

Dole aims sharp tongue at Hollywood

But remarks are a rerun to producers

By The Associated Press
LOS ANGELES — Sen. Bob Dole's tongue-lashing of Hollywood sex and violence sounds like a rerun to the people who make movies, music and TV shows.

"How different is the excess of violence in films and television from the excess of violence in campaigning, where in every race across the country, the campaign issues are used to destroy another human being?" producer Norman Lear said Thursday.

"It's just too easy to grab headlines this way."

At a fund-raiser for his presidential campaign Wednesday night,



Dole

Dole chastised the entertainment industry, saying it brought "nightmares of depravity" into the mainstream of society.

Dole mentioned Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers," a violent parody covering a killing spree and profit from it.

"It is the height of hypocrisy for Senator Dole, who wants to repeal the assault-weapons ban, to blame Hollywood for the violence in our society," Stone said.

"I'm proud of 'Natural Born Killers' and look at it as a commentary on a madness in contemporary American society," he said through spokesman Stephen Rivers.

Dole isn't the first public figure to come to Hollywood to urge restraint. President Clinton, former Vice President Dan Quayle and Pope John Paul II have taken the industry to task over sex and violence.

"I think Hollywood's morals have been questioned since the beginning of Hollywood," said Jim Chabin, president of Promax, a marketing

association. The company helps build entertainment audiences.

Two of last year's biggest movies were the feel-good "Forrest Gump" and the children's cartoon "The Lion King," while "Casper," a kid's ghost story, topped the Memorial Day box office list this year, Chabin noted.

Pop culture scholars questioned whether Dole's remarks were about entertainment or about raising money for himself.

"The violence that's the most disturbing is the violence that's presented in the news and the 'real-life' shows — and in society," said Marsha Kinder, an author and professor at the University of Southern California's film and television school.

Instructors are teaching students about the effects of the shows they make, she said.

"We're certainly trying to make them more conscious of it, to challenge them on these topics, also in television and the new interactive media," Kinder said.

Time Warner donated more than \$21,000 to Dole campaigns

By Curt Anderson
Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON — Time Warner Inc., the entertainment giant Sen. Bob Dole accused of undermining America's moral foundation through violence and sex in films and music, has contributed at least \$21,000 to various Dole political campaigns since 1987, records show.

Time Warner, which has a major stake in the outcome of telecommunications legislation pending in Congress, contributed

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through its political action committee to the Kansas Republican's 1992 Senate race, according to Federal Election Commission documents.

The company contributed a total of \$10,000 in 1990 and 1994 to Campaign America, the PAC created by Dole to fund GOP campaigns nationwide.

Before the Time Warner merger, a Warner Communications PAC gave Dole \$5,000 for his unsuccessful 1988 presidential campaign, the records show. And this year, a Time Warner senior vice president, Tod R. Hullin, contributed \$1,000 out of his own pocket for Dole's 1996 presidential bid.

Time Warner has contributed to other Dole interests as well. The company is listed among the 1993 contributors to The Dole Foundation, which raised about \$1.2 million that year to help disabled people

find meaningful work. The exact amount given by Time Warner to the foundation isn't public.

Dole has taken a position favored by Time Warner in the battle over telecommunications reform, in which cable and telephone companies are struggling over the right to provide an array of electronic services in people's homes.

But in Hollywood on Wednesday, Dole singled out Time Warner before an audience at a GOP fund-raiser, saying some rap records and movies it distributes were a threat to the nation's values.

"I would like to ask the executives of Time Warner a question: Is this what you intended to accomplish with your careers?" Dole said. "You have sold your souls, but must you debase our nation and threaten our children as well?"

Dole campaign spokesman Nelson Warfield said Dole did not intend to stop accepting contributions from Time Warner.

Hollywood attack may pay off big for Dole

By Dan Balz and Thomas B. Edsall
Los Angeles Times/Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., found a fat target to shoot at when he lambasted Hollywood on Wednesday. His speech denouncing the entertainment industry not only won the plaudits of social and religious conservatives, but tapped into broader public sentiment to rein in Hollywood's portrayal of sex and violence.

In his speech Wednesday in Los Angeles, Dole denounced the "mainstreaming of deviancy" by the entertainment industry, attacking films such as "Natural Born Killers" and "True Romance," and rap groups such as Cannibal Corpse, Geto Boys and 2 Live Crew. "A line has been crossed, not just of taste but of human dignity and decency," Dole said.

Dole's assault on Hollywood is designed to blunt doubts about his candidacy among religious and social conservatives — a powerful constituency within the Republican primary electorate.

But the criticism Dole leveled against rap lyrics and sexually explicit movies and the corporations that profit from them reaches well beyond the core of Republican activists. Hollywood ranks at the bottom when Americans are asked which institutions reflect their values, and a recent survey conducted by Dole's pollsters found that, by a margin of 2-1, Americans believe the country faces a moral crisis rather than an economic crisis.

This cultural conservatism was one of the forces powering the Republican takeover of Congress last year and is considered one of

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the GOP's most potent weapons for 1996.

Politicians across the political spectrum recognize the power of morals. Both President Clinton and his wife, Hillary, have recently spoken out on issues of character and morality, and Clinton criticized rap lyrics during his 1992 campaign. On the right, Patrick Buchanan has sounded similar themes in his presidential campaign, while Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, has struggled to establish conservative credentials on cultural and moral issues.

But Dole so far has done more to

elevate the issue of Hollywood's values in a way that is reminiscent of what then-Vice President Dan Quayle did with his "Murphy Brown" speech in 1992.

Some critics, noting the Kansas senator rarely talked about these issues before launching his presidential campaign, described what Dole is doing as cynical politics, designed to nail down the conservative wing of the party. But Dole advisers say that misses the point — attacks on Hollywood resonate across party, racial and religious lines.

"It appeals directly to parents and working families," said Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager. "I guarantee there will be a lot of dinner table discussions about what Bob

Dole said about the entertainment industry."

Dole's speech appeared to complete the process of converting skepticism of his bid among leaders of the religious right to enthusiasm, just a few steps short of endorsement.

"He clearly recognizes not only the importance of the religious-conservative vote, but understands the broad appeal that can be gained by making themes about the culture a centerpiece of his campaign," said Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition.

Gary Bauer, the president of the Family Research Council who was consulted about the speech before its delivery, said Dole had firmly

established his credentials as a candidate willing to make moral and values issues central to his campaign. "We were looking for an arena to give the speech where it would have maximum impact," one Dole official said Thursday. "Going into Hollywood's back yard was a way to draw attention to the issue."

To draw additional attention, Dole advisers beamed up specifics — singling out Time Warner, naming names of movies and rap groups.

One Dole adviser said the real purpose was not simply to pick a fight with Time Warner but to hit the broader issue of "the lessening of standards and the lowering of values."

Dole's wife to sell stock in Disney

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Elizabeth Dole said Friday she would immediately sell more than \$15,000 in Walt Disney Co. stock after being told that a Disney subsidiary made "Priest," one of the movies her husband has criticized.

"Priest," a film portraying sexual misconduct by Roman Catholic clergy, was produced by Miramax.

Walt Disney also owns Hollywood Records, whose performers have included rapper Prince Akeem, who in a 1991 song blamed black poverty on a "white conspiracy."

Bob Dole's 1993 Senate disclosure form showed that he owned Walt Disney common stock, but his 1994 form, to be released next week, will show that Dole sold his Disney stock last July 5.

Less than an hour after being asked about her investments Friday, Elizabeth Dole said through a campaign official that she would sell her Disney shares.

"Walt Disney has a long tradition of making high-quality family movies," said Dole campaign manager Scott Reed. "Mrs. Dole was surprised to learn that Walt Disney owned Miramax and Hollywood Records and has decided to sell her stock."

Dole switches gears in race

He leaves Senate uncertainties behind to attack popular themes

By JILL LAWRENCE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bob Dole's presidential aspirations will rise or fall on his accomplishments as Senate majority leader, the conventional wisdom goes.

But leadership can take many forms, and Dole is just beginning to tap the possibilities.

With his assault on Hollywood values, the consummate nuts-and-bolts legislator is turning to the bully pulpit and larger themes. At the same time, he's deflecting attention from the sticky uncertainties of the Senate.

The balanced budget amendment to the Constitution died for lack of one vote, sweeping House-passed legal reforms were substantially weakened, Republicans are feuding over tax cuts and Dr. Henry Foster may be confirmed as surgeon general despite adamant opposition by Dole.

Attacking gangsta rap and violent movies is a whole

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lot simpler, and gets immediate political results.

"People are very happy he's done this. The expectation is that he will continue to deal with these things," says Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council and a one-time domestic policy adviser to President Reagan.

Smart politicians realize at some point, sometimes out of strategic necessity, that there's more to being presidential than getting bills passed.

When his cherished health reform plan was on the ropes last fall, President Clinton began talking about "community values," the importance of character and the ills of society. He hasn't stopped since.

Last week in Montana, motivated in part by the Oklahoma City bombing, he implored people to disagree in civilized ways. In May, he hosted a conference on character-building and the importance of the family. This month, Clinton has invited community leaders to search for common ground on social problems.

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Dole, R-Kan., the front-runner for his party's presidential nomination, is not exactly a natural fit for the bully pulpit. As Bauer put it, "Great rhetoric has not been one of his strengths."

For years, Dole has been immersed in arcane legislative details, driven by the imperative to build coalitions and forge compromises. He is fluent in areas most Americans are not: unfunded mandates, line-item vetoes, cloture and the 10th Amendment.

In the 1988 primary season, Dole baited George Bush about the Iran-Contra affair and growing up rich. He said he understood people who "made it the hard way." He spent a lot of time defending his record on tax increases — the issue that ultimately did him in.

"Clearly, in the past, a better job could have been done with fleshing out the senator's whole range of concerns. We're not going to make that mistake again," said a Dole associate.

Dole's values-and-violence speech underscores his recognition that candidates for president need to be more than legislative facilitators. Bush called it "the vision thing." Dole strategists prefer "the leadership thing."

Former Vice President Dan Quayle kicked off the Hollywood values debate and a major controversy in 1992 with a critique of "Murphy Brown," a popular network television show.

Dole chose safer, far more shocking targets, among them song lyrics that are abusive, violent and obscene. The political appeal of Hollywood-bashing was guaranteed, only 25 percent of the

respondents in an April poll by Public Opinion Strategies, Dole's pollsters, said they felt Hollywood TV and movie producers represented their values well.

And what of the influential social conservatives who have been skeptical of Dole's commitment to their issues? "The speech and the delivery of it did not seem contrived. It seemed very heartfelt," Bauer said.

There's no question Dole's ability to deliver on GOP goals in the Senate will bear on his future. But it can only help him to demonstrate he is more than a creature of Capitol Hill.

"The most severe problems facing the country right now are not ones that lend themselves to easy legislative solutions," Bauer says. "Using the bully pulpit may be the most important role the next president has."