

Parents Call on Oprah Not to Mingle Her Name With Raunchy TV Show

In a letter to Oprah Winfrey, the Parents Television Council is urging her to keep her “good name” away from an explicit TV show, *The Mick*, which routinely features kids saying or being a part of that explicit adult content. Oprah is a board member of Weight Watchers and the star of the company’s ads, which have appeared during eight of 11 episodes of *The Mick*.

In the letter, PTC President Tim Winter writes: “For decades, your voice has informed, educated and inspired millions of Americans to be their very best. That is why it comes as such a shock that your good name would be associated with a television program that features trash-talking kids, teenagers who drink, children ingesting drugs and irresponsible adults who enable such behavior. (see full letter)

“The television program I’m referring to is called *The Mick*, and Weight Watchers has sponsored eight of the eleven episodes that have aired thus far during this broadcast season. As an owner, board member and public spokesperson for Weight Watchers, you and the company are being associated with explicit content on this teen-targeted, prime-time broadcast television program, including:

- “Mickey tells a 13-year-old to deal with a bully by yanking his pants down and ‘(obscene phrase).’ She later asks him, ‘Did you remember to laugh at his (obscurity)?’
- “A clown hired to perform for a seven-year-old’s birthday party, overdoses on drugs. He is shown unconscious in the bathtub with a cocaine spoon and hypodermic needle. The seven-year-old accidentally swallows a drug-filled balloon, and an adult suggests making him drink liquor so he will throw it up.

- “A 13-year-old boy fantasizes about a picture of a naked girl that was sent to his phone and has a (obscurity) about her. He later learns the girl in the photo was his own sister.

“It is unlikely you were aware that such content routinely appears on *The Mick*; and it is unlikely you were aware that Weight Watchers has been sponsoring the program. We have attempted to reach executives at Weight Watchers to discuss the matter with them privately, but our efforts have been rebuffed; hence this personal appeal for your intervention.

“*The Los Angeles Times* described *The Mick* as ‘a shallow exercise in provocation’ that relies on ‘incessant attempts to offend,’ ‘joke after joke relying on the shock value of seeing a child say or do something inappropriate and adults acting irresponsibly.’

“It is not only in your personal interest to avoid being associated with such squalid television programming; it is in Weight Watchers’ best financial interest to do so. Academic and scientific marketing research has proven that a corporation’s advertising effectiveness decreases by 30 percent when commercials air during explicit programming, as compared to family-oriented programming.

“Ms. Winfrey, we respectfully call on you to ask Weight Watchers why it would tarnish its image—and yours—by associating with this content and to encourage Weight Watchers to reconsider its sponsorship of this program. Thank you for your consideration.”

The PTC is also encouraging its members to co-sign Tim Winter’s letter to Oprah. {eoa}