

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

October 2, 2014

Leslie Moonves

President and Chief Executive Officer, CBS Corporation

Via email

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Dear Mr. Moonves:

I am writing to express my grave disappointment and concern after viewing last night's premier of *Stalker*. In glorifying and normalizing a serious crime, the program demonstrates extremely poor judgment disrespecting the 7.5 million individuals who are victims of stalking each year in the U.S.

We understand CBS's quest for large audiences and high ratings, however not by glorifying a crime with very real consequences. Stalking is a serious and terrifying crime that is too frequently minimized, romanticized, and comedized. One in 4 women and one in 13 men will be stalked in their lifetime. They will experience anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression at rates much higher than the general population, and one-third of all stalking victims live in fear that the stalking will never stop. Stalking, more than any other crime, is routinely misidentified, dismissed, or downplayed. The show further contributes to the glorification and normalization of the crime.

We have strong objections to the use of gratuitous violence especially because we know that only 25-35% of stalking cases involve any violence and only 2% of cases involve serious violence, including homicide. Promoting that viewers will be "blown away" by the premiere and then opening the series with a woman burned to death in an explosion at the hands of her stalker was insensitive and told us all we need to know about CBS's intentions. *Stalker* is a horror show, not a realistic depiction of a behavior or a foray to raise awareness by leading a national dialogue about a very real issue. Which by the way, in light of recent high profile cases of violence against women, we think CBS missed a tremendous opportunity to maximize its influence.

Beyond the statistics cited, there is very little the show gets right about stalking. As the nation's leading resource on stalking, the Stalking Resource Center of the National Center for Victims of Crime, works day in and out providing resources, training, and information to law enforcement, prosecutors, victim service providers, and others to help them more effectively recognize and respond to stalking. One of our greatest challenges in keeping victims safe and holding offenders accountable is the minimization and normalization of stalking behaviors. This show only makes our work more difficult by framing stalking as entertainment. Would CBS air a show called *Rapist* and justify it as a way to raise awareness about sexual violence?

The show's creator, Kevin Williamson, has responded to critics by telling them to "change the channel." We are calling on television viewers to do exactly that. We are asking national advertisers whose commercials aired during the show to pull their spots and we are asking that you immediately remove *Stalker* from the schedule. If CBS is truly serious about raising awareness, engage with us to contribute to a meaningful, national dialogue about the very real consequences of this horrific crime.

Sincerely,



Michelle M. Garcia

Director, Stalking Resource Center