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## Torturing terrorists for national security imperatives: Mediated violence on "24"

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TORTURING TERRORISTS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY IMPERATIVES:

MEDIATED VIOLENCE ON 24

by

Michael D. Sears

Bachelor of Arts  
New Mexico State University  
2007

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

**Master of Arts Degree in Journalism and Media Studies  
Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies  
Greenspun College of Urban Affairs**

**Graduate College  
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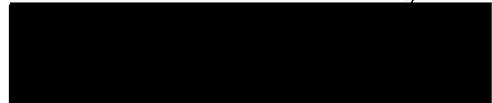
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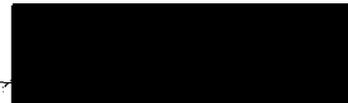
Torturing Terrorists for National Security Imperatives: Mediated  
Violence on "24"

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies



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## ABSTRACT

### **Torturing Terrorists for National Security Imperatives: Mediated Violence on *24***

by

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Professor of Journalism and Media Studies  
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This study analyzed mediated violent content as seen on the FOX television program *24*. The study covered a seven year period, or six seasons, of *24*, with a sample set of 43 episodes and 445 individual acts of violence. Three research questions guided this study. The first research question sought to determine if a relation exists between heroic characters inflicting torturous violence and justifying the act with a national security imperative. The second research question examined the prevailing mode of violence and the use of nonlethal and lethal weapons. The third research question examined the portrayed efficiency of violence on *24*. Findings suggest that while torture is rarely the intent and rarely justified with a national security imperative, *24* is nonetheless very violent, generally portraying violence as physical, involving the use of lethal weapons, intentionally gratuitous, and most often efficient.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*24* is a popular television program on FOX about terrorism and a fictional U.S. counter-terrorism agency. Presented in real time, episodes often feature graphic violent scenes, especially during torturous interrogations or terrorist attacks. Throughout the course of a season, both heroic and villainous characters use whatever means necessary to accomplish their respective goals. Heroic characters, especially the main character, Jack Bauer, are renowned for explicitly breaking legal protocol in the name of national security. This deviance arises from an urgency to attain the information, typically because of an impending terrorist attack or threat. Although there is a plethora of mediated violence studies, as well as many popular articles that criticize *24*, there is little scholarly evidence in this field on the presentation and rationalization of terroristic violence and violence that is inflicted in a torturous context.

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the first six seasons of *24* to determine what relation, if any, exists between heroic characters using violence as an effective method to combating terrorism and the act being rationalized through a national security imperative. An assessment of such programming advances our understanding of the role of mediated

terrorist activity, whether by us or other countries. Furthermore, this study sought to determine who, heroes or villains, perpetrate violence and is targeted by violence most often on *24*. The mode of violence, use of weapons, intent, and efficiency were also analyzed in order to have a more complete understanding of the portrayal of violent force on *24*.

### Significance of Study

This thesis is important because it concerns topics of current public interest. After September 11, 2001, the U.S. initiated a war on terrorism. Controversy over identifying, apprehending, and potentially torturing suspected terrorists in the name of national security has been publicly debated since then. *24* wrestled with the debate from its first season. Often, plot twists “force Bauer and his colleagues to make a series of grim choices that pit liberty versus security” (Mayer, 2007, p. 1). This dilemma is constantly employed, and more often than not, torture is used (Armstrong, 2007; Mayer, p. 1). Despite plenty of controversy over the show, *24* is an Emmy and Golden Globe winning program with a worldwide audience, with all six seasons available on DVD and many episodes streaming online for free, anytime viewing. Yet questions remain: how much violent content does *24* present to its audience, do heroes often resort to violence as an effective means of acquiring information, to what extent is that violence rationalized as necessary for the sake of national security, and how efficiently are such practices portrayed? This study will be significant as it seeks to be the first to analyze *24* to determine what the relation is between heroes inflicting violent harm and justifying the act with a national security imperative in order to prevent a terrorist attack.

## Background of 24

The following background information on *24* examines the rise of television programs like *24* as well as the criticisms and varied readings of *24*. An ongoing debate continues over the value, impact, and significance of *24* and other similar television programs.

According to Patricia Mellencamp (2006), from 1991 to 2003 the United States was busily adjusting itself, changing “from a global economy to a military economy, from internationalism to nationalism, and from peace to war” (p. 117). Noteworthy of mention is the similar transformation of television and pop culture at this time. Mellencamp writes that fear became predominantly influential in pop culture during these years (p. 117). Along with this rise in fear was the rising heroic appeal of the military. Arguably the collision of entertainment and the military spawned what Andersen (as cited in Downing, 2007, p. 70) refers to as “militainment.” As the idea of war grew in popularity, so did the presence of militaristic television programs.

When *24* first debuted “just weeks after 9/11” (Poniewozik, 2007), it was one of many television programs concerned in some way with either terrorism or the CIA. Although *24* premiered in November 2001, the television program was actually conceived in 2000 (Downing, 2007, p. 70). Other shows like *The Agency*, *UC: Undercover*, and *Alias* were also developed prior to the 9/11 attacks but reevaluated for broadcast following that eventful day (Friedman, 2001). However, since September 11, 2001, depictions of torture on television have greatly increased (Armstrong, 2007; Mayer, 2007, p. 2). Although all four shows eventually aired, *24* has arguably been the most

successful as it has six seasons under its belt and is still slated for two more seasons (Weinman, 2007).

Each season of *24* is supposedly a day in the life of the characters. Events play out in real time, and there are 24 episodes each season, one for every hour of those days. Throughout the course of each season, Jack Bauer, played by Kiefer Sutherland, “must unravel and undermine a conspiracy that imperils the nation” (Mayer, 2007, p. 1). As Cusac (2005) writes, “the would-be crimes (as seen on *24*) are so huge and so imminent that the anti-terrorism team believes it does not have the luxury of playing by the rules.” On *24*, torture is either represented as a necessity or as an effective means of interrogation.

In the six seasons that have aired, the show has managed to attract a die-hard fan following as well as a diverse group of critics. With a Republican fan base including the likes of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Rush Limbaugh, Newt Gingrich, John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, and Tom Tancredo (Armstrong, 2007; Poniewozik, 2007; Weinman, 2007), it’s no wonder *24* is sometimes referred to as the cultural product of the war on terror (Downing, 2007, p. 70; Poniewozik, 2007). According to Mayer (2007), “many prominent conservatives speak of *24* as if it were real” (p. 77). The constant use of torture interrogation techniques as the most efficient way to get a terrorist to speak apparently resonates with Republican lawmakers. In fact, at a Republican presidential candidates’ debate in South Carolina last year, *24* was implicitly and explicitly referenced to by three candidates (Weinman). According to Cusac (2005), the conservative appeal of *24* may be, in part, due to the show being “so entwined with our national political life.” However, *24* received praise from progressives Barbara Streisand and even Bill Clinton

(Armstrong, 2007). While it seems rightists or conservatives are more likely to have a favorable read of *24*, many diverse people and groups have criticized it.

According to Downing (2007) and Castonguay (2006), *24* is a dramatized endorsement of the Bush Administration's policies towards combating terrorism (p. 70). Mayer (2007) writes how *24*'s treatment of torture is in line with comments concerning torture made by President George W. Bush (p.72). Some critics argue that Bauer's means of gathering intelligence "make *24* a weekly rationalization of the 'ticking time bomb defense of torture'" (Poniewozik, 2007). An unlikely union was even spawned by *24* between the Pentagon and human rights charities as both organizations condemned the ever increasing instances of torture on the show (Armstrong, 2007). Even the U.S. military appealed to the show's writers, asking them "to tone down the programme's [*sic*] frequent torture scenes, because of 'the impact they are having on troops in the field and America's reputation abroad'" (Armstrong, 2007). However, some have argued that the shows conservative fans miss the real point of the show, and that *24* is in fact more favorable of liberals and liberal policy (Cusac, 2005).

Yet, one critic asked: "Is *24* just a TV show or right-wing propaganda?"(Poniewozik, 2007). Surprisingly, even the creators and main actor of *24* share mixed feelings. Joel Surnow, the executive producer and co-creator of the show who is a registered Republican, says that the writers of *24* are both liberals and conservatives and as such "*24* doesn't 'try to push an agenda,' but is 'committed to being non-PC'" (Cusac, 2005). Executive producer Howard Gordon, a registered Democrat, is quoted as saying "The politics of the show are narrative politics" (Poniewozik, 2007). Gordon has said he does not worry too much about the possible impact of torture portrayals on *24*, arguing "I think

people can differentiate between a television show and reality” (Mayer, 2007, p. 70). As for the show’s star, Kiefer Sutherland, he has expressed his own disagreement with using torture as an interrogation technique, even going so far as to describe himself as somewhat socialist (Armstrong, 2007; Cusac). Sutherland admits that he “worries about the ‘unintended consequences of the show’” (Mayer, p. 73).

Mixed readings and differences of opinion have only created more controversy over a television show that has received much criticism as well as praise. Despite the existence of critics and fans on either side of the political spectrum, there is still no scholarly evidence that accurately demonstrates the presentation and rationalization of violence on 24, specifically violence that occurs in a torturous or terrorism context. The stated goal of this thesis is to assess the level of violence that is portrayed in a torturous context and to assess whether such violent acts are positively portrayed. This was accomplished by conducting a content analysis of 24.

### Operational Definitions

*Violence:* Various yet overlapping definitions of violence, specifically what constitutes violence on television, have been employed in previous television violence studies. Nancy Signorielli and George Gerbner (1995) write that:

the questions of how that violence should be defined, how it should be measured, and whether and how different ‘types’ of violent portrayals should be recorded and itemized in different ways, have all generated sharp and sustained controversy among academic researchers, the [television] industry, and others. (p. 278)

According to W. James Potter (1999), television violence researchers are obliged to formally define violence because “such a definition clarifies the perimeter of the conceptualization such that we know which actions are included and which are excluded” (p. 63). Potter writes that a study’s chosen definition of violence is significant as “the broadness of the definition is directly related to counts of violence on television” (p. 63). Simply put, the amount of violence that is perceived on screen depends on an individual’s definition and comprehension of what justifies violence. Furthermore, the amount of violence perceived can be dramatically reduced by simply redefining violence more restrictively. Determining an exact definition of violence is not easy however since many elements regarding portrayals and perceptions of violence need to be considered.

Theoretical definitions of violence differ in conceptualizations of harm, intentionality, and whether the violence is physical, verbal, or both. Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (as cited in Potter, 1999) defined aggression ““as an act whose goal-response is an injury to an organism (or an organism surrogate)”” (p. 65). While this definition focuses on the intention to injure, other definitions moved towards more complex explanations of violence and aggression. Bandura (as cited in Potter) focused his definition on intentionality and harm, describing aggression as ““behavior that results in personal injury and in destruction of property. The injury may be psychological (in the form of devaluation or degradation) as well as physical”” (p. 65). Berkowitz (as cited in Potter) elaborates the definition by describing aggression as ““any form of behavior that is intended to injure someone physically or psychologically”” (p. 66). Potter’s (1999) own definition of violence states “violence is a violation of a character’s physical or

emotional well-being” (p. 80). This rather simple, straightforward definition of violence includes the elements of intentionality and harm.

Definitions of violence have also been developed by researchers who have conducted television violence content analyses. The chosen definition of violence in these studies reflects the complexities of how to accurately measure violence and violent scenes that occur within a television narrative. According to Potter (1999), the definition of violence developed by George Gerbner in the Cultural Indicators Project is most consistently used and “has become a standard for examining violence on television” (p. 67). That definition constitutes violence as “the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon, against self or other) compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt or killed or actually hurting or killing” (Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995, p. 280).

According to Signorielli and Gerbner (1995), their definition enables consistent observation of physical violence, or “hurting or killing or the threat of hurting and/or killing in any context” (p. 280). While “any act of violence that fits the definition, regardless of conventional notions about types of violence that may have ‘serious’ effects, is coded” (Signorielli, 1990, p. 89), the Cultural Indicators project does not code idle threats, verbal abuse, or gestures without credible violent consequences. However, violence that occurs in realistic, serious, fantasy or humorous contexts is coded. Additionally, accidental violence and acts of nature are coded as violence because “they are always purposeful in fiction, claim victims, and demonstrate power” (p. 89).

According to Shanahan, Hermans, and Hyman (2003), despite there being no “widely accepted scheme for identifying televised violence, the definitions provided in most previous studies mesh with legal terms” (p. 65). Even though content analyses do not

represent audience research, “content coding frames need to be sensitive to how audiences may respond to screen violence in the definitions of violence they use as their foundation” (Gunter et al., 2003, p. 21). Thus, if any television violence content analysis is to be as universally agreeable and understandable as possible, an exact, exhaustive, and possibly even legal definition of violence is absolutely necessary.

*Torture:* As this study is seeking to analyze violence that is portrayed in a torturous context, an understanding of contemporary conceptualizations of torture is required. Webster’s new universal unabridged dictionary (1983) defines torture as “the inflicting of severe bodily pain to force information or confession, get revenge, etc.” (p. 1,927). This definition may be the most agreed upon, but the meaning of the word torture, and more specifically what actually constitutes torture, has been a topic of controversy in the U.S. since September 11, 2001.

According to Dahlia Lithwick (2006), two narratives arose after September 11, 2001, concerning a possible change of American torture policy. The first narrative was propagated by the Bush administration and argued that “the Geneva Conventions mandating humane treatment of war prisoners could be unilaterally suspended by the president for the duration of the war on terror” (Lithwick, ¶ 1). On the other hand, human rights groups have argued that “Bush-administration attorneys [have] devoted considerable energy to secretly redefining torture” (Lithwick, ¶ 2). After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the summer of 2006 that the Bush administration was obliged to comply with the Geneva Convention, “the administration scrambled to both justify the torture and change the law” (Lithwick, ¶ 4).

Following the Supreme Court's ruling, President George W. Bush "demanded that Congress 'clarify' the part of the Geneva Conventions that, in effect, outlaws the use of torture under any circumstance" (Krugman, 2006, ¶ 1). Furthermore, the administration "requested the authority to keep the specifics of its 'alternative interrogation methods' secret" (Lithwick, 2006, ¶ 5). Not long thereafter, Congress passed legislation that effectively decreased Congressional and judicial oversight of detainees. According to Lithwick, when Bush confessed that it was true America was secretly torturing people, Congress simply legalized it.

Krugman (2006) writes about an ABC News report from the fall of 2005 that detailed procedures used by C.I.A. interrogators. These methods supposedly included "forcing prisoners to 'stand, handcuffed and with their feet shackled to an eye bolt in the floor for more than 40 hours'" (Krugman, ¶ 4). Another method was called the "cold cell," which involved forcing prisoners "'to stand naked in a cell kept near 50 degrees,' while being doused with cold water" (Krugman, ¶ 4). The one method that seems to get the most attention however is what has become known as "waterboarding," in which "'the prisoner is bound to an inclined board, feet raised and head slightly below the feet,' then 'cellophane is wrapped over the prisoner's face and water is poured over him,' inducing 'a terrifying fear of drowning'" (Krugman, ¶ 4).

Most of the controversy concerning possible tortuous interrogation practices has been over waterboarding. William Safire (2008) writes about the history of the word and the practice itself, which apparently emerged in ancient China under the names "water cure" and "water treatment." The word waterboarding as it is used today first emerged in an article in the *New York Times* that reported on the interrogation techniques being used on

suspected terrorist and “9/11 mastermind” Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. According to Safire, the Associated Press picked up the story, describing how “C.I.A. interrogators used graduated levels of force, including a technique known as ‘water boarding,’ in which a prisoner is strapped down, forcibly pushed under water and made to believe he *[sic]* might drown” (Safire, ¶ 8). To play down the controversy of the practice, Vice President Dick Cheney said that waterboarding “could be called a mere ‘dunking’” (Lithwick, 2006, ¶ 7). However, the White House later said that Cheney was referring to something else and not waterboarding.

Krugman (2006) poses a thoughtful question: “Is torture a necessary evil in a post-9/11 world?” (¶ 7). He argues that it is not given the fact that “people with actual knowledge of intelligence work tell us that reality isn’t like TV dramas, in which the good guys have to torture the bad guy to find out where he planted the ticking time bomb” (¶ 7). Krugman writes that what torture produces is nothing less than “misinformation, as its victims, desperate to end the pain, tell interrogators whatever they want to hear” (¶ 8). He describes the situation of Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, who told interrogators Saddam Hussein had trained members of Al Qaeda after allegedly being subjected to the cold cell and waterboarding. According to Krugman, “this ‘confession’ became a key part of the Bush administration’s case for invading Iraq – but was pure invention” (¶ 8).

Torture is not a new concept or a new interrogation method. In fact, some methods date back to ancient times. While the Geneva Convention has mandated that torture is illegal under any circumstance, the Bush administration has fervently worked to circumvent the mandate. This should trouble anyone who is seriously concerned about

the threat of terrorism as it is common knowledge that torture is generally a very ineffective means of acquiring hard-to-get information. It also becomes a concern given the fact that some television programs, such as *24*, consistently feature a narrative explicitly tied to terrorism and torture. It seems quite possible such programs may be positively portraying torture.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to examine previous television violence research studies in order to execute this analysis within the confines of preceding scholarly work. It becomes apparent that there are many considerations to be made when structuring such a study, including the context, the unit of analysis, and the content categories. Lastly, this literature review will seek to locate and place this study within the context of similar studies.

Many critical discrepancies exist between the real world and the television world, and “the shape and contours of the television world rarely match objective reality, though they often do match dominant ideologies and values” (Fiske & Hartley, 2003, p. 19). George Gerbner argued “that the content of the television message system is a representation of the underlying values in society” (p. 15). According to Fiske and Hartley, Gerbner and his colleagues in multiple studies were able to demonstrate that apparently television violence is not the same as real violence (p. 15), nor is it a direct representation of real-life violence (p. 20). Fiske and Hartley write that “unlike real violence, [television violence’s] internal rules and constraints govern what it ‘means’ in any particular context to the observer, rather than to the combatants themselves” (p. 20). The crucial differences between real-life violence and television violence are apparent

from all the evidence of content analysis. This should make researchers aware of “the inaccuracy of the commonly held belief that [real-life violence and television violence] are similar in performance and effect” (p. 20).

According to cultural theorist Stuart Hall, television texts can have meanings that contradict each other because they “are encoded with many meanings, a polysemy” (as cited in Butler, 2007, p. 449). Furthermore, three possible meanings could be constructed by audiences: a preferred reading, where the intended meaning of a piece is received; a negotiated reading, where a personally meaningful interpretation is established; and an oppositional reading, where an audience or audience member develops an understanding of the text that is directly opposed to the intended meaning. Hall, drawing from French semiotic theory, argued that “any media content can be regarded as a *text* made up of *signs*. These signs are structured; that is, they are related to one another in specific ways” (Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 244). In order to read these texts and make sense of them, one must be able to interpret their signs and their structure.

Content analysis, sometimes called message system analysis, is the methodology often adopted for analyzing of mediated television violence. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of use” (p. 18). According to Fiske and Hartley (2003), “content analysis can tell us much about television, but not everything” (p. 21). Additionally, content analysis “does not help us with matters of interpretation nor with how we respond to the complex significance and subtleties of the television text” (p. 21).

While content analysis is the most common methodology used by researchers studying violence on television, there are theoretical frameworks that could be useful for constructing a valid television violence analysis, such as the research paradigm that emerged from the Cultural Indicators Project. The early Cultural Indicators research, which tried to establish the degree and nature of violence on television, specifically “documented the extent to which violence predominated most dramatic television programming, described the nature of this violence, and established a baseline for long-term monitoring of the world of television” (p. 15). Signorielli and Gerbner (1995) write that Cultural Indicators “consists of two interrelated investigations: (1) Message System (content) Analysis and (2) Cultivation Analysis” (p. 279). Message system analysis is the sole concern here because this study is aimed at analyzing the violent content and images of television, and not the possible implications or effects on audiences, which is what cultivation analysis attests to measuring.

Message system analysis, a type of content analysis, “addresses the question of what viewers see, that is, the content shown on television” (Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995, p. 279). In other words, message system analysis studies “the composition and structure of large bodies of mass-mediated messages” (Gerbner, 1970, p. 71). According to Gerbner (1973), message system analysis was “designed to investigate aggregate and collective premises presented in samples of materials” (p. 564). Simply put, the function of message system analysis is to “describe the symbolic ‘world,’ sense its climate, trace its currents, and identify its functions” (p. 564). Furthermore, Gerbner (1970) writes that interaction with and through symbols is the process that “creates the symbolic environment from which behavior derives its distinctively human significance” and

“cultivates man’s [*sic*] notions of the facts and potentials of existence, his orders of priorities and ranges of values, and the clusters of associations among all these dimensions of imagery and imagination” (p. 72). So while this study will not answer how the violent content effects audiences, it will be safe to assume that the content is inevitably being absorbed and interpreted by audiences in many varying ways, one such way being that it is shaping perceptions of reality.

With a suitable methodology selected, the next significant concern for television violence analyses is how to go about accurately and exhaustively measuring violence. While there has been debate over the accuracy and reliability of the definition of violence, another ongoing concern is what type of violence to analyze. In content analyses or message system analyses of violent television content, the chosen measurement of violence will correlate to the findings, just like the selected definition of violence. Therefore, it is imperative to understand what aspects and components of violent content should and should not be analyzed by researchers.

According to Signorielli and Gerbner (1995), the Cultural Indicators Project “has consistently recorded all behaviors, phenomena, and incidents that meet the criteria set forth in the definition and coding instructions, regardless of the context in which the violence occurs” (p. 280). In the Cultural Indicators Project, violence is measured in three main ways, such as counting the separate violent actions and the amount of time given to these acts, determining the thematic relevance to the plot, and whether the characters are perpetrators or victims of violence. For Signorielli and Gerbner, a violent action “is a scene of some violence confined to the same characters, even if interrupted by a flashback. When a new character (or characters) enters the scene, it becomes

another separate action” (p. 281). The Cultural Indicators Project looks at the seriousness and significance of the mediated violence under analysis by coding for dimensions of existence, priorities, values, and relationships regarding the mediated violence.

Furthermore, the Cultural Indicators Project determined whether characters are perpetrators or victims of violence. According to Signorielli and Gerbner, “characters who commit violence are categorized by whether they do not hurt or kill, they hurt someone, or kill someone” (p. 281), while “characters who are victims of violence are categorized by whether they are not hurt or killed, are hurt, or are killed” (p. 281).

Although the Cultural Indicators Project was designed to analyze the seriousness and significance of mediated violence by coding for dimensions of existence, priorities, values, and relationships, there appears to be a lack of data or findings concerning torturous violence (see Gerbner, 1970; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Signorielli & Gerbner, 1995). One explanation for this absence is that torturous violence has only become prevalent in the last ten years or so. According to the Parents Television Council (as cited in McCormick, 2008), “there were 42 torture scenes on prime-time TV in 2000. By 2003 the number had jumped to 228” (p. 17). This explanation seems especially plausible given the events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing war on terror. The nonprofit organization Human Rights First (as cited in Reklis, 2008) reported “that before 2001, fewer than four scenes of torture appeared on prime-time television each year. (In 2007), there were more than 100” (p. 11).

Different researchers have made different decisions regarding what acts of violence to code and what contexts of violence to consider. Gunter (1985) developed several measurable characteristics of violence and aggression, including justification, motive,

intentionality, and whether the violence is instrumental or expressive (as cited in Potter, 1999, p. 67). Mustonen and Pulkkinen (1997) argue that the Signorielli and Gerbner definition should account for verbal and psychological violence because “there are always some who interpret (verbal or psychological violence) as an obtrusive form of violence” (p. 169). In their study, Mustonen and Pulkkinen defined violence as “actions causing or designed to cause harm to oneself, or to another person, either physically or psychologically, including implicit threats, nonverbal behavior, and outbursts of anger directed towards animals, and inanimate objects” (p. 172).

Potter (1999) developed eight continua which he recommended for coding and measuring all mediated acts of violence: (a) level of act (from serious to minor), (b) type of act (physical forms and verbal forms), (c) intentionality (from premeditation to accident), (d) degree of harm to the victims, (e) type of harm (physical, emotional, psychological), (f) level of openness (covert to overt), (g) level of reality (from fantasy to full reality), and (h) level of humor (from farce to serious) (p. 80). According to Potter, analyzing violence on all eight dimensions would provide a more complete understanding of the nature of television violence.

The thematic context in which the violence occurs is arguably related to the debate over what violence to measure. The context surrounding violence on television was only first analyzed in the mid-1980s (Potter, 1999, p. 87). Since then, researchers have taken several different approaches towards measuring and determining the context of mediated violence.

Williams, Zabrack, and Joy (1982) examined the intentionality, consequences, humor of the violent act, and its presentation (as cited in Potter, p. 87). By the mid-1990s,

however, dozens of contextual variables were being considered in television violence content analyses. In their 1993 study, Mustonen and Pulkkinen (as cited in Potter, p. 87) coded for 43 variables which were organized into four groups: (a) program context (such as temporal settings, realism, and atmosphere), (b) justification for aggression (motivational base, intentionality, legality), (c) seriousness of aggression (severity of acts and their consequences), and (d) dramatization of portrayal (camera range, amount of suffering, realism of portrayals of consequences). Potter (1999) explicates seven contextual factors he believes are good conceptualizations of various contextual factors: rewards and punishments, harmful consequences, motives, justification, realism, identification, and humor. A broad definition of such factors is necessary in order to “operationalize a full range of content measures to document what forms of these characteristics are most prevalent” (p. 87).

Similarly to the Cultural Indicators Project, the studies mentioned above have no data concerning torturous violence or violence inflicted in the guise of terrorism. Although intentionality or motive of the violent act is generally coded, it seems torture or terrorism were never considered a viable variable or explicitly recognized as possible intentions or motives (see Mustonen & Pulkkinen, 1997; Potter, 1999). Jenkins (2003) writes that “popular culture plays a critical political role in shaping American attitudes toward terrorism” (p. 150). However, Jenkins’ “account of popular culture focuses entirely on U.S.-made films, with the exception of a few foreign productions...” (p. 150).

Furthermore, the only aspect Jenkins discusses concerning mediated terrorism in popular culture is the racial and ethnic portrayals of terrorists as well as discussing the different uses of real terrorists such as Osama bin Laden, Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, or Carlos

the Jackal (p. 151). Herz (2006) also writes about movie portrayals or presentations of terrorists, with television news serving as the only example of terrorism on television. Given the lack of data of mediated torture or terrorism on popular television programs and the ongoing debate of the usefulness and appropriateness of torture as an interrogation technique, this area of mediated violence research deserves further investigation.

Another important component of television violence content analyses is the unit of analysis, which is the smallest element of any content study. According to Potter (1999), content analyses of television violence use any one or combination of three levels: macro, micro, and midlevel. At the macro level, an entire episode is considered the unit, with the program coded as violent if violence occurs anywhere in the show. This unit of analysis is most often used with large analyses of aggregate samples of televised content but is clearly problematic for any study similar to that being proposed here. The micro level, on the other hand, simply focuses on each individual act of violence. Potter writes that the problem with this unit of analysis is that “the counting of each individual act as a unit might be seen as inflating the frequency of violence” (p. 99). Measuring violence in scenes and sequences is using what Potter calls midlevel units of analysis. While recording violence at this level results in a smaller number of counted acts, the problem is “in the degree of difficulty in writing rules that specify the beginning and ending points of a sequence in such a manner that coders can attain an acceptable level of reliability” (p. 99).

Other studies have attempted to resolve some of the issues mentioned above by using multiple units of analysis. According to Potter (1999), Williams et al. (1982) coded at the

global level and at the segment level. At the global level, coders looked at the program as a whole and “rated the tone of the program and general characteristics of the characters” (p. 99). The second level, the segment, was “defined by a change in setting, time, or both” (p. 99). Potter notes that other studies have coded at the program and act levels, and another at the act and the sequence levels.

Potter (1999) also briefly discusses one study that used three levels of analysis. According to Potter, the National Television Violence Study (NTVS) coded on the program, sequence, and PAT level. PAT is defined as “a violent interaction (A) between a perpetrator (P) and a target (T)” (p. 99). While a new PAT was coded anytime one of the three elements changed, so long as the elements remained the same, even if there were multiple instances, only one unit was coded.

Kapoor, Kang, Kim, and Kim (1994) employed message system analysis to study mediated violence on Korean television. In their study, Kapoor et al. relied on the Cultural Indicators work done by George Gerbner. In particular, Gerbner’s definition of violence as well as the methodology of message system analysis and cultivation analysis were used by Kapoor et al. Message system analysis is used in this study because it “is a flexible tool for making systematic, reliable, and cumulative observations about television content” (p. 190). Specifically, Kapoor et al. examined “the frequency and rate of violent episodes, and the number of roles in which characters were the perpetrators of violence (violents), its victims, or both” (p. 192). With intercoder reliability better than 80 percent, Kapoor et al. determined that violence on Korean television is not nearly as rampant as it is on U.S. television.

Tamborini, Skalski, Lachlan, Westerman, Davis, and Smith (2005) analyzed violence occurring in professional wrestling programs on television, specifically the amount of violence and the contextual features associated with that violence. Drawing from a 1997 National Television Violence Study, Tamborini et al. define violence as “any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings” (p. 205-206). Tamborini et al. also employed the NTVS methodology for measuring violence at the level of individual interactions. A violent interaction is defined as “an aggressive exchange that occurs when a unique perpetrator (P) engages in a particular type of act (A) against a unique target (T)” (p. 206). Each time the perpetrator, type of violent act, or target changed, a new PAT line is started. However, additional coding was done at the scene level, which was defined as “a related sequence of violence that occurs without a significant break” (p. 206). Essentially, a PAT line is the committing of a violent act, either once or several times, while a scene is a series of many different violent acts, again committed either once or several times.

Tamborini et al. (2005) coded for five different categories on the PAT level of measurement: the extent, the perpetrator and target, the primary means of violence, depicted harm and depicted pain, and the reason for violent action. Of particular interest, with regard to the present study, are measurements of extent, perpetrator and target, means of violence, and the reason for violent action.

In terms of extent, coders counted the number of acts within a PAT line and coded as “either one (1 act), some (2-9 acts), many (10-20 acts), or extreme ( $\geq 21$ )” (p. 206). By

recording the raw number of violent acts in a PAT line, Tamborini et al. were able to “describe more accurately the variability in the extent of violence in PAT lines” (p. 206).

The next measurement of interest is the perpetrator and target of the violent act. While Tamborini et al. (2005) coded perpetrators and targets for ethnicity and biological sex, they also coded for goodness and badness. The primary means of violence measurement noted if the violent act included the use of a weapon, which were coded as “natural (e.g., kick, punch), handheld firearm, unconventional weapon (e.g., a lead pipe), conventional weapon (e.g., brass knuckles), heavy weaponry (e.g., a rocket launcher), bombs, or unknown” (p. 206).

The final measurement of interest concerns the reason for the violent act. Tamborini et al. (2005) classified each act as either for “personal gain (e.g., obtaining money, power); protection of life (e.g., to save a victim); anger; amusement or mental instability; retaliation (e.g., in response to a previous violent act); accident; or other/unknown” (p. 207). Additionally, given the often staged and choreographed nature of wrestling, Tamborini et al. included “mandated” as a reason for acting violently. Once the reason for the violent action was coded, each PAT line was then coded for justification. A violent act was considered justified if and only if it was previously coded as “being perpetrated for mandated, protection of life, and retaliatory reasons” (p. 208). Finally, rewards and punishments were analyzed. This category was the only one Tamborini et al. measured from the scene level as not every individual violent act is portrayed to have a reward and/or punishment.

Mediated television violence is not representative of reality but does provide insight into underlying societal values concerning violence. Thus, analyzing 24, a popular

television show with a consistent narrative concerning terrorism and combating terrorism, could provide a better understanding of U.S. society's current conception on the appropriateness of using torture to interrogate suspected terrorists. Since the merging of television and violence, researchers, politicians, and the public alike have all been concerned over the implications and possible effects of mass mediated violence as seen on television. Numerous studies, such as the National Television Violence Study (NTVS), the Cultural Indicators Project, and many others, have constructed valid and reliable content analyses or message system analyses to measure violent content of television programs. By establishing the necessity for an exhaustive definition of violence, clear and concise content categories, and appropriate units of analysis, these studies have provided a foundation for future television violence analysis much like what is being proposed here.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study relied on a content analysis. Previous violence studies, as mentioned in the review of literature, were the basis for constructing this study's methodology. Specifically, this thesis drew from previous studies' definition of violence and content categories. The codebook, coding sheet, and list of episodes coded are included as appendices.

#### Research Questions

1. On the television program *24*, what is the relation between the use of violent force by heroic characters and the need to thwart an imminent terrorist attack in the name of national security? This question will seek to answer who, heroes or villains, resort to violent force most often, what their specific intention is, and whether or not the act was rationalized through a national security imperative.
2. What is the prevailing mode of violence: verbal, physical, or both? Which is more commonly used to inflict violent harm: lethal weapons or non-lethal weapons? These questions will provide some insight on what is the most common form of violence and how often lethal weapons are used to inflict harm.

3. How efficient is violence on *24* most often portrayed? This question is aimed at determining how the use of violent force is portrayed as efficient or inefficient, based on whether or not a known goal is accomplished.

### Study Population and Sample

Since debuting in 2001, *24* has produced six seasons, which constitutes the present study's universe. Each of these seasons is basically a day in the life of the characters, with 24 episodes per season, one for each hour of the day. Considering the universe of this study is a total of 144 episodes from 6 seasons of *24*, it was necessary to take a representative sample from the study population. A systematic sample with a random start was conducted. Episodes were numbered according to their chronological order based on the episode and season number; the first episode of season one was numbered 1, while the last episode of season six was numbered 144. After randomly selecting the number one, every fifth episode was then selected, giving a total sample of 29 episodes. Five episodes were selected from every season except season five, from which four were selected. This sample makes up 20% of the study's universe and is consistent with the sample analyzed in Tamborini et al. (2005), which amounted to roughly 19% of their available universe.

After the first sample was coded and the yielded data statistically analyzed, it was determined that not enough data was available to conduct sound chi-squares of the crosstabulations. A second sample was thus taken from the study universe. To sample another 10% of the universe, a number between 1 and 12 was randomly selected using an online 12-sided dice simulator. The numbers 1, 6, and 11 were excluded as these

episodes had already been coded. After first rolling 11, the number 7 was rolled during the second attempt. Every tenth episode was then selected, giving a total of 14 more episodes, with two from seasons 1, 3, 4, and 6, and three from seasons 2 and 5. The total sample for this study then was 43 episodes, or 29.9% of the universe. A complete list of all the episodes that were coded is provided in the appendix.

### Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis as well as the content categories for this study were determined through emergent coding. This method of qualitative data analysis is rooted in grounded theory. According to Jensen (2002), grounded theory “is a methodology which tends to assume that theory can be ‘found’ in the field, if the research activity is sufficiently ‘grounded’ in the categories of that field” (p. 247). Grounded theory researchers “develop a detailed set of procedures for collecting and analyzing empirical data” (p. 247). This is commonly known as a “constant comparative method” (p. 247). Constant comparative method involves “the several, and often repeated, stages of sampling, analyzing, memoing, and interpreting materials” (p. 247). Another process of constant comparative method includes “a stepwise process of coding data at different levels of abstraction” (p. 247). The assumption of grounded theory is that “this sequence may ultimately produce theoretical ‘saturation’ – an equilibrium between empirical evidence and explanatory concepts” (p. 247). Essentially, grounded theory is a method of data analysis that allows researchers to familiarize themselves with a subject of study so that the subject is exhaustively and most accurately studied, since the variables under analysis are methodologically predetermined.

The emergent coding process defined the unit of analysis so that the most accurate analysis of violence on *24* could be conducted. The process determined that violent acts are often interrupted with a cut scene or transition. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the perpetrator of the violence to suddenly become the victim, or vice versa. In other circumstances, violent acts would turn into prolonged scenes, with no clear break or change in victim or perpetrator. Although the NTVS PAT line served as the model for this study's unit of analysis, these peculiarities of violence as portrayed on *24* effectively shaped the unit of analysis for this study.

The unit of analysis for this study was a modified PAT line. A violent act was coded when a perpetrator (P) attacked (A) a target (T). A new PAT line was only started when the perpetrator, victim, intent, mentioning of national security, and/or effectiveness categories suddenly changed, or if there was a scene change. Because this study is not measuring the violent act in itself, but the context in which the act is committed, any number of acts and any kind of attack, verbal, physical or both, could potentially occur in the same PAT line, so long as the other categories remain consistent. However, any time the perpetrator, victim, intent, mentioning of national security, and/or effectiveness was portrayed differently than presently coded, a new PAT line was initiated. Also, if the scene changed, i.e. cut scene, split screen, or other editing technique, a new PAT line was started.

For this study, the following definition of violence was used: any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical or verbal force or the use of such force intended to physically or psychologically harm a human being or group of human beings. This definition is a modified version of the definition used by the NTVS and Tamborini et al. (2005). Verbal

force in particular would be the act of verbally threatening violence against another or trying to inflict psychological or mental anguish through methods like spoken words, sounds, sensory deprivation, and/or visuals. Physical force, on the other hand, is the actual physical application of force, with or without a weapon.

### Content Categories

An overview of television violence analyses reveals that a number of relevant and significant variables can be measured when conducting research on mediated violence. First, it is important to identify who is perpetrating the violence and who is being victimized by the violence. Depending on the particular study and its stated goal, a number of variables could be coded, such as biological sex, socio-economic class, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political affiliation, age, and nationality. The other important measurement concerns the violent acts themselves, including the frequency, intensity, severity, consequences, rewards, motives, intentions, and efficiency of the portrayed violence. Although the argument could be made that all of these measurements are crucial to any television violence study, only a handful of them were absolutely necessary for this particular study. Emergent coding, again drawing from grounded theory, was used to determine the relevant factors concerning the infliction of violent force on *24*. These factors established six categories and two subcategories.

For this study, a pre-study or emergent coding analysis was conducted by watching every episode of every season of *24* over the course of several months. The purpose of this analysis was to develop content categories that would thoroughly and accurately measure the variables of interest. As grounded theory maintains, this is possible because

the categories emerged from the subject of study itself. Detailed notes were taken for every episode, specifically noting the occurrence and details of any violent act. By analyzing every violent act that has occurred during the six seasons of *24*, the researcher was able to construct an exhaustive unit of analysis as well as thorough content categories.

Through the emergent coding process, it was determined that generally the perpetrator and victim of a violent act could be coded as either being heroic or villainous, based on either a given character's alignment towards the U.S. in that season or an episode's contextual clues. However, other perpetrators and victims were not easily coded (i.e. innocent bystanders or other criminals not directly linked to a given season's plot) and, thus, an unable to code/other option was established.

Next, it was determined that most violent acts involved a verbal/psychological component, a physical component, or both. When physical violence was the given mode of an act, weapons were commonly used. The weapons were determined to be either lethal, such as guns, knives, chemicals, and explosives, or non-lethal, such as night sticks, tazers, or any other unconventional weapon incapable of inflicting fatal harm with ease.

Although there are a multitude of possible intentions when violence is inflicted on *24*, for this study two major categories were constructed, which also largely shaped the direction of this study. Most acts were either committed in a gratuitous context, with no identifiable motive other than to inflict harm or fear, or acts were committed in a tortuous context, where violence is being used as a persuasive means of attaining valuable information. However, an "other" category was included here in case another significant motive or intention should arise in the course of the actual study. Directly related to the

intention category is the national security subcategory. The emergent coding process revealed that violence inflicted in a torturous context was often justified with a national security imperative. To analyze the frequency with which such violence is justified, it was determined that any violent act coded as torture would also be coded for possible justification through national security needs.

The final category that emerged from the emergent coding process concerned the relative efficiency of the violent act under analysis. An act was considered inefficient if a specific goal was not accomplished, while efficient acts involved the successful completion of a goal. "Goal" in this sense cannot be universally defined and depended on the intention of the act. Thus, if a violent act was coded as gratuitous, then the goal was either simply harming or killing someone; if the act was coded as torture, then the goal was hurting the victim in hopes of acquiring pertinent information before the victim was either killed or incapacitated. An "other" category was again included just in case other possible measures of efficiency arose in the course of the study.

These six categories were constructed to determine if and to what extent heroic characters use violent force against villainous characters as an efficient means of preventing an imminent terrorist attack that threatens national security. The first two concern the perpetrator of the violence and the target of the violence, and whether each person is a heroic character or a villainous character. It should be noted that it is not uncommon for heroes to harm heroes, or for villains to harm villains. To ensure that characters were accurately coded as either good or evil, the moral alignment was dependent upon the character's role in the given season's plot. Thus, any character was considered heroic if their contextual motive is to protect the U.S., while villainous

characters were those whose motive was to harm the U.S. This clear distinction also aimed to reduce coding error as 24 notoriously features characters who are both heroic and villainous at different times. Because the only concern here is over the relative goodness or badness of a character, each perpetrator and each target were coded as either villainous or heroic. Other factors, such as the gender, ethnic, socio-economic, or other status were not coded as they are considered irrelevant to this study. However, in case the apparent goodness or evilness of a character was not necessarily determinable, an “unable to code” option was included.

The next two coding categories analyzed the mode of violence occurring within the given PAT (perpetrator attacks target) line. This study had two separate measures for mode: verbal and physical. The first looked at whether the violent act involved a verbal element or not. The next category coded whether or not the act included a physical element. If an attack did include a physical element, then the weapon used was coded as either non-lethal or lethal. Weapons were treated as a subcategory of the physical mode category. In the interest of clarity and conciseness, weapons were simply coded as non-lethal or lethal.

Intentionality was the next coding category. With the perpetrator, victim, and mode of violence identified, the next concern was what the desired goal of the violent act is. Again, for the sake of conciseness and based on the findings of the emergent coding process, a dichotomy was applied to this coding category. If the violence was committed in a needless manner, with no real intention or motive apparent, it was coded as gratuitous. However, if the violence is being inflicted specifically to attain valuable information or to learn a timely fact, which commonly occurs on 24, then it was coded as

torturous. An “other” option was included and requested the coder specify the intent of the violent act.

A subcategory of the intent category looked at the rationalization of the violence through national security imperatives. However, the violent act was coded for either explicitly mentioning a national security imperative or not if and only if the violence was coded as intentionally torturous. Unlike torturous violence, gratuitous violence has no inherent motive; thus, by definition it could not be projected under the guise of national security. Measuring only torturous violence also provided a clear picture on how frequently *24* rationalizes such violence as necessary for saving the nation.

The final category to be coded in this study was the efficiency of the violence. Coders determined if the desired goal was accomplished or not. For intercoder reliability, see below. In the case of gratuitous violence, accomplishment of the goal included successfully scaring, terrorizing, or killing of the target. On the other hand, the efficiency of torturous violence was determined based on whether or not the perpetrator was able to attain the valuable information before the target was either incapacitated or killed. Ultimately this measure was aimed at explicating just how effective or ineffective *24* portrays both gratuitous violence as well as tortuous violence.

The footage studied included each entire season episode reproduced on DVD, from the opening segment where Kiefer Sutherland is heard saying the time of the current episode to the end where the graphic of the clock ticks to the next hour. A frame-by-frame analysis of every scene, from the beginning of the episode to the end, was conducted. Using a DVD player, each coder played each episode from the beginning and, using a remote control, paused the DVD at the initiation and, if necessary,

throughout the course of a violent act. The codebook and coding sheet are provided in the appendix.

### Intercoder Reliability

To ensure intercoder reliability, 10% of the study population, or three episodes, were coded. Ole Holsti's formula was used to test for reliability. This is described as " $2M/(N_1 + N_2)$ , wherein  $M$  is the number of units on whose categorizations two readers agree,  $N_1$  is the number of units identified by one reader, and  $N_2$  is that number identified by another" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 245). Holsti's formula provides a measurement of percentage-agreement between two coders. Despite controversy over percentage-agreement measurements (see Bennett, Alpert, and Goldstein, 1954), Holsti's formula was used in this study because there are only two coders and Holsti's formula lends itself to analyses conducted by just two coders. Furthermore, from 1971 to 1995, 35% of all content analyses published in the journal *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* used some form of percentage-agreement measurement, including Holsti's formula, to check for intercoder reliability (Krippendorff, p. 245). No other measurement of intercoder reliability has been used in content analyses nearly as much as Holsti's formula.

A fellow graduate student was enlisted as a second coder to test for intercoder reliability. She was given a codebook (which is included in the appendix) that exhaustively described the confines and working definitions of the study, as well as specifically instructed on what to code and how to code appropriately. Three episodes from the first sample were selected at random, with the first and last episode selected as well as the final episode that was coded from season three. To check for any

discrepancies, the first episode was coded by the second coder, and those results were compared to those of the study. After an extra two acts were coded as violent, the second coder explained that she was unclear on what constituted verbal violence, specifically if yelling or raising one's voice was to be coded as violent. It was clarified that verbal violence does not include yelling or shouting, and instead focuses on the threat of physical violence or the use of words to psychologically manipulate, scare or coerce someone. The second coder then recoded the first episode and completed coding the other two episodes. For the 28 acts that were analyzed in the first sample, the percentage of agreement was 94.2%.

A second intercoder reliability test was conducted for the second sample. The same graduate student who served as the second coder again volunteered to code two more episodes, which were selected at random from the second sample. One episode was selected from season 3, and the other came from season 4. For the 14 acts that were analyzed in this second intercoder reliability test, the percentage of agreement was 90.2%.

### Treatment of Data

The data collected in this study are nominal data. Frequency summaries and crosstabulations, including chi-square, were the statistical analyses conducted for this study. Reported results included frequencies, percentages of occurrences, and the crosstabulation values and percentages.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

A total of 43 episodes of 24, sampled from season one (2001) to season six (2007), were coded. Of the 445 total acts of violence, heroes were the perpetrator most often, at 58.9% (232) of the time. The target of the violence was most often a heroic character as well, at 58.5% (213) of the time. Violent acts rarely included a verbal element, at 11.5% (51) of the time. The physical mode was much more prevalent, at 94.4% (420) of the time. When a weapon was used, lethal weapons were used much more often than nonlethal weapons, at 70.3% (296) of the time. As for intention, gratuitous violence was more common than torturous violence, at 85.5% (259) of the time.

The intent category included an 'other' option in case previously unidentified intentions arose during the course of this study. As it turned out, three other prevalent intents were identified. The first was threatening and/or ordering, in which a perpetrator threatened to use violence or used violence as a means of making demands and/or giving orders to the target. The second new intent was arresting and/or apprehending, in which the perpetrator used violent force to effectively apprehend or legally arrest the target. Suicide and/or self-inflicted was the final new intent, coded for when the target either inflicted violence on themselves or killed themselves. Thus, the intent category was expanded from two to five variables for further analysis: gratuitous, torturous,

threatening/ordering, arresting/apprehending, and suicide/self-inflicted. A frequency count of these five variables showed the most prevalent intent still was gratuitous, at 59.4% (259) of the time. However, threatening and/or ordering as an intent was the second most prevalent, at 19.0% (83) of the time. The national security imperative was very rarely used to rationalize torture, at 2.7% (12) of the time. Finally, violent acts were most often portrayed as efficient, at 62.1% (270) of the time.

### Research Questions

Research question one was what is the relation between the use of violent force by heroic characters and the need to thwart an imminent terrorist attack in the name of national security? This question sought to answer who, heroes or villains, resort to violent force most often, what their specific intention was, and whether or not the act was rationalized through a national security imperative. The findings of this study suggest that a significant association does not exist between heroes or villains inflicting violence and justifying it with a national security imperative. All six crosstabulations that were conducted between the national security category and every other category were determined not to be statistically significant.

To answer research question one, the national security imperative category was crosstabulated with the perpetrator, target, verbal mode, physical mode, weapon, intent, and efficiency categories. Also, the intent category was crosstabulated with the perpetrator, target, verbal mode, physical mode, and weapon categories. Finally, the perpetrator and target categories were crosstabulated. Of these 13 crosstabulations, two

were determined to be statistically significant. Further crosstabulations, conducted with the expanded intent category, rendered two more significant findings.

The categories of perpetrator and target have a significant association,  $\chi^2(1, N = 329) = 1.56, p < .001$ . Heroes and villains were just as likely to target one another. Villains targeted heroes 41.3% (136) of the time, and heroes targeted villains 41.9% (138) of the time.

The categories of perpetrator and intent have a significant association,  $\chi^2(1, N = 267) = 19.314, p < .001$ . Both heroic and villainous characters predominately had a gratuitous intent when inflicting violence. Villains had a gratuitous intent 40.8% (109) of the time, and heroes had a gratuitous intent 43.4% (138) of the time.

When the intent category was expanded from two variables to five, another significant association existed between the perpetrator and intent categories,  $\chi^2(4, N = 386) = 27.211, p < .001$ . Again, both heroic and villainous characters predominately had a gratuitous intention. Villains inflicted gratuitous violence 28.2% (109) of the time, and heroes inflicted gratuitous violence 30.1% (116) of the time. The next most prevalent intent was threatening and/or ordering. Villains inflicted violence in a threatening and/or ordering context 8.5% (33) of the time, and heroes inflicted violence in a threatening and/or ordering context 10.6% (41) of the time.

Another significant association existed between the target category and the expanded intent category,  $\chi^2(4, N = 356) = 10.512, p < .05$ . Gratuitous violence was still the most prevalent intent. Heroic characters were most likely to be the target of gratuitous violence, at 35.7% (127) of the time. Villainous characters were the target of gratuitous

violence 27.0% (96) of the time. Heroes were also the predominate target of violence with a threatening and/or ordering intent, at 11.8% (42) of the time.

Research question two was what was the prevailing mode of violence and what was more commonly used to inflict violent harm, lethal weapons or non-lethal weapons? This question aimed to provide some insight on what is the most common form of violence and how often lethal weapons are used to inflict harm. According to this study, physical violence is the predominate mode, and lethal weapons are used much more often than nonlethal weapons.

Chi-square was again used to statistically analyze the crosstabulations that were conducted. These consisted of the verbal mode, physical mode, and weapon categories crosstabulated with each other as well as with the perpetrator, target, and intent categories. Of these 12 crosstabulations, one was found to be statistically significant. Again, further crosstabulations using the expanded intent category determined two more crosstabulations to be statistically significant.

A significant association existed between the perpetrator and verbal categories,  $\chi^2(1, N = 394) = 9.357, p < .01$ . Both heroes and villains rarely inflicted verbal violence. Heroic acts of violence included a verbal element 9.1% (36) of the time. Villainous acts of violence included a verbal element 2.3% (9) of the time.

The expanded intent category had a significant association with the verbal category,  $\chi^2(4, N = 436) = 1.105, p < .001$ . Verbal violence rarely was inflicted when the intent was gratuitous, as 1.1% (5) of gratuitous acts included a verbal element. A verbal element was most often seen when violence was inflicted in either a torturous or

threatening and/or ordering context. Both included a verbal element 5.0% (22) of the time.

Another significant association existed between the weapon category and the expanded intent category,  $\chi^2(4, N = 412) = 16.753, p < .01$ . A lethal weapon was most often used when the intent was gratuitous, at 42.0% (173) of the time. Violence inflicted in a threatening and/or ordering intent was the next most likely to include a lethal weapon, at 15.8% (65) of the time.

Research question three was how efficient was violence on 24 most often portrayed? This question was designed to determine how violent force was portrayed as efficient or inefficient, based on whether or not a known goal was accomplished. According to this study, violence was generally portrayed as efficient, although it varies depending on the intent and perpetrator.

Research question three was answered by crosstabulating the efficiency category with perpetrator, target, verbal mode, physical mode, weapon, and intent, and then computing chi-squares for the six crosstabulations. Only two were determined to be statistically significant. However, another significant association was determined to exist between the efficiency category and the expanded intent category.

A significant association existed between the perpetrator and efficiency categories,  $\chi^2(1, N = 385) = 4.361, p < .05$ . Heroic characters were most often portrayed as efficient, at 39.7% (153) of the time. However, violence that was perpetrated by a villainous character was portrayed efficient 23.4% (90) of the time.

A significant association existed between the efficiency category and the intent category,  $\chi^2(1, N = 299) = 4.973, p < .05$ . Violence inflicted with a gratuitous intent was

portrayed efficient nearly half of all instances, at 49.5% (148) of the time. Torturous violence was portrayed as efficient 5.7% (17) of the time.

The final significant association existed between the efficiency category and the expanded intent category,  $\chi^2(4, N = 427) = 24.728, p < .001$ . Gratuitous violence was portrayed as efficient 34.7% (148) of the time. Violence with a threatening and/or ordering intent was portrayed as efficient 14.1% (60) of the time.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This study examined the violent content of the television show *24* to determine who perpetrated violence the most, who was the target of violence the most, what the prevalent mode of violence was, what the prevailing intent was, and how efficient violence was portrayed. Additionally, this study sought to determine what relation, if any, existed between heroes inflicting violence and justifying it with a national security imperative. Other mediated violence studies focused on large aggregates of television content, looking at any number of variables pertaining to violence. However, these studies, most especially the work of Gerbner and his colleagues (see Gerbner, 1970, 1973; Morgan and Signorielli, 1990; Signorielli, 1990; Signorielli and Gerbner, 1995), did not critically analyze portrayals of terroristic and torturous violence. This current study is relevant today given the ongoing debate on the usefulness and appropriateness of torture as an interrogation technique against suspected terrorists.

### Conclusions

The findings of this study indicated several important conclusions. First of all, according to this study, *24* does not overwhelmingly justify heroic acts of torture with a national security imperative. Additionally, torture is one of the least common intents, and

most often than not it is portrayed as inefficient. These findings are significant because they essentially deal a fatal blow to critics who claim *24* casts torture in a favorable light. Such accusations do not hold up as the data from this study shows that torture is not a prevalent intent and is portrayed most often as inefficient.

Another important conclusion of this study is that as an intent, threatening and/or ordering is prevalent. This is especially interesting given that this variable was not originally included in the study and arose during the course of the study. The most apparent implication of this conclusion is that violence is sometimes used as a means of coercion or making demands.

Another important conclusion from this data is that gratuitous violence is apparently rampant on *24*. Furthermore, gratuitous violence was the most often intent for both the perpetrator and target categories. Gratuitous violence was also predominately portrayed as efficient, and more often than not included a lethal weapon rather than a nonlethal weapon. When it came to verbal violence however, the perpetrator had a gratuitous intent only 1.1% (5) of the time. Given the fact that most verbal violence was equally perpetrated in either a torturous intent or a threatening and/or ordering intent, it seems safe to assume that on *24* verbal violence is specifically used as a means of persuasion and coercion.

Finally, it seems as though *24* has plot-driven episodes and violence-driven episodes. While some episodes had as many as 20 acts of violence, others had as few as two or three. This may be evidence that the creators and producers of *24* are aware of how prevalent violence is on the show, but it is not to say the subplots of the plot-driven episodes do not contain controversial, albeit nonviolent content. Most often the plot-

driven episodes simply did not show the violence, but implied its occurrence through editing techniques, narrative elements, or another character's actions. Simply put, it is not uncommon for *24* to imply violent acts are occurring off camera either through screams of the target or through the actions of a character supposedly watching the violence being inflicted. These off-camera acts of violence were not coded because it was impossible to code every category for such instances.

### Implications

The implications of this study might best be understood through the findings of previous television violence studies. A brief overview of these findings reveals that in many ways *24* is similar to other television violence studies, yet in other ways it is unique. One implication can be made concerning the rate of violence on *24* and the rate of violence as seen on other violent television programs. Potter (1999) writes that although the rate of violence fluctuates from year to year and from study to study, generally the number of violent acts in an hour is high, with reported rates from a low of 5 acts an hour to a high of 14.6 acts per hour (p. 48). By dividing the total number of acts that were coded (445 acts) by the number of hours watched (43 hours), the rate of violence on *24* is 10.3 acts per hour, according to this study. This is a rather high rate of violence that is consistent with other television violence studies.

Another implication in this study involves the good or bad alignment of the perpetrator of violence. The Center for Media and Public Affairs, as cited in Potter (1999), in 1994 reported that ““violence on television is typically not a tool of evil...most violence in network shows is committed by positive characters”” (p. 52). These

statements were made after the center conducted a television violence study that found 42% of violence was committed by positive characters, 20% was committed by negative characters, and 17% was committed by neutral characters. Furthermore, according to Potter, when good characters are operationalized as heroes, “heroes are found to commit as many antisocial acts as villains do” (p. 52). These findings are consistent with the findings of this study, which showed heroes were predominately the perpetrator as well as the target of violence on 24.

Another implication of this study concerns the use of weapons. According to Potter (1999), the National Television Violence Study (NTVS) said “that in fictional programming, guns are used in one fourth of all violent interactions, and that other kinds of weapons are used in another one third of all violent interactions” (p. 55). Again, the findings of this study are consistent with those of the NTVS. The frequency count for the weapons category reveals lethal weapons were used more often than nonlethal weapons, with a lethal weapon used 70.3% (296) of the time.

Although many of the findings of this study are similar to the findings of previous television violence studies, there is at least one conclusion that is not similar. One such finding is that rates for verbal violence are higher than those of physical violence. According to Potter (1999), when studies look at both physical and verbal modes of violence, consistently “verbal forms occur more frequently” (p. 49). Potter’s argument that verbal violence is nearly as prevalent as physical violence on television may be enough justification for any television violence study to include both modes; however, the fact is this study observed the opposite. The frequency counts for the verbal mode category and the physical mode category reveal the sharp occurrence difference, with

verbal violence occurring in 11.5% (51) of all acts and physical violence occurring in 94.4% (420) of all acts.

The implications of this study suggest that while *24* is a considerably violent program, especially when compared to what other studies have observed, the main criticism of the show may be unfounded, namely that heroes allegedly use national security imperatives to justify acts of violence that are either torturous in intent or illegal. In his regular column in *Entertainment Weekly*, novelist Stephen King (2009) wrote that “critics see (Jack Bauer’s) methods as a way of justifying immoral behavior when it comes to the war on terror” (p. 25). Downing (2007) wrote that audiences of *24* “are pitch-forked into situation after situation in which (the audience)...must hope that the application of torture *will do the trick in time*” (p. 77). Writing for the British newspaper *The Guardian*, Decca Aitkenhead (2009) wrote “‘Whatever it takes’ is Bauer’s gravelly motto – and what it takes on *24* can be highly violent, illegal and frequently involve torture” (¶ 3). Aitkenhead even poses the question: “Is admiration for Bauer confined to the escapism of make-believe – or has it had an impact on public opinion and military strategy in the real world?” (¶ 3). According to this study, *24* does not rely on some sort of national security imperative to justify certain acts of violence. In fact, a national security imperative was only mentioned 2.7% (12) of the time. Furthermore, torture was rarely recorded as an intent, with gratuitous violence and threatening and/or ordering violence recorded as much more prevalent intents.

Further implications can be made concerning the perpetrator and target of violence on *24*. This study showed that generally heroes were both the perpetrator and target most often. No matter what the intent was, heroes were most often the perpetrator at 59.3%

(229) of the time, but most often the intent was gratuitous, then threatening and/or ordering, and finally torture. Although a heroic character was most often the target of gratuitous violence and threatening and/or ordering violence, villainous characters were predominately portrayed as the target of torturous violence. These findings represent the significance of violent, efficient heroic characters to the narrative of *24*. Heroes are not only the most likely to perpetrate violence, but they are most likely to be targeted as well. Additionally, with the predominant intent being gratuitous, it seems most violence on *24* is inflicted simply to maim or kill someone. Simply put, gratuitous violence is apparently rampant on *24*.

Another implication can be made about the mode of violence and use of weapons. First, apparently verbal violence as a whole is rarely used on *24*, while physical violence, specifically physical violence involving the use of a lethal weapon, is much more common, suggesting the violence on *24* is typically intense and involving physical elements including guns, knives, and other weapons capable of easily inflicting death or fatal harm. Furthering the idea that *24* presents intense violent scenes is the fact that lethal weapons were most often used when the intent was gratuitous, at 42% (173) of the time. However, when a verbal element of violence was included, the intent had equal chances of being torturous or threatening and/or ordering. This suggests that verbal violence on *24* is used as a means of coercion or persuasion. This conclusion is also supported by the finding that lethal weapons were used more often than nonlethal weapons when the intent was threatening and/or ordering.

The final conclusions of this study involve the portrayed efficiency of violence on *24*. Overall violence was more often portrayed as efficient than inefficient. Between heroic

characters and villainous characters, heroic acts of violence were more likely to be portrayed as efficient, at 39.7% (153) of the time. This supports the conclusion that violent, successful heroes are central to the narrative of *24*. The finding that gratuitous violence is portrayed more often as efficient than inefficient supports the conclusion that violence on *24* is rampant, typically meaningless, and more often than not efficient. Interestingly, violence inflicted in a threatening and/or ordering intent was the second most efficient. While this goes back to the idea that verbal violence on *24* is used as a means of coercion, it also furthers the conclusion by showing that threatening and/or ordering violence is more often portrayed as efficient than inefficient.

Cultivation theory maintains that the more television a person watches, the more their real-world perspective matches that televised reality (Gerbner, 1970, 1973). Different readings that audiences might have of *24* can be hypothesized if cultivation theory is to be taken as a valid possibility concerning the effects of mediated violence. As mentioned in the literature review, Stuart Hall's theory on preferred, negotiated, and oppositional readings (see Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 245) is an excellent framework for speculating what audiences might be taking away from the content of *24* as seen in this study.

Viewers with a preferred reading would seemingly perceive the violent content on *24* as it was observed in this study, while an oppositional reading would likely be the opposite of what was observed in this study. No matter what reading an audience has of *24*, it is undeniable that the show is very violent.

A preferred reading of *24*, according to this study, would be that 1) heroic figures rarely justify torturous acts of violence with some sort of national security imperative; 2) most violence is inflicted with either a gratuitous intent or a threatening and/or ordering

intent; 3) violence is generally an efficient means to an end, most especially gratuitous violence though; 4) lethal weapons are generally used more often than nonlethal weapons; 5) verbal violence, although rarely inflicted, is most often used as a means of coercion or persuasion; and 6) torture is not a prevalent intent, nor is it very efficient.

On the other hand, a possible negotiated reading of *24*, according to this study, would be that 1) sometimes, but not always, heroic acts of violence are justified with a national security imperative; 2) while much of the violence is inflicted with a gratuitous or threatening and/or ordering intent, violence is inflicted with plenty of other intentions; 3) violence is efficient but not always; 4) weapons, either lethal or nonlethal, are commonly used in violent acts; 5) verbal violence is not as prevalent as physical violence and is sometimes used to coerce or persuade the target; and 6) torture is sometimes the intent of violence, but not too often, and when it is, generally it is inefficient.

Finally, an oppositional reading, according to this study, would be that 1) heroic characters often justify torturous acts of violence with a national security imperative; 2) most violent is inflicted with a torturous or similar intent; 3) violence is generally inefficient; 4) nonlethal weapons are used more often than lethal weapons; 5) verbal violence is as prevalent as physical, probably for all intentions; and 6) torture is a prevalent intent, and it is generally efficient.

While the producers and writers of *24* have not acknowledged, or denied for that matter, the prevalence of violence on the show, one thing they have discussed is the use of torture and heroes using a national security imperative to rationalize using torture. For critics who possess an oppositional view of *24*, the show is nothing but propaganda for the former Bush administration's policy towards torture. One such charge these critics

make is that *24* is “a Trojan horse, engrossing bubblegum entertainment that hides within itself both deep cynicism and the justification for pretty much every crime you can think of – and many that the (Bush) administration has tried to commit” (McDermott, 2007, p. 24).

When confronted about such accusations, the producing staff of *24* has said they actively try to produce a politically balanced program. When asked during an interview about the different political views of the writers of *24*, executive producer Howard Gordon said, “It’s far right to far left...And I think that’s reflected in the show. The central thesis this year is ‘At what price do we keep ourselves secure?’ It’s a question without clear answers...” (Edwards, 2007, ¶ 7). Executive producer and writer for *24* Doug Fury “defended the depiction of torture as seen on ‘24’ as serving the dramatic purpose of the show” (Warning: this slope, 2007, ¶ 4). Interestingly, in 2007 Howard Gordon told a TV columnist with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that *24* would be backing off from the torture scenes, insisting “the reason is not the pressure from the military or human rights groups or kids’ advocates, but because the writers just plain want to” (Warning: this slope, ¶ 7). While many have said that the sixth and even the current seventh season have contained as many if not more torturous acts than previous seasons, this study’s results suggest that torture on *24* may not be as prevalent as many critics like to think, especially when compared to the amount of gratuitous violence that was witnessed in this study.

According to the results of this study, the writing staff of *24* very well could be politically balanced and actively trying to produce a television program that presents or at least recognizes differing political views. The argument could be made that if the show

was written by mostly conservatives, then the findings of this study would have shown torture as well as use of national security imperatives to have been much more widespread. However, because torture was one of the least common intents, and the national security imperative used so rarely, it seems only fair to say there is a conscious effort being made by the producing staff of *24* to not favor one political perspective over another. The high rate of violence on *24* then may more accurately be a reflection of American cultural or media values, and perhaps even just values for a specific moment in history.

*24*, although conceived before September 11, 2001, debuted shortly after the attacks of that day. With the war on terror underway, *24* managed to gain a tremendous audience and following, picking up some notable awards, recognitions, and even criticisms along the way. It seems only plausible that at least some of the show's success is inevitably due to the parallels it draws between itself and the ongoing war on terror. *24* may not rationalize heroic acts of torture with national security imperatives, but the fact remains that the show is a violent one predominately concerned with terrorism and combating terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This might even suggest or provide some insight on American cultural and societal values when it comes to terrorism and even violence. For one, it seems safe to say that generally Americans believe they are good and must do whatever it takes to stop evil terrorists who are nearly everywhere, waiting for any chance they get to launch an attack. Furthermore, the high rate of violence simply reinforces the argument that the American population as a whole generally approves of violence and sees it as a uncontrolled force in society, yet it is acceptable as a sort of necessary evil, or, more specifically, as an effective means of getting the job done. These

suggestions only seem more relevant when put into the historical context that has shrouded *24* since its beginning.

### Limitations

Two immediate limitations to this study concern the national security imperative. First, in the very first season of *24*, there are no instances where a hero justifies torturing someone with a national security imperative. Despite the season's main plot concerning an assassination attempt on a presidential candidate, a subplot concerns the kidnapping of Jack Bauer's family, which Bauer is more concerned with. Thus one possible remedy to this problem would have been to make an exception and code for instances in the first season where Bauer rationalized torture with saving his family.

The second limitation concerning the national security imperative concerns the method used to measure the national security variable. This study only coded for the national security imperative when a hero was torturing someone, meaning the perpetrator had to be coded as heroic, and the intent had to be coded as torturous. However, in the course of the study, it became apparent that heroes use a national security imperative even when the intent is not torture. To remedy this, all heroic acts of violence should have been coded for using or not using a national security imperative. This would have also allowed for another crosstabulation that could have determined the prevailing intent when national security was mentioned.

## Future Direction

The most obvious direction this study could take in the future would be to include a cultivation analysis component or a second methodology geared towards measuring audiences' perceptions of *24*. Because this study relied on content analysis, it only provides data on the content of *24* and not on audience effects or possible interpretations of the content of *24*. While a traditional cultivation analysis, including either a survey or questionnaire component, would suffice, of equal interest would be a focus group discussion between regular viewers and non-viewers alike. Participants would view one or two episodes, pre-selected for their violent content or lack thereof. After viewing the episodes in their entirety, the group would be allowed to discuss their feelings, perceptions, and own personal take on the content they just witnessed.

If this study were to be replicated, the limitations mentioned above would first need to be considered. Any similar study should code all heroic violent acts for possible use of a national security imperative. Furthermore, to provide even more data concerning the national security imperative, another possibility is to use a larger sample. The seventh season of *24*, which is being broadcast at the time of writing this thesis, could also be included in the sample. This would be especially interesting given the fact that the seventh season of *24* has explicitly discussed the events that occurred during the first six seasons. It should be noted that in 2009 executive producer Howard Gordon announced his intentions to end the show after an eight season, but only so a *24* movie can be made (WENN, 2009). Thus, the last two seasons, and possibly even the movie, could also be included in a new study's sample to provide a truly complete sampling of the show.

Given that *24* is still in production and slated for at least two more seasons and possibly even a movie, another concern for the future is what direction the show will take with the Obama administration in power. Although season seven was conceived and written while Bush was still president, the debate over the U.S. torture policy was already underway and more than likely impacted the present season of *24*. As described in this thesis, a common criticism of *24* is that it endorses the Bush administration's stance on torture and combating terrorism. The Obama administration, however, has shown its disagreement with at least some of Bush's policies, as exemplified by Obama's executive order in early 2009 to close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp and to release to the public confidential CIA memos concerning torturous interrogations against suspected terrorists. Thus, it will be fascinating to see where the producers and writers of *24* take this popular television program in the future as it seems the U.S. and even the world will continue to debate the appropriateness and effectiveness of torture as an interrogation technique.

## APPENDIX I

### TORTURING TERRORISTS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY IMPERATIVES:

#### MEDIATED VIOLENCE ON *24*

##### Codebook

This thesis is conducting a content analysis of the TV show *24*, which is a popular television program on FOX about terrorism and a fictional U.S. counter-terrorism agency. The purpose of this codebook is to exhaustively inform you, the second coder, on the confines and working definitions of this study, as well as to specifically instruct you on what to code and how to code properly. You will watch episodes in their entirety, from the opening segment (where Kiefer Sutherland is heard saying the time of the current episode) to the end (where the graphic of the clock ticks to the next hour), analyzing for acts of violence scene-to-scene. Using a DVD player, play each episode from the beginning and pause the DVD at the initiation and, if necessary, throughout the course of a violent act.

##### Definitions

**Violence:** For this study, the following definition of violence is used: any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical or verbal force or the use of such force intended to physically or mentally harm a human being or group of human beings.

- Verbal force is any act of verbally threatening violence against another or trying to inflict psychological or mental anguish through methods like spoken words, sounds, sensory deprivation, and/or visuals.
- Physical force is the actual physical application of force, with or without a weapon.

Torture: For this study, torture was defined as the infliction of severe bodily pain, especially as a punishment or a means of persuasion. Essentially, an act of violence will be considered torture if the intention is to acquire information from the person being violently harmed. Also, heroes and villains can both be coded for torturing. However, only scenes with torture inflicted by a hero are to be coded for mentioning or not mentioning a national security imperative.

### Coding Instructions

A violent act will be coded when a perpetrator (P) attacks (A) a target (T).

Remember that the perpetrator can be a hero or a villain, and the target a hero or villain, with heroes attacking villains and heroes, and villains attacking heroes and villains. Note that a new PAT line is started when: 1) the scene changes or goes to split screen, or 2) when any of the content categories suddenly changes (victim/perpetrator, weapon, intention, and efficiency). An example of the first condition includes any cut scene, split screen, or other editing technique that effectively changes the scene. The second condition would include any situation where the perpetrator, victim, use of lethal or non-lethal weapon, intention, and/or efficiency is portrayed differently than presently coded. This study is not measuring the violent act in itself and instead looking more at the

context in which the act is committed, so any number of acts and any kind of attack (verbal, physical and/or both) can occur in the same PAT line, presuming the victim, perpetrator, use of weapon, intention and efficiency remain consistent. Otherwise recode for mode as necessary.

The first two coding categories concern the perpetrator of the violence and the target of the violence, and whether each person is a heroic character or a villainous character. Note that for this study a character's good/evil alignment depends on the season's plot. Thus, any character is considered heroic if their contextual motive is to protect the U.S., while villainous characters are those whose motive is to harm the U.S. This should be apparent based on a character's actions and dialogue. Also, the beginning of each episode recaps the previous episode, and this summary should be watched (not coded however) so that the context of a character's actions in a given episode will be better understood. It should also be noted that it is not uncommon for heroes to harm heroes, or for villains to harm villains. An unable to code/other option is also a possible choice for both the perpetrator and victim in case the hero or villain dichotomy fails to describe a perpetrator or victim. While it is possible you may not be able to determine the relative goodness or evilness of a character, most commonly these other victims and perpetrators are just extras whose characters play an insignificant or minor role in relation to the plot of the show. For example, other possible perpetrators of violence on *24* include smalltime, career criminals, while another possible victim would be innocent bystanders or civilians either targeted or caught in the crosshairs.

The next two coding categories analyze the mode of violence occurring within the given PAT line. This study had two separate measures for mode: verbal and physical.

The first looks at whether the violent act involves a verbal/psychological element or not. Again, for this study verbal force is any act of verbally threatening violence against another or trying to inflict psychological or mental anguish through methods like spoken words, sounds, sensory deprivation, and/or visuals.

The next category codes whether or not the act included a physical element. Refer to the definition of violence provided above. If an attack did include a physical element, or the actual physical application of force, then the weapon used will be coded as either non-lethal or lethal. In the interest of clarity and conciseness, weapons are to be simply coded as non-lethal (i.e. tazer, fist, night stick, or any unconventional weapon incapable of inflicting immediate fatal injury) or lethal (i.e. guns, knives, automobile, bombs, chemicals, or other weapons capable of inflicting death with little effort).

With the perpetrator, victim, and mode of violence identified, the next concern is what the desired goal of the violent act is. If the violence was committed in a needless manner, with no real intention or motive apparent other than to harm, scare, or maim someone, it will be coded as gratuitous. However, if the violence is being inflicted specifically to attain valuable information or to learn a timely fact, which commonly occurs on 24, then it is to be coded as torturous. An "other" option is included, and, should you use this other option, it is requested that you specify the intent of the violent act. Other possible intentions include threatening/ordering, apprehending/arresting, suicide, self-inflicted, and self defense. Note on self-defense: violent acts should only be coded as self defense if the intent of the defender is to stop someone from hurting them and the only way to do so is to use violence. Other instances, i.e. someone returning

gunfire, should be coded as gratuitous as the goal is just to kill the other person and not defending themselves.

A subcategory of the intentionality category looks at the rationalization of the violence through national security imperatives. However, the violent act will be coded for either explicitly mentioning a national security imperative or not if and only if the violence is coded as intentionally torturous. Unlike torturous violence, gratuitous violence has no inherent motive; thus, by definition it can not be projected under the guise of national security. A national security imperative effectively includes both the explicit mentioning of “national security”, and the implicit suggestion of such an imperative through the mentioning of a terrorist plot or threat to hurt (American) civilians. Such threats include bombings (general attacks with explosives, nuke bombs, suicide bombers), nuclear radiation, chemical attacks, biological attacks, airline hijackings, and other mass acts of violence or terror aimed at the general civilian population of a country.

The final category to be coded in this study is the efficiency of the violence. Basically you will determine if the desired goal was accomplished or not. In the case of gratuitous violence, accomplishment of the goal includes successfully scaring, terrorizing, or killing of the target. On the other hand, the efficiency of torturous violence is determined based on whether or not the perpetrator was able to attain the valuable information before the target was either incapacitated or killed. This category is the most open to interpretation and will require you to decide if the coded intention was effectively accomplished or not. Thus, the efficiency of an act should be determined based on the previously coded intention.

Using the coding sheet provided, start at the top of row one, coding for each of the six categories. Feel free to pause the DVD to write down the appropriate code, but avoid rewinding if possible. Finally, specify the episode number that was coded on the bottom of the sheet. Also remember that you do not code but should watch the introduction of each episode where the events of last episode are summarized. If you have any remaining questions, please ask them before you begin coding. Thank you for your help.

## APPENDIX II

### TORTURING TERRORISTS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY IMPERATIVES:

#### MEDIATED VIOLENCE ON 24

##### Coding Sheet

Each time a perpetrator (P) attacks (A) a target (T), code for the following categories.

A new PAT line is started with a scene change, or if any of the coding categories suddenly changes.

##### I. Perpetrator:

- {0} if villainous character(s)
- {1} if heroic character(s)
- {99} unable to code/other

##### II. Victim:

- {0} if villainous character(s)
- {1} if heroic character(s)
- {99} unable to code/other

### III. Verbal Mode:

- if attack does NOT include verbal/psychological element {0}
- if attack includes verbal/psychological element {1}

### IV. Physical Mode:

- if attack does NOT include physical element {0}
- if attack includes physical element {1}

[Subcategory 1] If violence includes PHYSICAL element, then:

- {0} if non-lethal (or no) weapon, {1} if lethal weapon, {99} not applicable

[unconventional weapons (tazers, night sticks, fists, etc.) versus guns, knives, chemicals, car, bomb]

### V. Intentionality:

- {0} if gratuitous (no identifiable motive other than to harm, scare, or terrorize)
- {1} if torture (inflicting pain for info)
- {2} other *specify* (examples include threatening/ordering; arresting/apprehending; suicide/self-inflicted; or other)

[Subcategory 2] If torture IS the intention, then:

- {0} if no mention of national security imperative
- {1} if mention of national security imperative

VI. Efficiency (based on intentionality):

- {0} if “goal” was NOT accomplished
- {1} if “goal” was accomplished
- {2} other *specify* (example includes unable to determine or no goal)

[i. e. was desired information acquired or was the victim killed before relenting information?]

## APPENDIX III

### TORTURING TERRORISTS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY IMPERATIVES:

#### MEDIATED VIOLENCE ON 24

##### Episode List

###### Season 1:

1. Episode 1, 12 a.m. to 1 a.m.
2. Episode 6, 5 a.m. to 6 a.m.
3. Episode 7, 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.
4. Episode 11, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
5. Episode 16, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
6. Episode 17, 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.
7. Episode 21, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

###### Season 2:

1. Episode 26, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.
2. Episode 27, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
3. Episode 31, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.
4. Episode 36, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
5. Episode 37, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.
6. Episode 41, 12 a.m. to 1 a.m.

7. Episode 46, 5 a.m. to 6 a.m.

8. Episode 47, 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.

Season 3:

1. Episode 51, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

2. Episode 56, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

3. Episode 57, 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.

4. Episode 61, 1 a.m. to 2 a.m.

5. Episode 66, 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.

6. Episode 67, 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.

7. Episode 71, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Season 4:

1. Episode 76, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

2. Episode 77, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

3. Episode 81, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

4. Episode 86, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

5. Episode 87, 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.

6. Episode 91, 1 a.m. to 2 a.m.

7. Episode 96, 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.

Season 5:

1. Episode 97, 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.

2. Episode 101, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

3. Episode 106, 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

4. Episode 107, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

5. Episode 111, 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.

6. Episode 116, 2 a.m. to 3 a.m.

7. Episode 117, 3 a.m. to 4 a.m.

Season 6:

1. Episode 121, 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.

2. Episode 126, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

3. Episode 127, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

4. Episode 131, 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

5. Episode 136, 9 p.m. to 10 p.m.

6. Episode 137, 10 p.m. to 11 p.m.

7. Episode 141, 2 a.m. to 3 a.m.

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