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Dole says he isn't seeking censorship, but Hollywood artists worry about a new McCarthyism

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican attacks on excessive sex and violence in America's entertainment industry are a direct threat to First Amendment rights, Hollywood artists say.

But Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, whose presidential campaign has struck a chord with its criticisms of Hollywood, insisted Sunday that the issue is not censorship but moral responsibility.

"When you debase America, debase society, there ought to be a line drawn," Dole said.

Dole, R-Kan., traveled to Hollywood last week to urge the entertainment industry to stop profiting from the exploitation of sex and violence. His speech touched off a national debate on the corrupting influences of movies

Dole troubled by steamy 'sex kitten' scene in upcoming Gingrich novel

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole says he's troubled by language in an upcoming novel by House Speaker Newt Gingrich that includes a passage about a "pouting sex kitten."

Dole was pressed to comment on Gingrich's new book Sunday during an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," when moderator Tim Russert began reading a steamy paragraph from a book he didn't identify.

"He was overwhelmed by the sight of her, the shameless pleasure she took in her own body," Russert read. "Suddenly the pouting sex kitten gave way to Diana the huntress. She rolled onto him, sitting athwart his chest,

her knees pinning his shoulders. Tell me, or I'll make you do terrible things."

Russert then identified the passage as coming from Gingrich's forthcoming novel. Asked to comment in light of his recent criticism of Hollywood for its portrayals of sex and violence, Dole said, "I don't particularly care for it."

Asked if Gingrich, R-Ga., should rewrite the passage, Dole laughed. "I didn't write the book," he said.

But pressed whether he found the language troubling, Dole said, "It's troubling to me. Maybe it's not troubling to Newt Gingrich."

and music lyrics, and on Sunday two news programs, NBC's "Meet the Press" and CBS' "Face the Nation," devoted time to the issue.

On NBC, movie director Rob Reiner said there was a danger of a new McCarthyism if Congress begins to impose restraints on free expression.

The roots of violence are guns and poor environments for raising children, Reiner said, and to "start blinding Hollywood for all the ills and vio-

lences in the world... (is) not very deep thinking, and it's kind of easy."

On CBS, actor James Woods made allusions to Nazi Germany in a heated exchange with former Education Secretary William Bennett, a leader in the Republican campaign for greater restraint in the entertainment industry.

"You cannot be cavalier about your trashing of the First Amendment," Woods said. He said he found some of the lyrics in music today repulsive, but "they are, sad to say, the tax we pay to enjoy the rights that we have as American citizens."

But Bennett said there was no comparison between the lyrics of Elvis Presley, also condemned in their time, and a recent song that depicts a rape scene. "Anybody who doesn't know the difference between those two is a

moron," he said.

Movie and music companies need "some sense of shame, if you will, or embarrassment, that says there is a line and we will not go below it," Bennett said.

In his Hollywood appearance last week, Dole singled out the entertainment conglomerate Time Warner Inc., criticizing its promotion of so-called "gangsta rap" and other music with objectionable lyrics.

But Dole told NBC on Sunday he had no intention of returning \$21,000 in political contributions Time Warner had given him since 1987.

"I think it demonstrates that they didn't buy anything with Bob Dole," he said. "It sort of dispels this view that every time somebody makes a donation that you're in their pocket."

Vote near on anti-terrorism bill

Clinton, Dole end disagreement, urge senators to cut amendments

WASHINGTON (AP) — Propelled by the Oklahoma City bombing, the Senate is moving toward a final vote on anti-terrorism legislation now that President Clinton and Majority Leader Bob Dole have quit blaming each other for delaying it.

Clinton and Dole prodded lawmakers Monday, spurring them to break the logjam. Dole, who is seeking the GOP presidential nomination, said Sunday that the bill might be bogged down by 67 Democratic amendments and 30 Republican amendments. But by Monday evening, Democrats had cut theirs to 15 to 20 and Republicans were down to five, said Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware, the Senate Judiciary Committee's senior Democrat.

Family members of those killed in the bombing gathered outside the Capitol and urged the senators to enact legislation

to speed implementation of the death penalty.

As the Senate resumed work on the anti-terrorism measure after its weeklong recess, it voted, 90-0, to approve a Democratic amendment requiring that tiny traceable materials, called taggants, be placed in chemicals that can be used to make bombs. The taggants would help law enforcement track down those responsible for bombings.

But the provision, sought by Clinton and proposed by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., was limited shortly before the vote to exclude smokeless or black powder, which is used to propel bullets. The National Rifle Association had opposed the original proposal.

The taggants requirement still would apply to dynamite, TNT, plastic explosives and other forms of explosive chemicals such as those used to make the fuel and fertilizer bomb that killed 168 in Oklahoma City.

The Senate also adopted, by voice vote, a Feinstein amendment to ban any teaching, demonstration or distribution of bomb-making information if the person doing it knows it would be used for a criminal purpose.

Dole closing tax-exempt foundation

"It now appears that some would use attacks on the foundation as a way to obscure the debate on the issues this organization was established to advance."

— Dole statement

By DAVID MORRIS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole is abruptly closing his tax-exempt Better America Foundation after critics demanded the identities of its benefactors and questioned its ties to his campaign.

Campaign and foundation officials refused Tuesday to discuss the abrupt decision. But a one-paragraph statement on a letterhead carrying the names of

Dole and Executive Director Jim Whittinghill said the foundation would go out of business at the end of the month.

"It now appears that some would use attacks on the foundation as a way to obscure the debate on the issues this organization was established to advance," the statement said.

"Rather than allow opponents to muddy the water, the foundation has decided to deny them this distraction. Therefore, effective June 30, 1995, the Better America Foundation will cease operations."

It wasn't immediately clear what would happen to the \$2.6 million the foundation had in the bank at the end of 1994 and any money it raised so far this year.

The Associated Press reported last month that the foundation had raised more than \$4 million in 1994 and spent about \$1.5 million on projects that would be useful to a presidential campaign — a poll, issues papers and a television advertisement that prominently featured Dole.

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The foundation is not required by law to disclose information about contributors and it has refused requests for voluntary disclosure.

Whittinghill, who used to work for Dole in the Senate, said last month there was no tie between the foundation and the Kansas Republican's bid for the White House.

But Whittinghill acknowledged that he often solicited Dole's ideas, shared the foundation's work with him and met regularly with Dole's Senate staff to "see where the foundation can help."

Dole: I'm not on a witch hunt

Hollywood criticism sparks controversy

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bob Dole said Wednesday his criticism of violence and sex in popular culture is not a "witch hunt" but a challenge to those responsible.

"I was not making a call for censorship," said Dole, the Senate majority leader from Kansas and front-running 1996 Republican presidential candidate.

Dole's speech last week in Hollywood has sparked a national debate over morals and values in

music, movies and television, and about the responsibility of companies to control their content.

He singled out Time Warner, the entertainment giant that produced violent movies such as "Natural Born Killers" and has a record subsidiary that distributes

"gangster rap."



Dole

In a speech Wednesday to an anti-pornography group called "Enough is Enough," Dole said he will continue to speak against what he called the "coarsening of our culture."

"We're going to name names. We're going to have the facts before we name names," Dole said. "It's not a witch hunt."

Dole contended that his criticism of entertainment is not simply an attempt to curry favor with the Republican Party's right wing for the 1996 GOP primary. He noted that Democratic Sens. Paul Simon of Illinois and Bill Bradley of New Jersey had made similar comments in the past.

Dole closes tax-exempt foundation

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Whittinghill didn't return repeated telephone calls to his office Tuesday. Nelson Warfield, a spokesman for Dole's presidential campaign, said Dole would have no comment.

Dole created the foundation in February 1993. Its purpose, according to promotional materials, was "to promote and advocate values and principles espoused by the Republican Party."

The IRS granted tax-exempt status to Better America. But because it was classified as a social welfare organization, donors weren't allowed to deduct contributions from their taxes.

Under federal tax law, the foundation couldn't advocate the election of a particular candidate. But Dole's affiliation with the foundation gave him access to indirect help — poll results and issue reports — without having to link contributions and identify donors, which he would have had to do if the money were contributed directly to his campaign.

The critic, Josh Goldstein of the Center for Responsive Politics, said not disclosing contributions provided "the very real possibility that there can be conflicts of interest."

Democrats also were quick to criticize the foundation. Last week Democratic National Committee Chairman Don Fowler called Better America "a Bob Dole political machine that skirts campaign laws by using the mask of non-profit status."

At least two former foundation employees now work for Dole's presidential campaign. Jennifer Rider, who was the foundation's spokeswoman, works in Dole's press office, and former finance director Royal Roth is a top official in the campaign's fund-raising office.

Warfield said there are no plans to add other foundation employees to the campaign staff.

Dole cynically turning silver screen into smoke screen

By Jay Carr
New York Times News Service

Here we go again. Pols dumping on Hollywood. Easy shot. Cheap bust. Great smoke screen. Nothing like an upcoming election to crank up the moral indignation in a pol laboring to become right-wing poster boy.

Been going on since movies began. When Warren Harding's backers were looting Teapot Dome, the GOP, quivering with righteous fury and anchored to Earth only by the fullness of its pockets, said the trouble with America was Clara Bow and her goddess flapper pals showing a little knee. When Hooveromics plunged the country into depression in the '30s, Republicans denounced Hollywood's gangster movies, not their own economic policies that did the real damage. In 1988, Dan Quayle had a vision: Reaganomics wasn't flattening America, "Murphy Brown" was.

Now here's Sen. Bob Dole, trotting out the moral decay script again, like a tired GOP "Nightmare on Elm Street" reread. It's enough to make you check your wallet pocket.

Dole hasn't seen "Natural Born Killers," one of the films he attacked recently. Why should he? He and the congressional apostles of the New Meanness have nothing to learn from it. But, mindful of how well Quayle's attack played with the right, he somehow just knows it's evil. Ditto for "True Romance."

Yet the films he included on his

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"friendly to families" list have much in common with these two he labeled "nightmares of depravity." The body count was higher in a film Dole smiled upon, "Forrest Gump." (The Democrats dropped the ball on "Gump," forfeiting it needlessly to the GOP, which claimed the Oscar-winner's populism as its own.) But there's a dark side to "Gump," an earned bitterness over America's betrayal of ideals in the Vietnam War. Dole did not mention this. Assuming he even saw "Gump." If you can hate a picture you never saw, you can love a picture you never saw.

Still, not having seen the films takes a certain something out of Dole's remarks. Call it conviction. Dole says he likes "The Lion King," a film that had child psychiatrists climbing the walls and parents anxious that the killings in it would traumatize their tots while glorifying violence and slipping in a few racist elements — Scar being darker than the good lions, his bad sidekicks using jive talk.

He also praised "True Lies," last summer's most despicable hit, in which Arnold Schwarzenegger not only vaporizes a screenful of Arab stereotypes, but nastily humiliates Jamie Lee Curtis.

The films Dole attacks, one suspects, are just props in a strategy of

diverting attention from the GOP's real attack on the social fabric, using Hollywood as a convenient scapegoat.

There is an argument to be made against the effects of repeated depictions of violence. But Dole and the GOP have forfeited the right to make it. He and his party present themselves as the guardians of family values. Yet they are the enemies of family values in their elimination of the social services safety net and their abdication of moral responsibility. Instead of making an attempt to fix things, they just pump up the volume and concentrate on assigning blame.

If the Democrats weren't out to lunch, they'd argue for a new policy — trickle-up economics, providing for the majority at the bottom while letting billionaires shift for themselves, leaving them to wonder where their next meal, or congressman, or country club membership is coming from.

They'd also ask Dole why his list of pans is so inconsistent. Why no barbs for Sylvester Stallone's "Cliffhanger," a film reveling in mayhem? Why no trepidation about his "Judge Dredd," due later this month? Could it have anything to do with the fact that Stallone, like Schwarzenegger, is a staunch GOP loyalist? What about this year's films, Bob? You make us feel you're not out there. People are knocking "Die Hard with a Vengeance" on the grounds that releasing a film



The films Sen. Bob Dole attacks are just props.

with a mad bomber plot is a tasteless thing to do so soon after Oklahoma City. Not Dole, though. Actually, it's a slickly made explosion movie, but that's not the point. Maybe the point is that Bruce Willis, its star, is also a Republican.

Or could it be that "Die Hard With a Vengeance" is a Fox movie? With the possible exception of Steven Spielberg, Dole and the GOP never met a billionaire they didn't like. Otherwise, how can you explain the expanded GOP welfare program for the rich, including new tax breaks for billionaires?

Maybe Dole thought it expedient to maintain a tactful silence on the whole "Die Hard" matter, just as the

GOP has been soft-pedaling its oft-stated enthusiasm for dismantling government. So let's see if we've got this straight. Dole wants to put more guns on the street and fewer movies in the theaters. Arnold, Sly and Bruce are on his A-list.

Oh, yes. One more thing. Dole had nothing to say about Fox's pace-setting and therefore presumably violence-inciting tabloid approach to TV. In Dole's book, Fox and boss Rupert Murdoch, who by the merest coincidence is Newt Gingrich's business associate, are OK. Warner, where support for Clinton is not unknown, is the studio that's been singled out as the evil empire. In its depravity, Warner not only released "Natural Born Killers," but featured gangsta rap on 28 of its 1,222 albums. Better rapping than shooting, one would think, but not Dole.

All this, of course, assumes that

Dole is even interested in initiating a rational debate about values propagated by pop culture. It's a worthy topic, an urgent topic, even. One can begin by arguing that Dole and Gingrich and their GOP colleagues are doing a lot more violence than Hollywood to American society by their policies designed to redistribute America's wealth to the rich. The tone and tenor of Dole's remarks do not speak of impartial inquiry, however. They come off as a cheap piece of grandstanding designed to keep conservatives in his camp. It would be healthy if he were opening the floor to a discussion of the root causes of violence and instability. But in a year when Dole needs a tactical jump on his rivals, don't bet on it. Given his cynical partisan jockeying, the one place you won't find Dole in '96 is the moral high ground.