Victorian and Modern 'fallen woman' narratives, the former bearing close resemblance to the observations leading up to this thesis, entertaining a 'death correspondence' of its own. Chapter 3 also incorporates a discussion of values as they seem to be expressed through the DC, and a comparison between the early American 'execution narrative' and the way some DC occurrences in *Cold Case* are structured. Finally, Chapter 4 looks at the values expressed in the first American written code for upholding 'decency' in the movies, compounding it with examinations of how the DC relate to sex professionals and gay persons.

A Gender Issue

In her article 'Genre and Gender: The Case of Soap Opera' (1997), Christine Gledhill argues that TV, being a form of mass entertainment, can be described in feminine or feminized terms like *being glamorous*, *being expressive*, having a *domestic* field of reference. She takes a dualist approach in her analysis as she compares the feminine references in mass culture with the masculine references in high culture: *Escapism* on TV relates to the *coming to terms* of the serious film or novel; *emotion* is opposed to *thought* and the aforementioned expressiveness has a counterpart in the novel's *understatement* or the *underplay* of serious movies. Although there is no shortage of films which are modest in the way of artistic pretensions, Gledhill's superimposing of the feminine / masculine distinction onto the relationship between television and the movies leaves little doubt that television can be evaluated in terms of gender focus. In this light, the presence of a substructure in dramatic narratives made specifically for the small screen, which promotes Puritan values, particularly targeting female sexuality, comes across as something of a contradiction. If anything, it underscores the autonomy of narrative substructures, so that even a show lecturing on women's repression and liberation can seek to punish a female character for challenging the established order of masculinity ('Torn', *Cold Case* season 4, episode 21).

Gledhill is cited in Sue Thornham and Tony Purvis: *Television Drama: Theories and identities* (p. 66-67), a comprehensive volume whose references alone make it a valuable companion throughout. The book is excellent, if somewhat condensed, on general TV theory, with statements like the one below assessed to be of particular interest to the subject matter of this thesis:

> Christine Gledhill argues that popular film and television genres like the detective genre or the ‘woman’s film’ may indeed reproduce gendered ideologies as Claire Johnston suggests, reaffirming the centrality and strength of the male hero and marginalizing or punishing the active or rebellious woman within their familiar patterns of plot and character. (p. 114)

The way women seem to be punished for sexual exposure in contemporary TV drama could, of course, be similarly categorized, with the Puritan, patriarchal viewpoint being weaved into the narratives. There is little doubt that a New England Code is a gender issue, although the mechanisms at work would accommodate any value template embedded in narrative.

Chapter 1

Moral Origins and the Uses of Melodrama

When American media sources on January 20, 2000 broke the news that 15-year-old Martha Moxley's murder had been pinned on a local guy in the Greenwich, Connecticut neighbourhood where she grew up, it signalled the end of a mystery which had captivated its audience for more than two decades. *The New York Times*, reporting on the reactions among the local residents, wrote: *'[…] there seemed to be a collective sense of relief, and satisfaction, perhaps, over the prospect that Greenwich's longest-running murder mystery was about to reach a denouement.'* (Chen and Smothers, 2000.) The case, having attained an aspect of glamour due to the perpetrator being a member of the Kennedy clan, also caught the attention of Meredith Stiehm, who was to use the murder and its delayed solution as an inspiration for her upcoming police procedural about unsolved crimes and their re-investigation. In an interview with Malcolm Knox in Australian media website *TheAge* she says: *'The idea of a 42-year-old man serving time for something he had done as a 17-year-old seemed to have more drama in it than the average murder conviction.'* (Knox, 2004.) Stiehm, who had been working as a junior writer on *NYPD Blue*, got her debut as a series creator on September 28, 2003, when *Cold Case* premiered with 'Look Again', a pilot based on the Moxley Case.

Cold Case is based, then, on the concept of reviving unsolved murder cases and, in their solution, correcting the injustice done to the victim. A strongly emphasised secondary narrative, relaying the circumstances of the crime, alternates with a frame narrative telling the story of how the solution to the mystery is approached. In 'Look Again' the episode

introduces essential characters in the secondary (historical) narrative until the point where one of the characters is found dead by a roaming camera. At this point the typical *Cold Case* episode will switch to 'present day' mode and establish the primary narrative (frame narrative) in which detective Lily Rush (Kathryn Morris) and her all male ensemble retrieve the hitherto unsolved crime files from their 'mausoleum' in the basement of police HQ in Philadelphia.

An episode of *Cold Case* will subscribe to a specific form. The initial flashback sequence and the death of a victim is invariably preceding the 'present day' mode in which the former crime is re-opened. Cue the vignette, a 'present day' establishing sequence, then alternating primary and secondary narratives until the crime is solved. The end sequence usually depicts a slow-motion parading of the perpetrator by detective Rush to his or her prosecution and eventual imprisonment / execution. The repetition of this sequence throughout the series, time and again with a fall of snow to signify closure, along rows of spectators among who can be spotted the victim of the crime, the victim's next of kin, friends; bears the resemblance of a ritual; an emphatic variant of the concluding 'prevalence of justice' typically encountered in, although not endemic to, the law enforcement genres; producing the 'relief and satisfaction' suggested by the *New York Times* reporters.

A form element is also present in the way the secondary narrative is given a visual signature to set it apart from the primary narrative. In 'Look Again' it is limited to the night of the murder, enabling a backdrop of darkness, within which characters and objects reflect the lush glow produced by incandescent light. The series employs a wide array of visual modes for the secondary narratives, changing from one episode to the next, although some modes will recur: In 'Hubris' (season 1, episode 11) the manner of depiction is a yellow-filtered, golden hue which apply both to outdoor and indoor scenes; the mode is repeated in 'Who's Your Daddy' (season 2, episode 5). The constant against which these variants are measured is

the cold palette of the primary narrative; a grey and bluish high contrast, high exposure rendering of distance and detachment.

Femininity and Feminism in Cold Case

In a scene towards the end of 'Look Again' there is a confrontation between Lily Rush and the lawyer Todd Whitley (D.W. Moffett), who is soon to be exposed as the episode's villain. Having tried to intimidate her, he gets the rebuttal: 'I'm not like the girls you're used to, Todd. You can't try to charm me, then when that doesn't work, talk down to me. Then when that doesn't work, get aggressive.' Rush asserts her authority once again in the second episode, 'Gleen', when she confronts another perpetrator, stating that 'I've got all these opinions, ideas, that might not be the same as yours – now, I'm just the kind of girl that pisses you off, Rob.' Her male colleagues treat her with indifference as to her gender, and she knows how to handle a *bad guy* with an attitude. However, the assertive dialogue elements are absent in the series after 'Gleen'. In the *TheAge* interview Stiehm notes:

> *'The expectation is that [women] downplay their femininity, and you see how Lilly Rush, with her messy hair and rumpled clothes is being kind of strategic, saying to her colleagues, 'Treat me as a cop, not a female cop.' But at the same time she's not aggressive or hard as nails. It's a more contemporary take on how a woman can succeed'* (Knox, 2004.)

A feminine approach does not, of course, by itself engender a *feminist* approach. Detective Rush could have been *Leontine*, heroine of Pixerécourt's *Charles the Bold*, the immensely popular French melodrama about the virtuous and militant avenger of a wrongly executed husband, had it not been for an ill-fated love interest. The depiction of female agency in Pixerécourt's plays is, of course, tempered by the social order within which they were staged; Even so, like Leontine Lily Rush is in male territory, upholding the law of a predominantly male judicial system. Her privileged freedom of action is earned: In the first season's episode

5, ‘The Runner’, she ventures into a tavern which also happens to be a police hangout. She gets the cold treatment and the words ‘You know what we got here, boys? The only female in Homicide. Working cold cases. Know why? ‘Cause it’s in the basement, where the little lady can dust down the files’ The end sequence, however, sees her enjoying a drink at the same tavern, having earned the respect of the clientele by solving the murder of a policeman. Having gone through what resembles a rite of passage, she has entered their ranks by demonstrating male virtue. Sufficiently male, she is hardly in need of assertive gendered statements.

The Abnormal Heroine: ‘Cold Case’ as Melodrama

In her essay *Deviant and Dangerous Behaviour: Women in Melodrama* Gabrielle Hyslop calls attention to the relationship between early French melodrama and contemporary film and TV productions within the dramatic genres. The latter are, like the plays of Pixerécourt, popular entertainment. As the early melodramas displayed codes for social behaviour and aimed to educate as well as entertain (Hyslop pp. 65-66), it would be relevant to ask whether drama featured in cinemas or on networks retain similar qualities; even share a system of displaying values, especially with respect to the representation of women.

According to Hyslop, Pixerécourt’s melodrama heroine is *‘excessively virtuous, naturally domestic and as physically weak as she is morally strong’* (p. 69). The frail shape of Lily Rush does not bear witness to great physical strength and as a heroine she is endowed with righteousness, as is every heroine, let alone hero, in a typical contemporary drama. Otherwise, the description seems out of place, unless one regards her colleagues as constituting the family of the otherwise unattached detective; Lt. John Stillman (John Finn) the symbolic father as well as her boss. In the series, detective Rush is at odd intervals chided for always spending time at the office; in ‘Glued’ (*Cold Case* season 1, episode 12) she exclaims, ‘I would not know what to do with myself if I was to go home at seven.’ Rush seems to have

more in common with Pixerécourt's less typical heroines, who became more frequent in the last half of his production. Hyslop elaborates:

> Almost all of Pixerécourt's strong heroines move beyond the family circle and become involved in public, political situations which are normally the prerogative of men. In one of Pixerécourt's earliest and most successful plays, *The Man with Three Faces*, the heroine disobeys her father, the Doge of Venice, and appears before the entire governing body to defend her wrongly accused husband. (p. 70)

As for the representation of the strong, but hardly independent heroine,

> Rosemunde is described in the stage directions as having 'a steady expression' ('sa contenance est ferme') and she speaks 'with nobility and steadfastness' ('avec noblesse et fermeté') in defence of Vivaldi (III, 9). (p. 73)

The resemblance between Pixerécourt's strong heroines and Lily Rush is manifest; in fact *Cold Case* hardly ever deviates from this form. The 'steady expression' and courage to face potentially dangerous opponents, as seen in 'Look Again', makes her eligible as a moral executor – after all, she is the agentive force behind that ritualized celebration of justice seen at the end of each episode.

A significant component in the representation of Lily Rush is the way she dresses. Her standard attire of matching trousers and jacket resembles a suit; technically this could be put down to the impracticality of wearing more traditional feminine clothes in the line of duty. On another level, however, it aligns her with the other detectives by camouflaging her femininity – again, it makes her sufficiently male. In Pixerécourt's melodrama, too, male attire granted access to the male domain:

> Masculine attire enhances women's status. Furthermore, in nineteenth century melodrama men's clothes enable the heroine to operate successfully in a male world. When there is no hero to offer her the assistance of his brave and brawny arm, the

> heroine, by adopting the external appearance of the hero, is granted the physical strength and courage normally confined to men. (Hyslop p. 73)

A similar, but not identical approximation to transvestitism is found in early Christian communities, where the ascension of women into positions normally allotted to men could involve imposing on the woman a representation of maleness. In *Sex and Salvation* Roger Steven Evans writes:

> For many of [the church Fathers] the unregenerated female mind was naturally given to lust and hysteria. Women's thinking was suspect and unreliable. […] The only release from this state that all women found themselves in was to somehow become male […] (Evans p. 68)

Evans goes on to quote Jerome to the effect that *'when [a woman] wishes to serve Christ more than the world, she will cease to be a woman and will be called man'* (p. 69). Where the melodramatic heroine's continued attachment to family is the source of her strength and virtue, the early Christian female could approach maleness only when she had left such considerations behind. The element of maleness in Rush's appearance grants her both access and agency, at the expense, however, of sexuality. What attraction occurs is conducted through looks, words and the occasional kiss. Even when it becomes evident that ADA Kite has spent the night at her place and her virginal status no longer is a matter of dispute, she gives the impression of having preserved, somehow, more than a vestige of chastity.

Looking beyond the representation of the heroine, *Cold Case* seems to have retained two of the more distinctive features of classic melodrama: Underscoring sequences which claim particular attention within the narrative; and the application of set structures within which the narrative operates. The use of musical scores to emphasize moods is a universal melodramatic heritage shared by movies since before the invention of the soundtrack; classical melodrama, however, frequently employed 'signature music' to identify the moral

status of a character. In *Cold Case* the use is more subtle, and rarely specific to a person; rather it identifies the time period in which the flashback occurs, and on occasion, as is the case in 'Hubris' (*Cold Case* season 1, episode 11), distinguishes one person's experience at a particular time and place from the main body of the secondary narrative. The victim of the episode's crime, Holly Rickter (Kaitlin Doubleday) is accompanied by Adam Ant's *Wonderful* in the sequences where she is depicted in festive circumstances at the university where she is a student, although this sequence is broken up and dispersed across the episode. These musical 'period set-pieces' occur throughout the *Cold Case* series and, although extradiegetic, tie in with the characters either on an emotional or a situational level.

The Exiled Mother

As Hyslop shows in *Deviant and Dangerous Behaviour*, a melodramatic heroine can only be truly heroic as long as she is committed to her role as mother and devoted wife, or loyal daughter. E. Ann Kaplan, in the essay *Mothering, Feminism and Representation*, relates how Rousseau, a near contemporary of Pixerécourt, was instrumental in shaping (or re-shaping) the ideal of the family which was to become the foundation of the melodramatic performance. Kaplan points to Rousseau's *Émilie*, published in 1762, as the first expression of a family model centred around the needs of a child, or rather, the necessity of providing the child with systematic, formative input from an early age. Although this consideration was radical in Rousseau's time, it reinforced the dependence of a family on a mother loyal to her domestic duties:

> It is these ideas that came to shape what I call the Master Mother Discourse that dominated the 19th and early 20th centuries, and from which we are now only beginning to emerge. In America, the ideas were particularly easily assimilated since, as David Leverenz has shown, Puritan discourses about the mother already valued tenderness […] (Kaplan p. 115)

Kaplan later points to developments in American woman's film where the narratives of melodrama undergo developments corresponding to the outlook of society at large. In the thirties, following periods of increasing sexual focus, the image of the mother as a moral mainstay seem to wither as she is gaining in narrative versatility: She can now be corrupted by her lack of inner strength, tempted in spite of her maternal instincts. Then, following the Second World War, there is a fundamental change in filmmakers approach to the narrative as the ideals of the classical melodrama are superseded by modern takes like Neo-Freudian notions of gendered fears – still the idea of an upbringing hinged on the lingering presence of the mother, Rousseau's offering, is in vogue, but the focus is on the damage, rather than the good her presence might do.

Changes in narrative focus may lead to entirely new modes of storytelling, but one would not expect radical alterations to the value structures without a loss to the spectator's receptive literacy. The connection of the melodramatic to contemporary prime time drama allows traditional melodramatic values to be carried into the Post-Modern; expressing a family-centred ideology and a 'sacredness' of family values, encountered in movies like *Don't Say a Word* (2001) where Michael Douglas, playing a psychiatrist whose daughter has been kidnapped, is appalled when a colleague approaches him with the information that the very same kidnappers have taken *his* girlfriend – scolding him that he could even think of comparing a lost girlfriend to the loss of a family member.

In the familial order structured within melodrama, adopted in the contemporary narrative of *Cold Case*, the alcoholised mother of Lily Rush represent the 'fallen woman' corrupted by temptation, who has deprived Rush of a family. The melodramatic mode furnishes a background of values against which Rush is assigned the more complex role of victim and heroine combined. In 'Ravaged' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 18) the 'exiled mother' has the centre stage:

The camera, mock handheld, unsteady, unstable zoom, captures a woman and a dog as they are approaching the owner of a bar from a service entrance; woman and dog are both bloody, the latter whimpering, the woman with make-up smeared around her eyes. Sloane, alcoholic mother of two, has come to beg a drink from her former employer. 'I told you to beat it,' says the bar owner. He is obese, with a pale, clean-shaved face that looms behind the bar like a surly representation of indifference. A few hours earlier he fired her for getting down on her knees to protect the mutt – he wanted to 'crack it' for having proved itself of little use in a dogfight. Now she is about to kneel once more, in the final disgraceful moment of her downfall.

The secondary narrative of this episode is photographed in a light-sensitive mode which nonetheless exhibits strong colour. Lit indoor scenes like the one at the very beginning, when Sloane enters a hamburger restaurant with her son and daughter, borrow extra intensity as the high exposure does not exclude contrast. Combined with unsteady-cam and a constantly readjusted frame, the spectator gets a sense of urgency even in situations low on dramatic potential, and, when Sloane's condition is revealed, associations to her lack of presence due to withdrawal. The opening scene *does* follow up on any uneasiness the spectator may have felt, as her inability to manage the present situation becomes apparent. A soft drink is turned over, Sloane tries to mop up the spillage, and then, under the gaze of strangers, leaves, promising a hasty return. Unsurprisingly, the next scene depicts her dead body being covered by falling snow, the *Cold Case* code for closure.

Back in the bar the camera is approaching Sloane's face. She's biting her lip, the scarf around her neck stained with the dog's blood. She asks for a bourbon in exchange for a week's free labour, begs to get hired again, offers to work without a wage, but the bar owner is stonewalling her – 'It's a bad life, Sloane – for the birds'. The camera lingers on Sloane's

face, she is dissolving in front of the spectator, then finally moves to offer the bar owner a leap across that last line of defence which the Pixerécourt melodrama heroine would defend to her death. The sex is not depicted, but indicated; Sloane grabs the belt of the bar owners trousers and tugs it while suggesting, 'I'll do anything. I mean it.' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 18)

Admittedly, the connection between Sloane's death and the sex she is depicted as offering is made tenuous by her general fall from grace as a mother; as indicated above, she is already in opposition both to the American and the classical melodramatic ideal of loyalty to the family. The proximity of her dead body in the snow to the opening scene where she is abandoning her children makes it conceivable that the death response, if present, could be directed at the 'transgression' of failing in her role as a provider of safety and care. The narrative does, however, repair that image to some extent. In one scene she is confronted by her ex-husband for having left their children alone for five hours; the children are present behind car windows and it is obvious that both parts are pining for contact. The way Sloane cares for the half dead dog equally indicates that there is no failing in her will to behave according to what, in a traditional sense, is expected of a woman. Indeed it is her care for the dog which gets her killed in the end. A male acquaintance responds with violence when she's choosing the dog over him; she receives a blow to the head, falls and, being drunk, does not have the good sense to get back up. It could be argued that the incidents which highlight her capacity for care modify, to some extent, the stigma she receives from being incapable of fulfilling her role as a mother. The scenes where she cares for the dog imbue her with a different type of value, a certain nobleness, which would increase to the level where it would outweigh her vices, were she to be killed. Sanctification of this kind would divert attention from her failure

as a mother, even make it seem unimportant; however, the connection to the sex incident tips the scales in Sloane's disfavour and 'legitimates' her death.

Sins of the Daughters: Sex and Punishment in Colonial New England

As pointed out by Fassenden et. al. (2001, p. 4) Puritan sexuality was confined to marriage, with an emphasis on reproduction. It was, however, hardly 'idealized as a domestic or familial and reproductive behavior' (ibid); Margaret Olofson Thickstun (1988) cites extensively to underpin an observation that, even within the sanctioned context of family, sex was regarded as 'low' even as a regenerative measure. Cotton Mather exemplifies this attitude by addressing pregnant women with 'the *Griefs* which you are now suffering in your Body, are the Fruit of Sin' (Thickstun p. 13). Nevertheless, marriage was the only arena for sexual activities; should they occur outside of marriage it would be met with a lack of tolerance reflected in the earliest sanctioned code of law in New England, *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1648). In the section 'Capital Laws' paragraph 9 states that

> 'If any person commit adultery with a married or espoused wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death. Leviticus 20:19 and 18:20; Deuteronomy 22:23, 27. (Vaughan, ed, 1972, p. 167)

And of course, in paragraph 7,

> 'If any man or woman shall lie with any beast, or brute creature, by carnal copulation, they shall surely be put to death; and the beat shall be slain and buried, and not eaten. Leviticus 20:15, 16. (ibid, p. 166)

Interestingly, the law does not distinguish between men and women, they are equally punishable; one would expect, therefore, an equal gender distribution among those convicted for such transgressions. This, however, is far from being the case. N.E.H Hull (1987) documents, through statistics for Colonial Massachusetts spanning the years 1673-1774 (p. 61) that 30

women were tried for adultery, while in the same period only 8 males were on trial. Clearly, while *The Law and Liberties* regard men and women as equally responsible as transgressors, women were targeted more frequently, although it would make sense to assume that an equal number of men and women were involved in the forbidden activities.

Puritan reliance on the texts of Paul as guidance in matters of gender, resulted, according to Thickstun, in a transference of values about sex and attitudes towards women from Paul's epistles to the Puritan social order (Thickstun, pp. 1-36). The dualism of mind and body which in Paul would be expressed as a 'law in my members, warring against the law of my mind' (Thickstun p. 5) and considered distributed unequally among men and women, would be echoed in, for instance, a classification of women with 'profane or carnal persons' (John Cotton: *Singing of Psalms a Gospel-Ordinance*, 1650, cited in Thickstun, p. 18). To Thickstun, Paul is the authority to which Puritan men turned to gain 'a metaphorical understanding of gender relations by which to deflect their own ambivalence about Original Sin onto women.' (p. 4)

Jerome too, as documented earlier in this chapter, regards women as inferior to men as a result of their nature being of the flesh; and Leander of Seville regards 'all the weak traits of mind and body, which are contrary to salvation, as feminine by nature'. (Cited in Evans, p. 70) Women, then, are expected to fall to temptation; still there is no leniency in the legislation taking the 'weak traits' into account. To the Puritan mind the exiled mother in 'Ravaged' or in the Victorian 'fallen woman' narrative has transgressed outside the familial confine and would have to be charged with the capital crime of adultery. The following chapters will argue that residual Puritan value structures are still operational in the modern melodramatic narrative, and responsible for the DC ('death correspondence') of *Cold Case* episodes like 'Ravaged'.

Chapter 2

Small Screen, Big Picture: Interpreting the DC Statistics

In 'Ravaged' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 18) the tugging at a male character's belt and the words 'I'll do anything. I mean it' constituted a sexual incident – the narrative context left little doubt as to how the situation would evolve. A different tableau is encountered in 'Look Again' when a boy and a girl, both teenagers, are making out on the tennis court behind a mansion. The intimacy between the characters never goes beyond the kissing; nevertheless, in the probe conducted in conjunction with the present thesis, this incident, too, has been classified as sexual. Obviously, with the diversity of physical contact exhibited between characters in visual narratives, what is to be considered *sexual content* will need some elaboration.

Defining the boundaries for their survey of sexual content on American prime time TV, Kaye and Fishburne (84-103) include 'touching, kissing, hugging, implied intercourse, explicit intercourse, prostitution and rape'. A similar survey for the Kaiser Family Foundation by Kunkel, Cope et al includes 'any depiction of sexual activity, sexually suggestive behavior, or talk about sexuality or sexual activity'.(pp. 8-9) In the case of Kaye and Fishburne, the inclusion of touching and hugging would seem to create an 'artificial' sexuality as a result of its expansive scheme: Although comforting somebody, or alternatively, strangling somebody risk residing in a sexual twilight and can to an extent be justified as sexual content, *formal* gestures are less empathy-driven, and would hardly qualify as instances of sex; the kisses received or delivered by East European heads of state come to mind. Indeed, there seems to be a visual code for when a kiss is sexual and when it is merely a kiss – in the case of the

latter, the kiss may be followed by a reciprocal smile, signifying that both parties regard the kiss to be ended (and thereby not leading to further physical contact).

Looking towards the Kunkel and Cope survey, the probe conducted for this thesis will include the categories for explicit and non-explicit sex, but will exclude *talk* about sex unless it is integral in a situation where sex is implied. Kissing will be regarded as sexual as long as it is ongoing, broken up only by changes in the surrounding situation, implying passion and the potential of developing the kissing / making out towards intercourse. Brief kissing which comes to an end seemingly by mutual consent will not be regarded as sexual, neither will hugging, touching with an explicit, non-sexual purpose or even long embraces which, when depicted in a drama, would be emotionally locked, as the participants are not looking in the direction of physical attraction. *Intentionality* has been a guideline for evaluating the degree to which a kiss or a touch of the hand should be included as sexual.

The eligible offender: Evading the 'death correspondence'

For an observer of contemporary crime melodrama, emerging patterns of transgression and punishment would likely be broken up by doubts about its consistency. In *Cold Case*, exceptions to the death response can be found in episodes 'Blank Generation' (season 2, episode 11), 'Revolution' (season 2, episode 14) and 'Strange Fruit' (season 2, episode 19). 'Blank Generation' in fact commences with a scene in which a young couple are cuddling, their presumed nakedness covered by bed linen. The incident qualifies as a 'transgression' and could trigger the death correspondence; nevertheless, the female party is very much at large in the end sequence of the episode where she is revealed to be the murderer of her former bed-mate. Likewise, in *Revolution* a wedding party is providing the muffled aural backdrop as the bride is having adulterous intercourse in the restroom; as in 'Blank Generation' this incident does not result in the death of the 'transgressor'. If these incidents

suggest a secondary pattern, it is one of non-arbitrary situations (consistent exceptions) where a certain degree of sexual exposure is allowed.

A categorization of such exceptions would, however, have to come second to determining whether the character in question is *expendable* in the first place. Expendability is what enables death in a narrative, unless the narrative itself is coming to a close: Although a dead person can throw around considerable weight plot-wise[2], for a regular or main character to die in-show would normally require somebody to step in and fill their shoes. Consequently, the 'death correspondence' would be limited to characters that can depart from the show without upsetting the narrative framework. This leaves two main categories:

1. Extras or *non-regular cast* (NRC), including those who may have significant roles but rarely extend their appearances beyond a single episode, and

2. Regular cast who are leaving the show.

The distinction between expendable and non-expendable characters provides immunity for the main characters should they 'choose' to be sexually exposed, as is the case throughout *NYPD Blue* (seasons 1 and 2), in which 64, 4 % of all such exposure involves the main and regular characters.[3] For *Cold Case* (seasons 1 and 2) and *Carnivale* (seasons 1 and 2) the corresponding numbers are 12, 1% and 81, 0% respectively: The greatly diverging values could be indicative of the degree to which there is a partitioning between primary (frame) and secondary narratives, as the latter, if self-contained, would reduce the screen time of the regular

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[2] In *Carnivale* the deaths of several regular characters (on different occasions) never quite leave them without agency. Following the serial's premise of including the supernatural in an 'extended envelope' type of reality, they may reappear to interact among the living by possession or by being resurrected to become a (slightly alienated) living dead.

[3] Attachment: Table [Sexual exposure: Regular or non-regular cast]

characters, leaving less room for developing intrigue. In *NYPD Blue* the distinction between the two is diffuse; a dominant primary narrative is depicting the private lives of the regular characters, and the episode-specific cases are accommodated within an ongoing context of interpersonal relationships. The segmentation between primary and secondary narratives is more precise in *Cold Case* where the regular characters are regarding the cases at a retrospective distance.

As previously indicated, a casual observer of these series may notice that with certain types of characters, even particular situations, no 'death correspondence' will occur even when the characters are expendable. As for the character types, this particularly seems to be the case for all types of sex professional – normally prostitutes and strippers / stage dancers. Once in a while they, too, die; however, the persistent impression is that sex professionals are 'eligible offenders' – they have a 'licence' to go beyond what is considered 'decent'. The immunity of sex professionals will be treated further in Chapter 4.

Another character type which seems to enjoy protection from the 'death correspondence' is the *bad guy*, who, conforming to the melodramatic tradition, is beyond reformation: In 'Russian Formalist Theories of Melodrama' Daniel Gerould calls attention to the set of principles offered by Russian formalist Sergei Balukhatyi (1892-1945), in which the villain is identified as '[…] a vicious, pitiless figure, whose deeds, theatrically effective in themselves, serve as a stimulus for testing the positive values of the play'. (Gerould, 118-134) Consequently, with the *bad guy* a 'transgression' is hardly anything beyond what is expected; but while cinematic narratives frequently award him a spectacular death before the end credits as a symbolic victory over 'evil', in TV police procedurals like *Cold Case* and *NYPD Blue* a tendency towards realistic reckoning by way of arrest and imprisonment prevails. A 'death correspondence' would be in conflict with the writer's chosen mode of punishment.

Finally, incidents of sexual exposure which are arranged as comedy, or engender a humorous outcome, will by their own example demonstrate how sexual activities lead to ridicule and embarrassment. As in the case of the *bad guy*, a form of punishment is already in place, overriding the DC. In 'The House' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 4) a warden and a nurse retreat into the guard room of a prison block with the intention of having sex; the scene qualifies as 'sexual innuendo' but is rendered harmless by their session being broadcast through the prison speakers, especially as the warden is into a few rather embarrassing routines; again, the slot for punishment is already filled and the 'death correspondence' consequently disabled.

Overall the number of exceptions fitting into any of these groups constitute 27, 3 % of the occurrences involving expendable characters.[4] Distributed among exception types the numbers are as indicated in table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Overall distribution of exception types (based on a total of 121 occurrences)

Sex professional:	14 occurrences	11, 6 %
Bad guy:	12	9, 9 %
Comical situations:	7	5, 8 %

One of the examples where a sex professional *does* seem to suffer the 'death response' is when Dora Mae, one of the two daughters of carnival prostitute Rita Sue, is lynched after having flashed her genitalia at the audience during a stage performance ('Babylon', *Carnivale* season 1, episode 5). The degree of explicitness is high, arguably pornographic, and is not encountered in any other probed episode. The sequence also demonstrates a weakness in the

[4] Attachment: Table [Sexual exposure and types of exception]

statistical approach, in that the boundary between categories can be crossed; what ultimately will identify such correspondences is to evaluate them in the context of the narrative.

The Survey Results: Correspondence or Convergence?

The probed material consists of the premier and follow-up seasons of police procedurals *Cold Case* and *NYPD Blue* as well as the complete *Carnivale* serial, a historical drama which was cancelled after two seasons. The number of episodes surveyed is 114, of which *Cold Case* sums up at 46, *NYPD Blue* at 44, and *Carnivale* at 24. A total of 237 occurrences of sexual exposure have been recorded, of which 72 (30, 4 %) have been graded as explicit.[5] Excluding sexual exposure of regular characters the number of occurrences is 121, and when adjusted for 'eligible offenders' stands at 88 (table 2.1).

Table 2.2: Occurrences of sexual exposure

Total number of occurrences	237	
Number of occurrences involving expendable characters	121	(51, 1 % of total)
Ibid, excluding 'eligible offenders'	88	(37, 1 % of total)

Both the 'intermediate' 121 and the final 88 incidents have been probed for possible correspondence between sexual exposure and death (DC). The overall result is a DC of 36, 4 % when 'eligible offenders' as well as regular characters are excluded (tables 2.3; 2.5). Broken down to TV show the results are 33, 8 % for *Cold Case*, 33, 3 % for *Carnivale*, and 62, 5 % for *NYPD Blue*.

[5] Attachment: Table [Sexual exposure: explicit sex or sexual innuendo]

Table 2.3: Distribution of DC (Death Correspondence) with and without 'eligible offenders'

Cold Case	28, 0 %	33, 8 %
Carnivale	21, 1 %	33, 3 %
NYPD Blue	25, 0 %	62, 5 %

The results are characterized by a striking DC consistency between *Cold Case* and *Carnivale*, and a readout for *NYPD Blue* which changes by a factor approaching 2.5 when 'eligible offenders' are excluded. The *Carnivale* results level out only after the two seasons have been put together; then numbering a total of 24 episodes, equaling a single season of the police procedurals. The consistency between the *Cold Case* and the *Carnivale* readouts is re-markable in that they are dramas within different genres; moreover, they employ different narrative methods, influencing the likelihood of sexual exposure of regular characters. In fact, three of the four recorded DC occurrences in *Carnivale* are tied in with regular characters ending or changing their role in the show. It is also remarkable in that the number of DC samples range from an acceptable 23 for *Cold Case* and the statistically unreliable 4 for

Table 2.4: General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Connections between sexual exposure and death for expendable characters[6]; 'eligible offenders' both included and excluded.

Show	Total SX	Total DC	% DC	DC Female[7]	DC Male	DC % female	DC % male
Cold Case 1	69 / 41[8]	11	22, 4 / 26, 8	10	1	90, 9	9, 1
Cold Case 2	33 / 27	12	36, 4 / 44, 4	11	1	91, 7	8, 3
Cold Case total	**82 / 68**	**23**	**28, 0 / 33, 8**	**21**	**2**	**91, 3**	**8, 7**
Carnivale 1	15 / 9	4	26, 7 / 44, 4	3	1	75, 0	25, 0
Carnivale 2	4 / 3	0	0 / 0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Carnivale total	**19 / 12**	**4**	**21, 1 / 33, 3**	**3**	**1**	**75, 0**	**25, 0**
NYPD Blue 1	8 / 2	2	25, 0 / 100, 0	2	0	100, 0	0, 0
NYPD Blue 2	12 / 6	3	25, 0 / 50, 0	1	2	33, 3	67, 7
NYPD Blue total	**20 / 8**	**5**	**25, 0 / 62, 5**	**3**	**2**	**60, 0**	**40, 0**
Overall	**121 / 88**	**32**	**(26, 5 / 36, 4)**[9]	**27**	**5**	**(84, 4)**	**(15, 6)**

SX = Sexual exposure of expendable characters (excluding regular cast); DC = 'death correspondence': same character has sex and dies in episode, or even next couple of episodes if serial (continuous narrative)

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[6] Expendable characters: Non-regular (NRC) cast and regular cast who are exiting the show.
[7] The four last columns show gender distribution for the incidents classifiable as 'death correspondence'. Applies also to the third column.
[8] The first number includes 'eligible offenders' while in the second they are excluded.
[9] Bracketed numbers indicate that they can only be added horizontally, as they refer to different quantities for each series.

Carnivale, although, whether this indicates *real* consistency between smaller and higher numbers of samples remains unresolved. The *NYPD Blue* results show how the readout for a small number of samples is likely to fluctuate at the entry of additional variables.

According to the probe, there is a likelihood that one out of three incidents of sexual exposure within the candidate group (expendable characters who are not 'eligible offenders') will correspond with the death of the character. It could be argued that the number is too small to be regarded as significant. Again, the apparent correspondence between the *Cold Case* and *Carnivale* readouts becomes relevant, as it raises the question: If there is consistency in the results from two genres which are as different as the historical drama and the police procedural, could it be explained as an effect, a convergence, seen when sexual exposure and death occur in great enough numbers in a TV show? As there is a limited number of characters in any narrative, chances are that both sex and death could arbitrarily be connected to a single character. For police procedurals particularly this seems relevant, as one or more homicides usually are included in the shows. However, while such occurrences are probable, even a frequency of one out of three seems be too high to be accounted for by convergence only. More importantly, gender distribution indicates a clear preference for the death of female characters. An arbitrary convergence could possibly discriminate against gender if the sex depicted was isolated to the female party; it should be noted, though, that according to the probe there is no great divergence between genders as to the number of incidents, with an overall distribution of 48, 9 % for males and 51, 1 % for females.[10]

The *overall DC value* of 36, 4 % is not gender specific. In order to arrive at exact values reflecting the gender distribution of the DC, comparisons need to be made between the number of gender specific DC occurrences and the number of equally gender specific cases of sexual exposure. Season 1 of *Cold Case* yields 1 DC in which the character is male and 10

[10] Attachment: Table [Sexual exposure: Gender distribution]

DC with female characters. The corresponding numbers of sexual exposure is 22 male and 19 female cases, leaving DC values of 4, 5 % for males and 52, 6 for females.[11] The overall result for all the surveyed seasons (*Cold Case, Carnivale, NYPD Blue*) indicates that one out of ten cases of male sexual exposure will be a DC, whereas two out of three cases of female sexual exposure are DC relevant:

Table 2.5: Gender distribution of DC values in the surveyed material

	Cold Case	*Carnivale*	*NYPD Blue*	*Overall*
Male	5, 7 %	20, 0 %	33, 3 %	9, 3 %
Female	63, 6 %	42, 9 %	80, 0 %	62, 2 %

It needs to be emphasized that the two seasons of *Cold Case* provide more than three quarters of all registered instances of sexual exposure in the candidate group (77, 3 %) and therefore dominate the results from the other shows in the overall readout.

Matters of Gender: Capital Punishment or Stern Warning?

The obvious reason for the equal distribution of sexual incidents between genders (48, 9 % / 51, 1 %, see above) is the prevailing tendency for these incidents to be heterosexual and coupled. There are few deviations from this norm – lesbians approaching sexual intercourse ('Best Friends', *Cold Case* season 2, episode 22), stage dancers, a 'decent' girl dressing like a hooker in a red light district ('Daniela', *Cold Case* season 2, episode 3) – and considering most incidents of sexual exposure being 'shared', the gender separation in DC is conspicuous. It would appear that women are receiving a harsh retribution for 'transgressing' while men

[11] Attachment: Table [DC gender distribution]

walk away from a sexual encounter unchallenged as to their moral stature. There are observations, however, which suggest that some form of punishment is meted out also in the case of a male ‘transgression’. The punishment in question is never death, but rather a ‘stern warning’ identifying the ‘transgression’ as such and indicating that the male party has crossed the boundaries of ‘decency’.

In the opening episode of *NYPD Blue* (Pilot, season 1, episode 1), main character detective Sipowicz is undressing in the company of a prostitute when the couple is barged in on by a mobster and his goons. Sipowicz receives several bullets and barely survives. In a later episode (‘True Confessions’, season 1, episode 4) main character Kelly is in bed with his ex-wife, the session turning into a quarrel and subsequent lack of fulfillment. On a similar note, in an early episode of *Carnivale* (‘Black Blizzard’, season 1, episode 4) main character Samson is seen paying money to a prostitute, his whistling suggesting he was the other attending party. In the next scene he looks out of the window and notices the black clouds hanging over the horizon, heralding the ensuing dust storm of the episode’s title. Later, when weather-bound in the home of the prostitute (with whom he seems to have a personal relationship) Samson is humiliated by her going several rounds with his driver while Samson himself is waiting in a chair downstairs.

Further observations indicate that ‘punishment’ for male participation in sexual exposure can be offset by a character’s initial misfortune: Regular character Jonesy in *Carnivale* has a defunct leg and sports a limp; regular Lodz in the same serial is blind. Both seem to have some leeway when it comes to crossing the boundaries of ‘decency’, although a sequence where Jonesy is tarred and feathered can be located in the proximity of a particularly explicit scene he shares with another regular, ex-prostitute Libby (‘Damascus, NE’, season 2, episode 7; ‘Lincoln Highway’, season 2, episode 9). Similar situations are encountered in *NYPD Blue* and *Cold Case* where regular characters who are in a bad way because of recent

losses or dissolved relationships can find 'legal' solace in a situation which would otherwise be identified as a 'transgression'.[12]

It should be noted here that this type of punishment, or 'balancing of fortunes', does not depend on expendability to be operative. Consequently regular characters, if male, are as eligible to be targeted as NRC's.

Table 2.6: 'Immediate male punishment' in Cold Case, Carnivale and NYPD Blue

	Male SE[13]	*Male punishment*	*% male punishment*
Cold Case	*45*	*11*	*24, 4*
Carnivale	*27*	*12*	*44, 4*
NYPD Blue	*25*	*8*	*32, 0*
Overall	*97*	*31*	*32, 0*

Table 2.6 indicates that one third of all male 'transgressions' can be tied in with 'punishment' / 'balance of fortunes'. Female characters seem to be excepted from 'retaliation' of this kind – if held within a Puritan context, this would be consistent with the Puritan notion that women are inherently untrustworthy (Chapter 1) and can not improve on their being by a simple whipping. Female 'transgressors' among the regular characters of *NYPD Blue* never seem to be on the losing end of a 'retaliative' transaction.

[12] Attachment: Table [Immediate Male Punishment]

[13] SE = Sexual exposure

Chapter 3

Negotiating Gendered Values in the 'Fallen Woman' Narrative

Augustus Egg's Victorian triptych *Past and Present* (1858)[14] chronicles a woman's fall from iconic motherhood to a state of social deprivation. The first painting, entitled *Misfortune*, renders a ruptured domestic scene where the mother lies prostrate on the floor of a lush living room. The husband is still at the table, taken aback; the children at play nearby. The 'rupture' is signified almost entirely by the woman's posture: her position by her husband's feet is not one of begging, as she is turned away from him; rather, this is the start of her exile, her point of departure. The second tableau is set in a simple furnished room, where the now exiled mother is comforting her daughter at the news – according to the gloss accompanying the paintings – of her former husband's death (Auerbach p. 154). Eventually she finds herself without material protection, huddled in the lower left corner of the third painting, *Despair*, inside what appears to be an open boathouse by the river; protecting an infant in the folds of her garment. The painting carefully hints at her fall leaving her with the stigma of a common prostitute.

Past and Present's narration of a 'fall' and ensuing misfortune provides a diachronic dialogue of values with the DC ('death correspondence') in current TV drama. One could imagine a similar scene preceding the exile of Sloane in 'Ravaged' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 18) to the one depicted in the first painting, *Misfortune*; although one that would be in accordance with the behaviour of 21st Century character types. In both cases, the strong em-

[14] The paintings are reproduced in Auerbach pp. 154-156.

phasis on family values in melodrama lends dramatic content to the situation depicted; in *Past and Present* the caption about the family father's death is set in contrast to the second painting and the spinster-like appearance of his former wife, indicating that her 'fall' not only brought havoc on her family, but, in the long term, caused her husband's untimely death. The modern version, however, sees Sloane's family getting another chance with a new mother figure. It makes Sloane's exile seem harsher – the scene where her kids are present inside the car and the car windows become barriers against their contact (Chapter 1) underscores her solitude.

Nina Auerbach, who in *Woman and the Demon: the Life of a Victorian Myth* writes extensively about Victorian narratives featuring 'fallen women', observes that '[g]enerally the fallen woman must die at the end of her story [...]' (Auerbach p. 161), and '[...] [the fallen woman] seems to enlightened minds a pitiable monster, created by the neurosis of a culture that because it feared female sexuality and aggression enshrined a respectably sadistic cautionary tale punishing them both.'(p. 157) The similarities with the DC of a show like *Cold Case* is striking, not only in the outcome of the 'transgression', but also, as will be argued later in this chapter, in that both incident types – sexuality and aggression – seem to occur with regularity in the episodes where a DC is present. The Victorian narrative, however, never explicitly punishes a sexual 'transgression'; Auerbach provides examples from the novels of Thomas Hardy (*Tess of the d'Ubervilles*) and George Eliot (*Adam Bede*) which suggest that the 'transgression' for which death has been meted out is conflated with a *rationale* for the capital punishment:

> In *Adam Bede* Hetty's sexual fall is compounded by infanticide: she murders her illegitimate baby, confesses her guilt under Dinah Morris' noble influence, and is dramatically rescued from the gallows only to die anticlimactically after empty years of transportation. Tess, too, compounds sexual experience with murder, and there is nobody to rescue her from the ceremonial butchery of death by hanging. (p. 170)

In Egg's trilogy the fate of the 'exiled mother' is brought to a gritty absence of good fortune in the boathouse, but no further; it is only by extrapolation, following the 'fall' sequence of the narrative, that the assumption of her death seems evident. A premonition of it, however, may be encountered in the huge, empty mirror facing the spectator in the first painting, its chilling effect arising in part from the intuitive expectation that a mirror in such a position would reflect the image of the viewer: Should it not also have reflected the 'fallen' mother had she been standing, rather than lying on the floor? Her absence in the mirror signifies her exile, perhaps also her eventual disappearance. One could imagine a 'missing' fourth painting picturing her death, and Auerbach finds it in George F. Watts' *Found Drowned*, in which the dead body of a woman has drifted ashore under an arc similar to those in the boathouse of Egg's concluding painting. Where the DC in a show like *Cold Case* can hold together 'transgression' and death as a dyadic entity; the Victorian 'fallen woman' discourse can not allow itself the uncontested claim that a sexual 'transgression' is a capital sin. As the final act is set for the 'fallen woman', the Victorian narrative leaves it to the reading (or exhibition attending) public to decide whether the execution of a Tess or the drowning of an 'exiled mother' is related to their 'fall'.

Open and Closed Value Systems and the Autonomy of the Substructure

In 'Ravaged' and other *Cold Case* episodes containing a DC, a claim can be made on behalf of the narrative proposing a common structure operational 'under' the plotlines, in favour of capital punishment for a woman's sexual 'transgression'. The observation that this *sub-structure* expresses *values* makes it feasible to speak of a *value system*, originating at one or several stages in the assembly of the narrative. However, if the values expressed do not find recognition in society at large, it is unlikely that the sequence of events preferred by the sub-structure will be perceived as value based at all. Although sentiments to support, for instance,

sexual abstinence before marriage will be found in some conservative quarters, a demand that 'transgressors' should be met with capital punishment would raise eyebrows. When these values nevertheless shape the sequence of the DC, they will be categorized as a *closed value system* as without recognition in society they are not *negotiable*.

In a discussion deriving from 'the prevalence of hidden relationships and masked personages and occult powers in Balzac' (*The Melodramatic Imagination*, 1995, p. 5), Peter Brooks arrives at a similar conclusion:

'We might say that the center of interest and the scene of the underlying drama reside within what we could call the 'moral occult,' the domain of operative spiritual values which is both indicated within and masked by the surface of reality. The moral occult is not a metaphysical system; it is rather the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth. It bears comparison to unconscious mind, for it is a sphere of being where our most basic desires and interdictions lie, a realm which in quotidian existence may appear closed off from us, but which we must accede to since it is the realm of meaning and value. The melodramatic mode in large measure exists to locate and articulate the moral occult. (Brooks, p. 5)

The 'moral occult', by being operational while still perceived as 'closed off from us', embody traits closely resembling those suggested above for the *closed value system*; its inaccessibility disabling a negotiation of the values displayed. According to Brooks, then, the melodramatic narrative lends itself well to mediating values and meaning across historical distances – the 'melodramatic mode' could be likened to a 'carrier wave' enabling residual or even emergent values to find a narrative form.

Typically, the closed value system of the DC is embedded within a narrative structure where *open values* are available for *negotiation*. In 'Ravaged' Sloane's alcoholism can be regarded with contempt, blamed on her, or on society. The issue of alcoholism can be acc-essed and debated and if the narrative seems to suggest that Sloane's exile is justified in the light of her lacking ability as a mother, it can be contested. Similarly, in Egg's trilogy the 'fall' of the mother is explicit, her 'transgression' and its consequences constitute the main

narrative. Conversely, if the values expressed by the DC were to be made explicit, they would alter the narrative – the diegetic perception of the 'transgressor' would compound her death with the lack of morals displayed by her; she would be 'deserving her punishment' and these values would be communicated to the spectator in such a way that he could talk back.

As the terms *open and closed value systems* are used in social sciences to denote open-mindedness and its reverse in individual subjects (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2006), a specification of its use in the present context is in order. Defining such a system as reflected in the speech and actions, ultimately in the *mind* of a person, would be of less relevance when relating to a text, or any expression of culture *representing itself* – for instance, artwork or architecture dis-engaged from artist or architect. The self-representation is essential; the design of a car, for instance, potentially expresses values pertaining to fields as diverse as energy conservation (aerodynamic design) and traditional extrovert masculinity (accentuated sports car features) – in other words, values at different levels of negotiability. An open value system in the context of cultural representation is a *discourse*, rather than an attitude; a closed value system, however, share the traits of the sociological uses of the term in that it is 'locked down' in a state negating change.

The Case for a Recessive Value Template

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the DC could not be operational in cases where regular characters were sexually exposed. There was a 'DC override' ensuring that the 'transgressing' regular character would remain alive at the end of the episode. A similar override may occur whenever the plot requires a specific use of a character. In 'Strange Fruit' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 19) Mathilde (Dana Davis), a young black maid is raped, the incident signified by the man she works for exiting the bedroom, buttoning his trousers, while Mathilde appears through the same door somewhat later, crying. A DC would be expected, punishing the maid,

according to its isolated logic, for having been raped; however, the narrative needs her to further highlight the racist attitudes treated in the episode: When at the local police station to report the abuse, she is required to demonstrate its particulars with a bat and a cup, the incident turning into a mockery of her suffering. It is also possible that her death would detract from that of the young black man who is the episode's murder victim.

Clearly, the DC arises from a value system with a coherent structure; otherwise its occurrences in contemporary TV drama would not be as consistent as it appears to be. When a *recessive* value template is suggested, it indicates that the DC does not have priority in the narrative; arguably, to the narrative the DC does not even exist, it does not pull storytelling weight. Any occurrence of the DC then requires a void in the narrative to avoid the override for plot requirement reasons. In some cases, however, it would appear that the value template has acquired some solidity, as in the cases resembling the structure of the Puritan 'execution narratives' treated in a later section of this chapter. In these cases, where a more complex structure than the single response: 'sexual exposure requires capital punishment' is present; the DC seems to have acquired some storytelling agency.

The value template may owe its recessive trait to the lack of communication between the values at its core and the open values of contemporary American society. However, the isolation of the recessive template may also be the reason why it prevails, in that it is never challenged.

As Auerbach points out in *Woman and the Demon*, Egg's trilogy may be read with more ambiguity than simply a depicted 'fall' and its consequences. The two last paintings incorporate an 'inner frame' opening towards an exterior, a 'beyond' expressing possibilities of existence not available to the woman prior to her 'fall'. Referring to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* Auerbach suggests that 'a woman's fall is imagined as almost the only avenue

through which she is allowed to grow'(p. 166). As for Egg's trilogy, in *Misfortune* the light fixture (which is also reflected in the mirror, the painting's introverted 'inner frame') is not lit; in the next pictures, however, there is light from a waning moon, and in the last picture there's a star shining over a tableau which is biblical in its theme and composition. A second value set is evident in these paintings where sympathy with the 'transgressor' is expressed; and the overlap between the missing spectator / the absence of the 'fallen woman' in the empty mirror facilitates an early identification with the 'heroine'. Conceivably, a not yet explicitly formed, and therefore not fully negotiable set of values sympathetic to the liberation of the woman from her family constraints, or, alternatively, one seeing her as a victim excluded from her family, is expressed as values which to an extent are closed as they precede, or even forecast a social development. A set of values in a formative state could share a restricted or absent negotiability with one whose use has been phased out.

Further Case Studies

The Victorian fascination with 'fallen women' was carried into the 20th Century and developed through a series of movies of a type which came to be known as the 'kept woman story'.[15] However, while the Victorian imagination was torn between images of the 'trans-gressing' woman as an outcast or, alternatively, a woman whose loss of familial status opened up for independence; in the melodramatic tradition of the 1930's, the rendering of an entrepreneur, who by virtue of her good looks and social survival skills managed to secure herself a position among people of means, had become the visually attractive narrative of choice. Augustus Egg's heroine in *Past and Present*, having discarded her rags, was now posed for *chic* outfits and secret admiration. According to Lea Jacobs '[t]he possibility of movement upward is almost always emphasized by a sequence in which the heroine is

[15] According to Lea Jacobs, better known as 'the sex picture'. (Jacobs, p. 100.)

visually transformed, dressed up and surrounded by objects – furs, automobiles, diamonds – which redefine her 'class' status.' (Jacobs p. 102) This lingering display of luxury would move the emotions of the spectator in favour of the heroine and counter any cynicism employed in her acquisition of it. But although the cinematic expression of 'the fallen woman' would be bolder than in the Victorian novel, the values expressed appear to be at a similar level of negotiability: in the case of the cinematic gold-digger one of 'improper fascination'; but still one removed far enough from the non-negotiable to retain status as an open value system – the negotiation of which was to lead to self-censorship among Hollywood producers and the implementation of *The Production Code* in 1930 (Quigley, 1937, p.52)

While we see, then, a slight movement in the transition from Victorian to Modern in favour of openly negotiating the status of the 'fallen woman', the idea that her 'fall' should be punishable by death has been discarded altogether. Never explicit in the first place, the Victorian innuendo of a connection between sex and death *was* debated, as when Charlotte Brontë objected to the fates of 'transgressing' heroines in contemporary novels (Auerbach p. 170). Moving up to the present, the values expressed in the DC would be lost to an audience not educated in the virtues of women championed in Pre-Modern cultures like the Victorian, or familiar with the fundamental distrust in women expressed by the Church Fathers and echoed in the legislation of Puritan New England (Chapter 1). The punishment of the woman is without a contemporary moral context. In 'Hubris' (*Cold Case* season 1, episode 11), where a female college student is being murdered shortly after a sex scene in the office of one of the professors, one could openly question the moral choices made by the student as well as the professor, but the sexual content would likely be relegated to a debate over airing hours:

The episode commences at a posh academic gathering where the camera selects a young woman, a blonde, manoeuvring between people she does not appear to know; her airs of

insecurity furnishing her with purpose and identity. The camera mimics the girl's viewpoint without quite sharing it, looking over her shoulder, exploiting the spectator's presumed unfamiliarity with the venue and searching, like her, for the person who is her reason for being there. Once found, exit the professor and his young mistress, each from their respective picture frames.

As indicated in Chapter 1, sexual intercourse in *Cold Case* is usually merely suggested if it goes beyond intimate petting. The camera is allowed to follow the proceedings until that point where the intimacy is about to become explicit, and then it politely fades to black. In 'Hubris', camera attendance goes as far as to the passionate kissing between student mistress and professor while they are lying on his office couch, unbuttoning clothes with urgency. The camera does not linger, but assumes bashfulness on behalf of the spectator and pans vertically to a painting above the couch, leaving the couple to their devices. The painting itself is a semi-erotic genre piece, showing a blissfully reclining woman, blurred at first, then coming into focus as the face of the model is centred in the spectator's view.[16]

The vulnerability of the young woman in the painting reflects that of the professor's mistress as she 'trespasses' into the social event at the university: She does not know anyone there, and her single contact is made tenuous by the social context – she cannot reveal herself to the professor, or she will jeopardize their relationship, supposed to be secret. The theme of vulnerability is exploited in full once the sequence with the presumed intercourse has ended: The girl is walking hurriedly away on a sidewalk lit by street lamps, chased by a subjective, handheld camera whose unsteadiness indicates that somebody is on the move behind her. The camera is darting out of view when she turns to look over her shoulder; seconds later it zooms

[16] In a sub-genre to this type of painting the woman reclining would actually be *dead*. Here, the other person in the painting is holding the woman's hand as if feeling for her pulse, and her head is at an awkward angle, indicating that this could indeed be the case.

in on a car antenna, the murder weapon, as it is about to be snapped off a parked car; eventually it closes in on the victim. (‘Hubris’, *Cold Case* Season 1, Episode 11)

In the frame narrative to this episode, the irony served the professor by the investigators, as well as the professor’s attempts at self-irony, indicate that an open value set condemning his behaviour towards female students is present. In his seduction of the young woman who is also his protégée, he is already receiving the treatment of a petty criminal. The DC, which in this episode is reinforced by the opening sequence’s ‘transgression’ scene taking place just before the murder, is oblivious of any guilt projected onto the professor by contemporary moral standards. The narrative’s depiction of the student as a victim is at odds with the status as a ‘transgressor’ conferred on her by the closed value system, but in the end sequence an element of ‘attitude’ seems to lend further relevance to the latter:

The frame is divided between the darkness along its extreme edges and the lit university front steps in the middle, where the professor’s mistress sits, nearly cried out, her solitude reinforced by her modest size relative to the steps and the building. The professor is approaching her from behind, coming down the steps, hunching down next to her and, after demanding to know her state of mind, receives a rebuttal: The mistress announces the end of the relationship, as the reality of the professor’s wife and kid has triggered remorse in her, making her see herself in a different light. Words are exchanged and the mistress makes a move to leave, when the professor, now angered, grabs her arm and tells her, *‘I say when it’s over. I make the rules.’*

The subsequent scene is a recap of the pursuit and attack section depicted through a subjective camera in the opening; this time, however, the camera is observing the situation in a more detached manner, making room for the professor to be exposed as the stalker and

finally the killer of his mistress. The camera seems to switch between the characters, the way it did at the gathering, as the professor overtakes her and commences to whip her with the snapped-off car antenna while repeatedly screaming the words *'I decide!'* at her. Cue the strangulation scene and the death of the mistress. ('Hubris', *Cold Case* Season 1, Episode 11)

As before in this episode, the solitude and vulnerability of the mistress constitute the dramatic strategy of the secondary narrative. Nevertheless the mistress comes across as assertive and, to some extent, in control; both when she, in an earlier scene, pushes the envelope of her relationship with the professor by suggesting they should be together in public, and in the end sequence where she refutes him, takes control of the situation, and leaves. This woman is *not* the victim portrayed in the opening sequence – for a moment the tables have turned.

Assertiveness is also an issue in 'Who's Your Daddy' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 5) where the Cambodian heroine, Channary Dhiet, is being subjected to – and proudly resisting – unwanted sexual attention:

A knock on the door makes Channary Dhiet (Doan Ly) turn her head and look at her husband Sen (Sung Kang), who returns her glance with an air of discomfort. Being illegal immigrants, living in a small flat with their only daughter, the couple is cautious about responding. Barely above a whisper Sen asks: 'Who is it?' and is told from behind the door: 'Fred Atwater. Your boss.' It is 37 minutes into an episode lasting 45 and the spectator knows about the couple's death from the introductory sequence. The lighting is high in contrast, slightly overexposed, mellowed by incandescent light sources; the effect being a division of the frame into a few dominant surfaces, like images remembered rather than seen. The couple exchange glances, Channary's eyes dilated and dark.

In the frame narrative directly preceding this scene, speaking to the team of investigators, Atwater (Joel McKinnon Miller), the employer wielding feudal power over the illegal immigrants on his payroll, admits that he had developed a yearning for the striking Channary who brought her husband lunch every workday. Speaking of an encounter the day of the murder he complains, ‘The woman was uppity. Acted too good for me. […] I say hello, she doesn’t even acknowledge me.’ In an earlier scene, Atwater hails her, gets a cold shoulder and retorts to threatening innuendo to goad her in the direction of ‘a little cultural exchange’. Not responding to his threats, Channary walks off; leaving her female companion to face the trouble she just escaped from.

At 37 minutes Sen is opening the door and Atwater barges through, immediately demanding to be served according to his cravings. The camera is unsteady and nervous. Not willing to comply, Channary keeps her distance. Atwater’s next move is to produce a pistol from out of his trousers, threatening to shoot her husband if she does not yield. He pulls Sen towards him, pressing the gun against his abdomen. Channary, in the face of the dangerous escalation, bends down and starts licking Atwater’s boots. Unwilling to accept the harassment, Sen tries to wrestle the gun from Atwater’s hands. It accidentally fires and Sen falls to the floor. Channary kneels by her dead husband; Atwater, distressed by the outcome, puts the gun down, disowning it; then picks is up again as he figures (speaking to Channary): ‘Now I’ve got to shoot you too!’ Before the final shot is fired, Atwater, now in great emotional upheaval, is demanding, ‘Aren’t you even gonna beg?’ but receives another rebuttal from the woman, looking back at him with wide open eyes, ‘You don’t exist’. (‘Who’s Your Daddy’, *Cold Case* season 2, episode 5.)

If regarded as part of an ongoing struggle between feminist and conservative views of female agency, the end scene in ‘Who’s Your Daddy’ display open values through Channary’s

attitude towards Atwater. Her final words could be interpreted as a show of strength, as they assert her unwillingness to remain under Atwater's thumb, and her subsequent murder a demonstration of how the male order is willing to retort to extreme means of suppression. In this scenario there would, of course, be a conflict of values between those of the substructure, connecting the boot fetish to Channary's death, and those of the open plot as the substructure is ignorant of Channary's heroism.

For an examination of conditions under which the DC values *would* be negotiable, one should consider another type of narrative which, like the Victorian novel, is native to a Pre-Modern mindset:

Some Parallels between Cold Case and the Early American 'Execution Narrative'

Apparently, the body of texts accompanying executions in the early American societies, by Jodi Schorb labeled 'execution narratives' (Schorb, 2001), emerged as an effort to situate transgression within a context of temptation and failed moral guidance. Well ahead of modern child psychology, reasons for straying into crime would be offered as lack of education, as in the testimony of Elizabeth Colson: '[…] I fear [my guardians] never took the pains they should have done to instruct me […]'(Schorb p. 79) or, as in the 1738 case of Katherine Garrett, an admonition directed at those in charge of upbringing 'to set a good Example before their Children and Servants, for You also must give an Account to God how you carry it to them.'(Schorb p. 85) Both Colson and Garret had been found guilty of infanticide, a crime where young female servants were the dominant group of offenders.

The 'execution narrative' would emphasize the sexual transgression which occurred prior to the crime. Where a confession to the killing of an infant would be sufficient reason for trial and conviction, the inclusion of the circumstances under which the child came into being would shift the focus towards unsanctioned sex; offering a rival reason for the

offender's execution. Colson confesses, '[H]aving got a habit of Sin, I still grew worse & worse & worse; and was left to fall into the Sin of Fornication […]' (Schorb pp. 80-81), and goes on to relate how she carried her child 'from place to place' like a bundle of evidence to be disposed of, and later 'fell again to that shameful and Soul-destroying Sin of Fornication the Second time […]' (p. 81).

This structure, where a sexual transgression is embedded within the larger body of text relating to a capital crime, is echoed in *Cold Case*; although the connection *capital crime / death* is replaced by a similar pattern where the moment of death is seen to be in close proximity with a *challenge to male authority*. In 'Ravaged' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 18) Sloane, the 'exiled mother' delivers a rant aimed directly at her would-be suitor's manliness, whereupon she receives a blow to the head and falls. Similarly, in 'Hubris' the professor's mistress provokes the anger of her former lover by telling him off, facilitating the murder scene. Indeed, these situations seem to be *causally* connected to the death of the 'transgressor' – in these episodes their function is to motivate the killer.

The dynamic is no less evident in the pilot based on the Moxley case, 'Look Again' (*Cold Case* season 1, episode 1). It starts off with a couple of giggling teenage girls approaching the camera on an unlit road at night, dressed to party, stopping briefly to check if the drugs they have taken make them look conspicuous. The camera follows the girls onto the mansion grounds where the party is being held, and, in the next sequence, set a few hours later when the party is over, subjectively traces a path through the grounds until it has found the dead body of Jill Shelby (Kate Mara), one of the girls from the opening. Then, towards the conclusion of the episode, the scene which reveals Shelby's killer:

On the mansion grounds, by the tennis court, Jill Shelby is making out with her boyfriend's brother (Michael Reilly Burke). The necking is passionate, continuous; their body language

denotes deeper emotional involvement. Rather than depicting romance, however, the narrative is underscored by a high, complaining soundtrack warning of discord in the proceedings to come. Like in 'Hubris' a sense of vulnerability is conveyed by the use of zoom to create a distance between the characters and the spectator. Then, out of the edges of the tennis court appears Shelby's boyfriend Todd (D.W. Moffett). Unaware of his approach, the 'adulterous' couple are disengaging their intimacy only as he is close by, and in the agitated moments that follow, harsh words are effortlessly spoken. An argument between Shelby and her boyfriend rapidly breaks down to a choice of interjections: Todd, who clearly entered the scene with the intent of creating a hassle, demands: 'Just stop talking!' Shelby counters with 'Asshole!' Todd calls Shelby 'Bitch!' and, after Todd's brother has tried to intervene, is told by her: 'You're such a prick!' There is more of the same, until Todd finally loses his cool and shouts, 'Hey slut! I said shut your mouth!' while advancing on Shelby. Her final gesture is one of mild obscenity, and the rest of the sequence is a depiction of physical violence which draws to a close as Todd batters Shelby repeatedly, even passionately, with a tennis racket. ('Look Again', *Cold Case* season 1, episode 1)

The dialogue towards the conclusion of 'Ravaged' proceeds after a similar fashion. Sloane is drunk and the AA guy who has volunteered to help her, hits on her:

Sloane: 'Oh God you're sleazy!' *The AA guy (Michael B. Silver):* 'Excuse me?' *Sloane:* 'I'm so drunk I can't even see and you wanna screw me?' The *AA guy:* 'I'm trying to help you.' *Sloane:* 'I just whored myself for a drink.' *The AA guy:* 'Watch your mouth.' *Sloane:* 'I'm in the gutter, and you still want a piece? You must be desperate.' *The AA guy:* 'It's late and it's freezing and you're starting to piss me off.' *Sloane:* 'You're lower than me, Rick.' *The AA guy:* 'I'm lower than you? That's funny. Because you are nothing!' *Sloane:* 'And even I

won't have you.' The AA guy hits Sloane, who falls and stays down. ('Ravaged', *Cold Case* season 2, episode 18)

The 'punitive response' accompanying challenges to male authority finds resonance both in the Puritan view of women, and in the melodramatic tradition of women as champions of the traditional family structure, suggesting a recessive template based on these values. The opposition between open and closed value systems can be exemplified by comparing these incidents to the early episode face-offs between Lily Rush and a variety of male adversaries, in which the open values pertaining to gendered conflict are displayed as an argument against male chauvinism (Chapter 1). The two value sets do not communicate or comment upon each other. As the recessive template remains closed and non-negotiable, its logic inaccessible, no exchange of *meaning* occurs between what is, and what is not negotiable. Consequently, the 'transgression' is not judged, not even morally, as that would require negotiation; there is nothing beyond the punishment of the 'transgressor'.

The similar structures in the 'execution narratives' and the *Cold Case* episodes indicate a connection between a sexual incident occurring at some point in the past and the capital crime for which death is imminent. In the 17th Century this connection would have been integral to a sequence of increasingly serious crimes, leading to the gallows; however, with the emphasis put heavily on the *sexual* transgression, this and the capital crime communicate a cause-and-effect relatedness: It is the *fall* depicted in the narratives which is the *cause* of the crime. In *Cold Case* the structure is simplified in the absence of its original context so that, in a 21st Century police procedural, it looks conspicuous; unrelated to the open and negotiable values otherwise displayed.

However, although the basic 'topography' of the value template is one of cor-respondence between a sexual 'transgression' and subsequent 'capital crime' and its punish-

ment, a few *Cold Case* episodes include other evidence of what in the Puritan age would be considered moral degradation. Where in Elizabeth Colson's 'execution narrative' a point is made of her being 'tempted to Steal, for which I have reason to lament […] yet the Devil took Advantage against me, and led me further into Sin' (Schorb p. 79); in 'Who's You Daddy' Channary Dhiet exhibits both the Cardinal Vice of pride in walking away from her first encounter with Atwater, her head still held high, and is depicted as having a substance abuse problem. In 'Ravaged' the additional 'vices' are, of course, alcoholism and neglect of family duties.

In the value template's duality of 'transgression' and capital offence / death, an argument is proposed that female sexuality needs to be *controlled*, as without control, serious crime or rebellion will ensue. Sloane's 'transgression' in 'Ravaged' enables her rebellious performance in the scene preceding her death. It is also the incident which signifies her exile from family: Within it, her sexuality would have been contained. As Schorb points out in her essay; the young women by the gallows 'did not fit easily into the dominant narrative of Puritan 'family-centered, reproductive' sexuality' (Schorb p. 79). It is worth noting that in the case of Channary Dhiet, whose 'transgression' occurs in spite of her melodramatically correct role as valiant wife, the integrity of the family is weakened by The Dhiet's having appropriated another family's name in an effort to avoid deportation. Eventually, as in the *Cold* Case episodes already mentioned, Channary's 'transgression' leads to a confrontation with male authority, in her denouncing of the presence of a man holding a gun to her head.

Chapter 4

Glamorous Temptation, Deviancy, and Hollywood's Production Code

While contemporary pictures aimed at the cinema are rated to indicate the age group for which they are suitable, in broadcasting such a system would only be advisory. What keeps material with an adult content inaccessible by children and juveniles is the time slot; in a public network such material will get a late night airing, although even the time slot boundaries become blurred when shows are broadcast across different time zones simultaneously by affiliate networks (Douglas and Hockley, 2006). The open values expressed in legislation is nevertheless the *protection of children* from 'harmful content' – sex, violence, substance abuse – as seen in the *Telecommunications Act of 1996*, cited in the introduction. A similar current attitude which is open and negotiable, is the common assumption that violence in films and video games lead to increased violence in society at large. As argued in Chapter 3, it is not as common today to maintain a moral judgment of sexual exploits; this type of value would more likely occur in a closed, non-negotiable form, expressed in a non-explicit fashion.

The code for self-censorship among Hollywood producers issued in 1930 to 'curb the evil influence of evil pictures' (Quigley, p. 49), provides a range of examples of openly negotiated values which were unremarkable in its time, but would create a stir today should calls for restrictions be worded in a similar manner. In an extensive section on sex, it is demanded that 'the sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld', echoing the puritan ideal of a family-contained sexuality (Quigley, p. 53). Further down the list are

warnings against depictions of miscegenation, while ‘apparent cruelty to children or animals’ should be ‘treated within the careful limits of good taste’. (Quigley, p. 56)

The censors, however, seem to have been concerned as much with the narrative context of movies as with individual cases of explicitness. In his list of movies ‘typical of wrong standards’ Quigley volunteers examples like Riptide (1934) (‘The story is objectionable principally because of the depiction of the popular star in a role of casual attitude toward infidelity […]’), Scarface (1932) (‘It glorifies crime, presents methods of crime and familiarizes the audience with them’) and Possessed (1931) (‘This is another of the familiar formulae in which the small town girl, a factory worker, yearns for the attractions of a life of ease and luxury. […] The story is destructive to character and conduct because it accepts and condones the girl’s conduct and shows that it apparently led to a successful accomplishment of her wishes.’) (Quigley, 31-40). The ‘familiar formulae’ Quigley refers to corresponds with the type of movie Lea Jacobs has identified as belonging to ‘the fallen woman cycle’ of the pre-code or early Production Code era. As seen in Chapter 3, the Post-Victorian version of the ‘cycle’ does not inevitably lead to the misfortune of the ‘transgressor’, but to her ascent to social and material affluence ‘rags to riches’ style:

> The contemporary accounts indicate that the fallen woman cycle was recognized, if somewhat loosely defined, as a type. And as a type it brought to the fore major concerns of the reform forces. The films were held to be in violation of what Edgar Dale called ‘the current moral code’, to undermine normative definitions of sexuality, especially female sexuality, and to promote crime or sexual delinquency among women (Jacobs, p. 102)

In a pre-feminist era, the desire to protect women from forces that could corrupt them (comparable to current attempts at protecting children from undesirable influences) were indicative of values openly displayed and therefore negotiable, and any measures to counter such influence would be a result of negotiation. The values were similar to those expressed in Pixerécourt’s melodrama, where the woman’s ultimate role was as a housewife forced to

become a heroine to defend the integrity of her family (Chapter 1): The dissolution of the Code after the war would reflect social changes as well as the production companies' desire to make their movies more attractive. According to Sargent, by 1961 the Code had become so eroded that it had become a matter of public debate; the prevailing opinion being that the Code should be replaced by a simple rating system, classifying movies according to degrees of what would earlier have been considered violations of the Code (Sargent, p. 231).

The 'Fallen Woman License': DC exceptions and the Sex Professional

In Chapter 2 a brief note was made of the scene in 'Babylon' (*Carnivale* season 1, episode 5) where Dora Mae, one of two daughters in a family of sex professionals, following the exposure of her genitalia in front of a large male audience is found hanging from a tree, evidently lynched by a local mob. The 'Babylon' sequence of sexual exposure and death is extraordinary in that sex professionals are among the 'eligible offenders' in the candidate group; furthermore, there is no causal connection between Dora Mae's death and the exposure: The immediate response is a scene of commotion in which the character apparently is sexually assaulted, after which she is still alive and advised by her father to take primitive contraceptive measures. Her dead body is found later in the episode, and, as her death is not a plot requirement, would appear to be a DC incident.

With the sex professional, the envelope is extended as to the representation of sexuality in a character. However, while the sex professional in *Carnivale* enjoys a conflation of *two* types of immunity, that of being a regular character as well as a sex professional; the usual encounter with a prostitute or stage dancer in a contemporary TV melodrama is with a 'human prop' whose agentive role rarely goes beyond the eliciting of information in cases to be solved. Looking beyond the contemporary, however, a notable group of narratives cast the

sex professional in a prominent role: In the *New Testament* Mary Magdalene, who in general (non-scholarly) Christian tradition has been regarded as a prostitute, earns a position among the disciples of Jesus despite her 'ill repute'. Puritan values being closely connected to exegetic readings of the New Testament, an exception from the DC for secular narratives could have originated in the precedence set by an 'archetype of the prostitute' found in the Scriptures. In the shuffled deck of religious references which constitute the mythic backdrop of *Carnivale*, several identities may have converged on the Dora Mae character in the depiction of her death: The word 'harlot' is etched into her forehead, making of her a mockery of the Crucifixion.

Another, rather more pragmatic explanation to 'the fallen woman license' is the necessity of giving visual clues to identify the sex professional; an amount of sexual exposure needs to be evident in the way she appears in order to set her apart from other women. The representation of the prostitute is likely to draw on staples like scant clothing (even on a cold night, making the choice of attire conspicuous) and heavy styling (make-up, hairdo), the latter contributing to an impression of the sex professional being an 'artificial woman' playing a role in a sexual sideshow. As the need for character type identification legitimizes the sexual exposure of 'suggestive clothing', inclusion of other sexual elements, like depictions of intercourse, would slip quietly under the canopy of what has already been permitted.

The typecasting of the prostitute serves a further purpose: The closed values contained within the DC are, as argued in the previous chapter, in favor of restricting female sexuality – whenever it breaks free from the permitted (but hidden) context of family, there is a risk of a DC 'retaliation'. The prostitute, however, represents sexual *containment*: She is a recognizable feature in the melodramatic urban landscape, in herself a guardian of the sexuality she embodies. Her exaggerated features draw a reinforced borderline between her 'artificial' sexuality and the sexually restricted society she inhabits. When Dora Mae exposes

her genitalia in 'Babylon' she lets untempered sexuality escape across that borderline and ends up the victim of a DC which responds solely to the need for re-establishing sexual control. Her crucifixion, however, could signify another closed set of values, one not included in the DC template, expressing sympathy with the 'transgressor', in a mode similar to Egg's *Past and Present* (Chapter 3).

It is implied that dressing up in tight clothes showing off thighs, pushing up breasts, in any other context than prostitution would be regarded as sexually suggestive and be classified as 'sexual innuendo' (Chapter 1). For a woman who is not a sex professional this type of representation signals sexual intent and could make her a DC target. In 'Daniela' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 3) the lack of immunity for the titular character becomes an issue when, in the opening sequence, she appears in a street lined with prostitutes, dressed in such a way that the only thing which sets her apart from them is her absence of cool. Dressing like a prostitute among prostitutes but not sharing their DC immunity makes her depicted vulnerability seem particularly urgent:

Backed by Donna Summer's 1979 disco hit 'Bad Girls' a night time street scene is unveiled: Prostitutes on corner duty at a destitute bus station; casual passers by, and, entering from a side street, in an elegant yet determined swagger, a young woman, rather skinny, dressed in flamboyant, tight-fitting slacks and a see-thru top. Not out of place among the hookers, Daniela at first gives the impression of being in the trade herself – the narrative even walks her to a car parked by the curb, and it is only after she has made contact with the persons inside it, bending forward, poking her head in as would any hooker in the street hustling stereotype; that her lack of professional intent becomes apparent. She hails the car with 'Help a girl get home, papi?' and, with her head inside it, 'See my bag got stolen and I need some

bread to get on the bus.' The person in the car spits in her face, corroborating the impression that she could be a prostitute, and is met by a display of anger from other girls, one of which turns out to be Daniela's friend. The car takes off, and in the following sequence, where Daniela's friend helps her clean up, offering encouragement, she states 'This merchandise ain't for sale!' and resolves the ambiguity. The contrast between this statement and the completeness of her representation as a sex professional – her mode of dress, her street language, her acquaintances, her whereabouts as well as the time of day; also, the way she is treated by the person in the car – renders her with a prostitute's character, but without a prostitute's DC immunity. A few scenes later, Daniela's bloodied clothes are found in a dumpster nearby, signifying her death. ('Daniela', *Cold Case* season 2, episode 3)

Daniela's death does not occur as a result of her appearance among prostitutes, but is connected to a second type of exposure: It is revealed that she is a transsexual, and although a surprised boyfriend is ready to accept it, her boyfriend's father is not. None of them is her killer, but the 'showdown' among the three in her crummy flat leaves her feeling rejected to the extent that she dies, somewhat later, by her own hand. Considering the Puritan value set presumed to operate underneath the plot structure, it would appear that Daniela's two exposures – the sexual and the transsexual – are equally suited to motivate her death. However, the latter is ruled out by causality, and, as will be argued shortly, gay exposure in itself does not seem to generate a DC occurrence.

Wigglesworth, Danville and the Beast Within

The general absence of documented homosexuality in early Puritan literature makes the diaries of Michael Wigglesworth, kept in the middle of the Seventeenth Century, an

extensively cited sourcebook of same-sex awareness. Wigglesworth was a Harvard graduate, poet and a teacher, and it was in the course of his tutoring of boys he realized that he nurtured feelings for his pupils that amounted to more than mere doting. In his diaries he describes:

> '[…] filthy lust flowing from my fond affection to my pupils whiles in their presence on the third day after noon that I confess myself an object of God's loathing as my sin is of my own; and pray God make it so more to me.' (Morgan (ed.), p. 27)

For Wigglesworth, his feelings represented a challenge to his faith, but it is doubtful whether he identified himself as one among a group of people sharing a common sexuality. In his thorough essay 'A Sodom Within: Historicizing Puritan Homoerotics in the Diary of Michael Wigglesworth' Nicholas F. Radel quotes historian Alan Bray to the effect that no social structures existed that could embody a gay community. (Radel, 45) As a consequence, same-sex occurrences could not be antagonized as belonging to a group of people sharing 'deviant' behaviour.

Although Wigglesworth seemingly managed to contain his 'filthy lust', the presence of opportunity could in other circumstances have paved the way for abuse. According to statistics provided by N.E.H. Hull, 20 persons of both sexes were charged with sodomy-related crimes ('buggery' notably among them) in Massachusetts in the years 1673 to 1774 (Hull p. 61). Distributed cases of 'buggery' every odd year hardly constitute an emergent phenomenon in need of classification; Post-Modern media, however, has had the opportunity to treat homosexuality either in its isolated form, with the gay character as an outsider, or as social phenomena based on gay communities. In 'Greed' (*Cold Case* Season 1, episode 20) the urges depicted are individual, challenging the social order rather than belonging to it; and so are similar to those experienced by Wigglesworth, if negotiated differently:

Charles Danville, freelancing speculator guru, is at work behind the 80's style glass and steel desk in his office when one of his apprentices enters the room, returning from an assignment. The light is a phosphorescent green, a signature visual effect consistent throughout the secondary narrative, rendering rooms and the people in them in a bleak monochrome and inflicting the skin of the characters with a haggard, ageing look, even on faces belonging to younger men. Beau Munger (Mat Hostetler) is wearing the executive's uniform of suit and tie, contrasting his mentor's half open robe and supercilious, half-joking demeanour. Beau is invited to sit down, then is offered a line of coke and readily accepts. A few moments later, Danville (William Bumiller), having declared that 'you're the one, Beau; you're the one that's gonna make it big', reaches out underneath the table, his hand settling on Beau's thigh. Speaking out of the primary narrative nineteen years later, Beau informs Lily Rush (and the spectator) that the sexual approach was a consensual part of the relationship between Danville and his young wannabees: 'He hit on all of us. If you wanted to succeed with Charlie you'd play by his rules.'

Back in the secondary narrative, Beau's claim is corroborated. Randy Price (Samuel Ball) is standing under an umbrella in a heavy rainfall, apparently waiting for the bus. It is dark; solitary headlights are approaching the camera, low on luminosity to he point of appearing bleak and, like the rest of the scene, in the episode's persistent palette. The headlights belong to a sports car with Danville in it, pulling up in front of Randy who does not know Danville personally, but knows him by reputation; and is taken aback at the offer of a ride. He gets into the car, expresses his admiration of it, whereupon Danville admits, 'took me a hard days work to afford it'. The conversation moves on to moneymaking ventures; Danville proposes that Randy joins him in establishing a scam outfit, and places a hand on his budding apprentice's knee to make him realize what is expected of him. ('Greed', *Cold Case* season 1, episode 17)

This sequence, with Randy Price waiting in the rain, huddling under his umbrella, Danville in the car picking him up, mimics the process of somebody buying sex off a boy prostitute. Randy is depicted as being dissatisfied and ready to yield, unlike Beau, who left Danville's office after he was approached sexually. There are similar sequences in 'Greed' where Danville is surrounded by young admirers at nightclubs, enjoying the attention, sometimes expanding his posse. It would appear that the narrative is extending the activity of commerce to include the manner in which people are regarded by Danville – hookers 'going places'. Danville's character may come across as excessively callous; it should be noted, though, that his disregard for emotions, or other people's misfortune, has plot value in that it provides a steady supply of suspects when Danville's eventual death is investigated.

Obviously, Wigglesworth's self-loathing and fearfulness of transgression does not find resonance with Danville. Wigglesworth, treading lightly, channels his desires into ever more ardent religious worship:

> 'God assisted me so to speak to my pupils this day that I could hardly utter my self without pouring forth tears though notwithstanding I desire to look up to the Lord […] Suffer me not suffer me not O my God to dote upon the creature wherein is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit'. (Morgan (ed.) p. 11)

Wigglesworth remains alert as to the yearnings of the beast within; Danville, as far as the Puritan ethic goes, is the beast *embodied*. In the opening sequence of 'Greed' Danville toasts, 'to lives of quiet desperation – and not leading them', the lives referred to being those of the victims of his ventures and scams. This is how Danville is introduced to the viewer, surrounded by fellow speculators, celebrating somebody else's lack of fortune. Enter Kip Crowley (T.J. Thyne), another apprentice of Danville's although, perhaps due to his absence of looks, not his lover. Kip is upset as the shareholders in Danville's scam are losing their savings, the very reason Danville and his crew are 'living it up'. Kip demands a word with

him and, in confronting his mentor, represents the conscience the narrative needs as a contrast to the carefree 80's speculator outlook. The incursion of conscience through one of Danville's own men prepares the ground for the revealing of Danville's dead body in the next scene – the accusations delivered 'behind the lines' negate his distancing abilities and strips him of protection.

There is, as noted, a wide range of reasons why Danville might 'deserve' to end up dead. One could maintain, therefore, that the sex elements are not necessary, plot wise, to move the narrative towards its conclusion. However, with the 'execution narrative' in mind, as has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the tendency to tie sexual transgression to a felony is pervasive. In 'Ravaged' (*Cold Case* season 2, episode 18), it could be argued that the fallen mother had to transgress sexually before her moment of death could be depicted: In 'Greed' Danville's crimes are not fully punishable until a case of sexual exploitation has been made within the narrative.

Randy Price admits, retrospectively, that intercourse took place after the meeting in the car. It is interesting that in symbolically making Randy a prostitute, the 'fallen woman licence' (although applied here to a young man) immunizes him against the 'death correspondence'. It would support the assumption that the DC also applies to occurrences of gay intercourse.

Being a homosexual, however, does not in itself elicit a 'punitive' response in the narrative. As long as Wigglesworth does not cave in under he pressure of the sexual temptations surrounding him, he is not a felon; rather, his diary reads as a continuation of the biblical narratives of temptation, particularly the temptations of Christ, and read in this light it becomes a testimony to Wigglesworth's resilience, even to the degree of setting an example for others to follow. Homosexuality, as is pointed out by Radel (p.42-43), appears to be a social construction of the most recent centuries; in the early days of the Eastern colonies

homosexuality was not yet a matter of being identified as a particular type of person. [point already made, needs editing] What remains, then, is the homosexual *act* which, along with other acts of a 'deviant' nature would be labelled as *sodomy*. Although the distinction can not be made in 'Greed' because the only person actively displaying homosexual behaviour is the one who dies, other episodes, like 'The Lost Soul of Herman Lester' (*Cold Case* Season 1, episode 17) show that homosexuality does not need to be depicted in an unfavourable manner, let alone call for 'punishment'. However, both *Cold Case* and *Carnivale* yield examples of sodomy triggering the 'death correspondence': In 'After the Ball Is Over' (*Carnivale* Season 1, episode 2) the demonic reverend Justin uses his powers to make a middle-aged man recall an instance in his past when he abused a child, the revoking of the memory apparently also activating the man's realization of his transgression. He later ends up dead by his own hand. Likewise, in 'The Plan' (*Cold Case* Season 1, episode 22) a swim coach may be subjected to the 'death correspondence' for having abused the children he was coaching, although the causal connection between the abuse and the retribution could make the connection invalid. If valid, these examples could indicate that 'sodomy' is the trigger of the response, not the sexual leanings of the perpetrator. Even so, it should be noted that these series, being contemporary with a socialized homosexuality, eventually redirects the punishment towards that which is defined as homosexual, homing in on, and adhering to, the gay identity.

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General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Sexual exposure: Gender distribution

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General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Sexual exposure: Regular or non-regular cast

[17] Expendable characters: Non-regular (NRC) cast and regular cast who are exiting the show.
[18] Expendable characters: Non-regular (NRC) cast and regular cast who are exiting the show.
[19] The deaths of characters whose gender can not be determined, are not included in the statistics.

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Immediate Male Punishment

Show	Total SE	Male SE	Total IMP	% IMP	Chrono.	Balance
Cold Case 1	55	29	5	17, 2	5	0
Cold Case 2	39	16	6	37, 5	3	3
Cold Case total	**94**	**45**	**11**	**24, 4**	**8**	**3**
Carnivale 1	53	16	8	50, 0	2	6
Carnivale 2	31	11	4	36, 4	3	1
Carnivale total	**84**	**27**	**12**	**44, 4**	**5**	**7**
NYPD Blue 1	31	13	6	46, 2	5	1
NYPD Blue 2	28	12	2	16, 7	1	1
NYPD Blue total	**59**	**25**	**8**	**32, 0**	**7**	**1**
Overall	**237**	**97**	**31**	**(32, 0)**	**20**	**11**

SE = sexual exposure; IMP = immediate male punishment; Chrono. = chronological occurrence[20]; Balance = unfavourable situation prior to the ‘transgression’ cancelling out the IMP.

[20] A ’chronological occurrence’ locates the IMP after the ’transgression’

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Sexual exposure and types of exception.

Show	All SX	SP	% SP	Com.	% com.	BG	% BG	Total / %
Cold Case 1	49	1	2, 0	0	0	7	14, 3	8 / 16, 3
Cold Case 2	33	0	0, 0	4	12, 1	2	6, 1	6 / 18, 2
Cold Case total	**82**	**1**	**1, 2**	**4**	**4, 9**	**9**	**11, 0**	**14 / 17, 1**
Carnivale 1	15	6	40, 0	0	0, 0	0	0, 0	6 / 40, 0
Carnivale 2	4	1	25, 0	0	0, 0	0	0, 0	1 / 25, 0
Carnivale total	**19**	**7**	**36, 8**	**0**	**0, 0**	**0**	**0, 0**	**7 / 36, 8**
NYPD Blue 1	8	2	25, 0	2	25, 0	2	25, 0	6 / 75, 0
NYPD Blue 2	12	4	33, 3	1	8, 3	1	8, 3	6 / 50, 0
NYPD Blue total	**20**	**6**	**30, 0**	**3**	**15, 0**	**3**	**15, 0**	**12 / 60, 0**
Overall	**121**	**14**	**11, 6**	**7**	**5, 8**	**12**	**9, 9**	**33 / 27, 3**

SX = sexual exposure of expendable characters (excluding regular cast); SP = sex professional; Com. = comical situation; BG = bad guy.

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Connections between sexual exposure and death for expendable characters[21]; 'eligible offenders' both included and excluded.

Show	Total SX	Total DC	% DC	DC Female[22]	DC Male	DC % female	DC % male
Cold Case 1	69 / 41[23]	11	22, 4 / 26, 8	10	1	90, 9	9, 1
Cold Case 2	33 / 27	12	36, 4 / 44, 4	11	1	91, 7	8, 3
Cold Case total	**82 / 68**	**23**	**28, 0 / 33, 8**	**21**	**2**	**91, 3**	**8, 7**
Carnivale 1	15 / 9	4	26, 7 / 44, 4	3	1	75, 0	25, 0
Carnivale 2	4 / 3	0	0 / 0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Carnivale total	**19 / 12**	**4**	**21, 1 / 33, 3**	**3**	**1**	**75, 0**	**25, 0**
NYPD Blue 1	8 / 2	2	25, 0 / 100, 0	2	0	100, 0	0, 0
NYPD Blue 2	12 / 6	3	25, 0 / 50, 0	1	2	33, 3	67, 7
NYPD Blue total	**20 / 8**	**5**	**25, 0 / 62, 5**	**3**	**2**	**60, 0**	**40, 0**
Overall	**121 / 88**	**32**	**(26, 5 / 36, 4)**[24]	**27**	**5**	**(84, 4)**	**(15, 6)**

SX = Sexual exposure of expendable characters (excluding regular cast); DC = 'death correspondence': same character has sex and dies in episode, or even next couple of episodes if serial (continuous narrative)

[21] Expendable characters: Non-regular (NRC) cast and regular cast who are exiting the show.
[22] The four last columns show gender distribution for the incidents classifiable as 'death correspondence'. Applies also to the third column.
[23] The first number includes 'eligible offenders' while in the second they are excluded.
[24] Bracketed numbers indicate that they can only be calculated horizontally, as they refer to different quantities for each series.

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Connections between sexual exposure and death for expendable characters[25]; ‘eligible offenders’ included.

Show	Total SX	Total DC	% DC	DC Female[26]	DC Male	DC % female	DC % male
Cold Case 1	49	11	22, 4	10	1	90, 9	9, 1
Cold Case 2	33	12	36, 4	11	1	91, 7	8, 3
Cold Case total	**82**	**23**	**28, 0**	**21**	**2**	**91, 3**	**8, 7**
Carnivale 1	15	4	26, 7	3	1	75, 0	25, 0
Carnivale 2	4	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Carnivale total	**19**	**4**	**21, 1**	**3**	**1**	**75, 0**	**25, 0**
NYPD Blue 1	8	2	25, 0	2	0	100, 0	0, 0
NYPD Blue 2	12	3	25, 0	1	2	33, 3	67, 7
NYPD Blue total	**20**	**5**	**25, 0**	**3**	**2**	**60, 0**	**40, 0**
Overall	**121**	**32**	**26, 5**	**27**	**5**	**84, 4**	**15, 6**

SX = Sexual exposure of expendable characters (excluding regular cast); DC = ’death correspondence’: same character has sex and dies in episode, or even next couple of episodes if serial (continuous narrative)

[25] Expendable characters: Non-regular (NRC) cast and regular cast who are exiting the show.

[26] The four last columns show gender distribution for the incidents classifiable as ‘death correspondence’.

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Sexual exposure: Gender distribution

Show	SE[27]	Male	Female	Male DC	Female DC	% male DC[28]	% female DC[29]
Cold Case 1	41	22	19	1	10	4, 5	52, 6
Cold Case 2	27	13	14	1	11	7, 7	78, 6
Cold Case total	**68**	**35**	**33**	**2**	**21**	**(5, 7)**	**(63, 6)**
Carnivale 1	9	5	4	1	3	20, 0	75, 0
Carnivale 2	3	0	3	0	0	N/A	0, 0
Carnivale total	**12**	**5**	**7**	**1**	**3**	**(20, 0)**	**(42, 9)**
NYPD Blue 1	3	1	2	0	2	0, 0	100, 0
NYPD Blue 2	5	2	3	1	2	50, 0	66, 7
NYPD Blue total	**8**	**3**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**(33, 3)**	**(80, 0)**
Overall	**88**	**43**	**45**	**4**	**28**	**(9, 3)**	**(62, 2)**

[27] Cases of sexual exposure for the candidate group (expendable characters who are not 'eligible offenders').
[28] Measured against male sexual exposure
[29] Measured against female sexual exposure

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Sexual exposure: explicit sex or sexual innuendo

Show	Sexual exposure	Explicit	Innuendo	% explicit	% innuendo
Cold Case 1	55	4	51	7, 3	92, 7
Cold Case 2	39	4	35	10, 3	89, 7
Cold Case total	**94**	**8**	**86**	**8, 5**	**91, 5**
Carnivale 1	53	24	29	45, 3	54, 7
Carnivale 2	31	13	18	41, 9	58, 1
Carnivale total	**84**	**37**	**47**	**44, 0**	**56, 0**
NYPD Blue 1	31	16	15	51, 6	48, 4
NYPD Blue 2	28	11	17	39, 3	60, 7
NYPD Blue total	**59**	**27**	**32**	**45, 8**	**54, 2**
Overall	**237**	**72**	**165**	**30, 4**	**69, 6**

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Death and gender distribution[30]

Show	Total deaths	Male deaths	Female deaths	Male deaths %	Female deaths %
Cold Case 1	31	18	13	58, 1	41, 9
Cold Case 2	34	16	18	47, 1	52, 9
Cold Case total	**65**	**34**	**31**	**52, 3**	**47, 7**
Carnivale 1	6	3	3	50, 0	50, 0
Carnivale 2	10	6	4	60, 0	40, 0
Carnivale total	**16**	**9**	**7**	**56, 2**	**43, 8**
NYPD Blue 1	28	21	7	75, 0	25, 0
NYPD Blue 2	34	20	14	58, 8	41, 2
NYPD Blue total	**62**	**41**	**21**	**66, 1**	**33, 9**
Overall	**143**	**84**	**59**	**58, 7**	**41, 3**

[30] The deaths of characters whose gender can not be determined, are not included in the statistics.

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: DC gender distribution

Show	SE[31]	Male	Female	Male DC	Female DC	% male DC[32]	% female DC[33]
Cold Case 1	41	22	19	1	10	4, 5	52, 6
Cold Case 2	27	13	14	1	11	7, 7	78, 6
Cold Case total	**68**	**35**	**33**	**2**	**21**	**(5, 7)[34]**	**(63, 6)**
Carnivale 1	9	5	4	1	3	20, 0	75, 0
Carnivale 2	3	0	3	0	0	N/A	0, 0
Carnivale total	**12**	**5**	**7**	**1**	**3**	**(20, 0)**	**(42, 9)**
NYPD Blue 1	3	1	2	0	2	0, 0	100, 0
NYPD Blue 2	5	2	3	1	2	50, 0	66, 7
NYPD Blue total	**8**	**3**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**(33, 3)**	**(80, 0)**
Overall	**88**	**43**	**45**	**4**	**28**	**(9, 3)**	**(62, 2)**

DC = death correspondence.

[31] Cases of sexual exposure for the candidate group (expendable characters who are not 'eligible offenders').
[32] Measured against male sexual exposure
[33] Measured against female sexual exposure
[34] In brackets: Horizontal calculation only.

General statistics readout for *Cold Case*, *Carnivale* and *NYPD Blue*: Sexual exposure: Regular or non-regular cast

Show	Total SE	Reg.	% reg.	NRC	% NRC
Cold Case 1	55	6	10, 9	49	89, 1
Cold Case 2	39	6	15, 4	33	84, 6
Cold Case total	**94**	**12**	**12, 8**	**82**	**87, 2**
Carnivale 1	53	41	77, 4	12	22, 6
Carnivale 2	31	27	87, 1	4	12, 9
Carnivale total	**84**	**68**	**81, 0**	**16**	**19, 0**
NYPD Blue 1	31	22	71, 0	9	29, 0
NYPD Blue 2	28	16	57, 1	12	42, 9
NYPD Blue total	**59**	**38**	**64, 4**	**21**	**35, 6**
Overall [35]	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

SE = Sexual exposure; Reg. = Regular cast; NRC = Non-regular cast

[35] Overall numbers are not included as the shows are different in their narrative method and can not readily be compared. Such difference can entail the degree to which the frame narrative interacts with the secondary narrative, or whether, as in *Carnivale*, it is absent altogether. The significance of the frame narrative is, of course, that it contains the regular cast.