

Parental Advisory: Tipper Gore and the PMRC

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Abstract: A defender of childhood innocence and the wife of a powerful politician, Tipper Gore became the spokesperson for concerned mothers after forming the Parents' Music Resource Center (PMRC). Joining forces with Susan Baker, wife of the secretary of the treasury, and other similarly well-connected women, Gore formed the PMRC to combat "porn rock": a catch-all for the explicit sins and excesses depicted in some of the rock music of the time. She felt that these excesses had the potential to corrupt the nation's youth, so the women of the PMRC came up with a solution: label offensive albums with a warning sticker. Leveraging the power of their influential husbands, the PMRC and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) were called before the Senate Commerce Technology and Transportation Committee for a hearing. While the hearing was still ongoing, the PMRC and RIAA came to an agreement behind the scenes. The RIAA agreed to place a *Parental Advisory — Explicit Content* label on albums with potentially objectionable lyrics, an addition that had drastic effects on the music industry. This case explores the relations between motherhood and culture, negotiating the ambiguities between good-natured efforts at protection and explicit censorship.

Tipper Gore Takes a Stand

It was in late December of 1984 when Tipper Gore brought home Prince's chart-topping *Purple Rain* for her 11-year-old daughter. Kareenna had begged her mother for the album after hearing the innocuous hit "Let's Go Crazy" on the radio. As the family listened to the album in its entirety, however, they were treated to previously unheard tracks like "Darling Nikki." Unlike the more banal songs on the album, "Darling Nikki" was tinged with portrayals of sexual deviancy. The song describes a girl named "Nikki," a "sex fiend" who the narrator meets "in a hotel lobby / Masturbating with a magazine" (Prince 1984) (see Appendix 2 for full lyrics).

Tipper Gore was incensed. "At first, I was stunned — then I got mad! Millions of Americans were buying *Purple Rain* with no idea what to expect. Thousands of parents were giving the album to their children" (Gore 1987, 17). Gore was a vocal critic of the MTV era's "adult" excesses, denouncing the hypersexuality perpetuated by "leather-clad male band[s]" (Gore 1987, 18). These extravagances stood in direct opposition to Gore's "Stand By Your Man" family values. Gore, who shelved her psychology career to become a mother and wife, was the sort of wife who "combs her hair and touches up her lipstick before her husband returns home in the evening" (Simmons 1992). Still, Gore was a leader in her own right, a veteran campaigner whose fame once superseded that of her husband. A New York Times headline in April of 1987 read "Senator Gore? Is he the one married to Tipper?" calling Tipper Gore's "traditional wife" image into question (Dowd 1987).

A few months into the new year, Gore brought up her anxieties to her friend and confidant Susan Baker, wife of the Secretary of the Treasury, James Baker. They agreed that the current “excesses” in rock music put the moral development of their children at risk and, with the help of other “Washington Wives,” decided to take up arms against “porn rock.” Gore railed against this breed of rock ‘n roll, decrying it as a “new brand of vicious, violent porn [that] is peddled” by rock music labels and their hedonistic singers (Gore 1987, 99). Out of her consternation, the Parents’ Music Resource Center (PMRC) was born.

In an effort to mitigate the “porn rock” crisis, the PMRC pushed for a record rating system that issued warning labels based on the explicit content of each record. In order to execute their plan and gain an audience with higher-ups in the music business, the PMRC had to establish a powerful media presence and a buzz that could be leveraged against recording industry executives. The buzz generated by the PMRC’s drastic approach to “porn rock” thrust the group into the limelight, helping the movement gain traction and media attention. This notoriety afforded Gore and other members spots on rock music panels and large press conference turnouts. As the “porn rock” zeitgeist grew, the PMRC continued to distribute abundant anti-obscenity literature, attracting factional support and more media attention.

In the summer of 1985, the PMRC again attracted the public eye with the “Filthy Fifteen” (see Appendix 1), a curated list of particularly explicit or offensive songs paired with a PMRC-issued sample rating. The rating system, however, betrayed the gender bias of its compilers, operating under different standards of decency for male artists and female artists. Both W.A.S.P.’s “Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)” and Madonna’s “Dress You Up” were given an X rating, denoting “sexually explicit or profane” lyrical content. Why did the PMRC consider Madonna’s comparatively innocent track just as perverse and damaging as “Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)”? Were the ladies of the PMRC infuriated at the merest suggestion of female sexuality? Did Madonna’s sexual agency stand in direct opposition to Tipper Gore’s more traditional role as a mother?

As the PMRC argued against obscenity in an attempt to protect the innocence of American youth, they reinforced women’s roles as mothers and moral educators. In Tipper Gore’s 1987 book *Raising PG kids in an X-rated Society*, she frequently expresses her opinion on the moral role of parenthood in the modern age. In a section entitled “A Mother Takes a Stand,” Gore asserts that “parents have a right to know what [our] children are buying and hearing,” advertising her hopes that “full disclosure [of explicit content] will stir parents to try to stop the wholesale exploitation of American youth” (Gore 1987, 16).

While the PMRC’s message generated support from various Christian and family values organizations, many media and rock titans disagreed with Gore and questioned her intentions: were her efforts borne out of a concern for American innocence or an attempt at covert censorship? Thanks to extensive media attention, the PMRC gained enough cultural traction to take their fight with the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) to the Senate. Under pressure from friends (and husbands) in high places, the Senate Commerce Technology and Transportation Committee called for a series of hearings examining “porn rock.” Once the PMRC and RIAA took their discussion to the Senate, musicians Frank Zappa, John Denver, and Dee Snider of Twisted Sister were also called upon to testify. John Denver contended that government enforcement of anti-obscenity regulations would “approach censorship” and that “a self-appointed watchdog of public morals” could easily suppress and censor the written word (U.S. Congress 1985, 69). By calling into question the constitutionality of such regulation, Denver introduced yet another

dilemma. Could the PMRC's attempt to restrict and label explicit music be classified as censorship? Or did their campaign simply give voice to legions of concerned mothers?

Women As Pop Musicians

The PMRC's gendered criticism of female musicians reflected the dominant cultural attitude of the time. Western music tradition has historically catered to the tastes of men, undervaluing female musicians. As women in the music industry intrude on a typically male-dominated field, they are forced to contend with reactionary discrimination. Female musicians cannot simply create music because they are forced to contend with the constricting and ingrained sexism of the industry itself (Whiteley 2011). These patterns of suppression and dominance were reinvigorated by the birth of MTV, reviving value structures and strategies of differentiation that prioritized white-male musicianship, belittling female musicians and devaluing their contributions to the musical canon (Lewis 1990, 6, 32). These strategies of differentiation constituted the cultural climate in which Madonna, one of the five female artists on the PMRC's "Filthy Fifteen," rose to stardom.

The birth of MTV in 1981 revolutionized the music industry, skyrocketing notable female artists, including Madonna, to fame. MTV began as a television channel for music video distribution, visualizing popular music and broadcasting it to the nation. In the beginning, MTV targeted a youth audience with rock music videos. Throughout the 1970s, rock developed a reputation as the anti-commercial, high-art antithesis of popular music, catering to white-male musicianship and spectatorship by relegating female artists and female fans to the undervalued pop category. By commercializing and popularizing rock music in a new visual form, MTV began to erode the standard of difference between rock and pop, rehabilitating the cultural image of female artists who were once relegated to the pop category and devalued "as a result of the association" (Lewis 1990, 32). Though this erosion of barriers allowed female artists to enter a previously male-dominated arena, MTV's heavy emphasis on the visual elements of popular music trapped female musicians in a double bind: transform their bodies into objects of hypersexualization to gain status or risk falling into obscurity. Image mattered more than ever before, and female artists like Madonna had to navigate the new industry standards.

In 1984, the first Madonna music video aired on MTV. From then on, Madonna worked hard to cultivate an image, combining "bad girl" lace and crucifixes with bleached blonde hair. Exaggerating typical markers of femininity, Madonna crafted a blatantly sexual persona to retaliate against the ladylike ethic of dependency and modesty. Madonna combined sex appeal, charm, and power to craft a multi-faceted media persona, playing upon her own sexuality to refashion and subvert stereotypical femininity. Madonna's detractors reviled her for this, calling her a "tart," a "slut," and a "cheap coquette" (Sexton 1993). In a 1985 interview, Madonna told *Spin* magazine that:

I get so much bad press because people associate a girl who's successful with a bimbo or an airhead. Sexy boys never get bad press. Do you think they'd bug Prince if he pulled out his dick on stage? If I ever did something like that, I'm the slut of the year (Cohen 1985).

Madonna embodies the notion that for female musicians, it is never enough to be "just an artist." These women must also craft a very particular (and often sexualized) image in order to secure a place in the pop music canon. Though Madonna tried to exercise control over her sexual

image, the effect was twofold. Her unashamed and playful approach to sexuality helped elevate her to stardom, but the increased exposure transformed her body into “an object of oppression,” exposing her to criticism and objectification (Wurtzel 2001, 24). Tipper Gore and the PMRC were some of those critics. They played into the gendered standards of obscenity by placing Madonna’s comparatively innocent “Dress You Up” alongside W.A.S.P.’s “Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)” on the Filthy Fifteen. While Madonna sang about “velvet kisses” and “satin sheets” (see Appendix 3) the men of W.A.S.P. sang about “nail[ing] your ass to the sheets” and “steal[ing] your love” (see Appendix 4) using heavily sexualized and violent imagery. Both songs, however, were labeled with an “X” for sexually explicit by the PMRC, conflating lighthearted descriptions of teenaged infatuation with assault fantasies.

“In My House” by the Mary Jane Girls also appeared on the Filthy Fifteen. Although the song includes no explicit language, indirectly referring to sex as “sweet stuff” and “making love” (Appendix 5), the PMRC still gave the song an “X” rating. Made up entirely of black women, the Mary Jane Girls revolutionized the R&B genre. Joanne McDuffie, lead singer of the all-girl band, was confused by the song’s placement on the list:

I remember being really, really irritated, because there was nothing in the song that would suggest anything inappropriate. Was the song about sex? Of course it was. But lyrically, it was very tastefully done. It wasn't something that would make your kids go, “Oooh, I'm gonna go figure out what she's talking about” (Schonfeld 2015, n.p).

McDuffie went on to describe the PMRC’s targeting of them as “a blacklist...a modern-day witch hunt...Or an attempt at censorship for *certain* artists and *certain* songs” (Schonfeld 2015, n.p.). McDuffie cites the negative publicity they received from the PMRC as the central reason they were denied the awards and other accolades that were regularly granted to other artists of their stature and popularity.

Women As Mother Protectors

The PMRC’s concern for the innocence of the American youth seems diametrically opposed to the self-sexualized pop star of the MTV era. Tipper Gore’s attitudes towards parenting are rooted in historical notions of moral motherhood, a result of the changing roles of women in colonial society that occurred during the American Revolution. The birth of America coincided with the creation of republican motherhood, an alternative form of maternal citizenship that designated women as the moral protectors of their children. Instead of exercising the full rights of citizenship themselves, they would nurture the budding republic by instilling republican values in their children. Unable to vote or hold office, women channeled their patriotism into the rearing of “virtuous sons” (Vandenberg-Daves 2014, 17).

The American Revolution coincided with the religious and structural changes that had already begun to alter the Protestant church, affording American women greater cultural influence. As the church became feminized, a gentle, self-sacrificing, and overall more feminine conceptualization of Jesus emerged. This shift coincided with women’s increased involvement in religious activism as they began to create church-led voluntary associations dedicated to the protection and betterment of American society. People feared that the commercialization of American society would cause men to lose their moral compass, increasing the need for devout women who could preserve the virtue of the republic (Vandenberg-Daves 2014, 19).

The connection between moral motherhood and religious activism strengthened throughout the 19th century. Women who disregarded their role as mothers and moral caretakers were severely criticized. Mary Palmer Tyler, who wrote a popular book on child rearing, said that women “who neglect this sweet endearing office are more fit objects of censure than pity” (Tyler 1972, n.p). This led to a romanticization of childhood, conceptualizing children as malleable vessels of innocence who were deeply influenced by their surroundings.

Tipper Gore, mother of four children, evokes the ideology of moral motherhood in her comments about the formation of the PMRC. In “A Mother Takes A Stand,” the first chapter of her book *Raising PG kids in an X-rated Society*, Gore asserts that:

In fact, we are talking about products primarily written for children, marketed to children, and sold to children. In this country we rightly treat children differently from adults...If no one under eighteen can buy *Penthouse* magazine, why should children be subjected to explicit album covers and lyrics that are even worse? (Gore 1987, 28).

Tipper Gore saw her crusade as a quest to “protect the rights of children,” an effort to preserve the “personal and family values” characteristic of moral motherhood (Gore 1987, 29, 12). Gore feared for the innocence of American boys and girls, accusing the music industry of the “wholesale exploitation of American youth” (Gore 1987, 13).

Despite the negative press directed towards Gore, a handful of fellow women leaders supported Gore’s efforts to mobilize mothers. In her 1995 biography *It Takes a Village*, Hillary Clinton writes that “Long before I met her, I admired Tipper for having the courage to stand up and say what millions of other fathers and mothers were thinking: that some of the media our kids are exposed to is doing them harm” (Clinton 1996, 269). Like many mothers, Clinton also had concerns about the impact of explicit media on children and recognized that Gore was using her position as a mother to affect change, drawing a link between motherhood and activism. Consequently, Gore formed the PMRC, authoring extensive literature on their ethos in order to reassert some “control over the cultural environment” children grow up in (Chastanger 1999, 181). “The art of parenting should be approached with the same conviction and dedication as a professional career,” Gore said, substantiating her conceptualization of motherhood as an occupation (Gore 1987, 157).

PMRC: Tipper Gore and the Washington Wives

In addition to Tipper Gore and Susan Baker, the founding members included Sally Nevius, wife of a Washington City Council member, Peatsy Hollings, wife of a senator and future governor, Pam Howar, wife of a construction company CEO, and Ethelann Stuckey, wife of a congressman. Seventeen more “Washington Wives” served on the PMRC’s board of directors, further establishing the PMRC’s influence in the capital (Cutietta 1986, 36). For their formal debut, the ladies of the PMRC established a two thousand person mailing list made up of names from their Christmas card lists in order to engender support from their similarly well-connected peers (Cutietta 1986, 36-7).

The PMRC stated that their primary purpose was “to educate and inform parents about this alarming trend [towards obscene lyrics] as well as to ask the industry to exercise self-restraint” (U.S. Congress 1985, 11). They initially planned to generate this “self-restraint” with a rating

system. Modeled after the MPA film rating system¹, the PMRC's system branded albums with a V (for violence), X (for sexual content), D/A (for drugs/alcohol), or O (for the occult) depending on the nature of the offensive content. The PMRC also proposed that the record company include a lyric sheet enumerating each songs' offensive components.

The PMRC's proposed solution to "porn rock", however, was not as simple as it seemed, requiring a more severe enforcement of obscenity laws. Throughout the 20th century, various Supreme Court rulings altered the definition of obscenity. In the 1960s, two supplemental criteria were included to better define obscenity, citing obscene material as both "patently offensive" and "appeal[ing] to prurient interest in sex" (Chastagner 1999, 182). Still, the Supreme Court recognized that the lines dividing obscene material (illegal) and pornographic material (protected under the First Amendment) were hazy and unclear. 1973's *Miller v. California* attempted to resolve those uncertainties, defining obscenity as material that "lacked seriously literary, artistic, political or scientific value." Under this definition, "contemporary community standards" were used to evaluate whether or not material was "patently offensive" or evinced a "prurient interest in sex" (*Miller v. California* 1973, n.p). This "community standards" clause allowed each state to individually determine what material could be considered obscene (and therefore illegal) within their borders. The ambiguity of this definition left obscenity and indecency open to wide interpretation. The PMRC planned to exploit this ambiguity, gunning for a stricter enforcement of obscenity laws in order to tackle porn rock head-on.

After months of media pressure from the PMRC, the Senate Commerce Technology and Transportation Committee called for a series of hearings, examining "porn rock" in a legislative context. The examination didn't last long, however. During the Senate hearing, the RIAA complied with a modified version of the PMRC's demands. The RIAA gave its members an option: attach a generic warning label to the front of the record or print the offensive lyrics on the cover. Before the Senate hearings were over, the RIAA and the PMRC had come to a behind-the-scenes agreement (Chastagner 1999). The RIAA members chose to attach a generic warning label to records that included explicit content. The PMRC agreed, acquiescing to a generic labeling system in which each record with "potentially objectionable" lyrics would sport a simple inscription: *Explicit Lyrics — Parental Advisory* (Cutietta 1986).

Conflicts of Interest

During the Senate hearing, Frank Zappa exposed several conflicts of interest that compromised the integrity of the PMRC, the RIAA, and their ensuing agreement. In his statement, Zappa remarked that:

The ladies' shame must be shared by the bosses at the major labels who, through the RIAA, chose to bargain away the rights of composers, performers, and retailers in order to pass H.R. 2911, The Blank Tape Tax, a private tax levied by an industry on consumers for the benefit of a select group within that industry (United States 1985, 53).

The Blank Tape Tax that Zappa referred to had been on the RIAA's agenda for years. Since 1982, the RIAA had tried and failed to pass H.R. 2911, a bill known as the Blank Tape Tax or the Home Audio Recording Tax. This bill taxed blank audio tapes purchased by consumers and would have

¹ In 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America introduced a voluntary rating system that assigned a rating of G, PG, PG-13, R, or NC-17 to films depending on the severity of content.

brought in roughly \$250,000,000 per year for the RIAA. The Blank Tape Tax was a result of the RIAA's fear of lost revenue; they worried that record sales would decrease dramatically if consumers were able to easily create bootleg copies of albums.

Unable to get the tax passed above board, in 1985 the RIAA met with the PMRC in an effort to curry favor with their more powerful husbands. This meeting introduced yet another conflict of interest, one which Frank Zappa also discussed at length:

Is it a coincidence that Mrs. Thurmond is affiliated with the PMRC? ... While the wife of the Secretary of the Treasury recites "Gonna drive my love inside you" and Senator Gore's wife talks about "bondage" and "oral sex at gunpoint" on the CBS Evening News, people in high places work on a tax bill that is so ridiculous, the only way to sneak it through is to keep the public's mind on something else: Porn rock... Is it proper that the husband of a PMRC nonmember / founder / person sits on any committee considering business pertaining to the blank tape tax or his wife's lobbying organization? Can any committee thus constituted find facts in a fair and unbiased manner? (United States 1985, 53).

Of the 19 senators involved with the hearing, four of the men (Senators Gore, Packwood, Thurmond, and chairman Danforth) were married to PMRC members. Tipper Gore remarked that her husband's commerce committee membership put them both "in an awkward position," but neither of them moved to resolve the issue (Gore 1987, 32). Additionally, all four of the husbands sat on the committee which decided the fate of H.R. 2911. As the RIAA contended with the demands of the PMRC in order to win the favor of their husbands, they "yielded on the main points" but soundly dismissed a handful of the PMRC's other requests, refusing to ban explicit album art or implement a MPA-style rating system. A few months after the RIAA came to an agreement with the PMRC, H.R. 2911 was finally passed (Chastanger 1999, 185).

Censorship or Consumer Choice?

During the Senate hearing, Musicians John Denver, Frank Zappa, and Dee Snider of Twisted Sister were summoned to testify alongside the PMRC members. Snider nicknamed the group the Unholy Trinity, a trio of seasoned musicians invited to testify on behalf of their fellow artists (Snider 2016, n.p). Though these men were designated as expert witnesses, they were not representative of rock music as a whole. Notable female artists like Madonna, Sheena Easton, Cyndi Lauper, and the Mary Jane Girls were excluded from the trial, silencing their valuable testimonies and calling into question the inherent biases of the music industry and the Senate committee members themselves. Though they were just as famous and well-spoken as the likes of Zappa and Snider, they were not invited to testify.

Nevertheless, the Unholy Trinity continued to push back against the PMRC's labeling efforts. During the hearing, Frank Zappa told the Chairman of the committee that "the establishment of a rating system, voluntary or otherwise, opens the door to an endless parade of Moral Quality Control Programs based on 'Things Certain Christians Don't Like'," raising questions about the PMRC's professed secularism and how the organization dealt with censorship accusations (U.S. Congress 1985, 54).

Detractors, like the Unholy Trinity, however, had issues with the generic labeling system, criticizing the value judgements that went into labeling a piece of art. Critics asserted that simple

warning labels encourage misinterpretation, inviting listeners to misconstrue the meaning of a harmless song. One such case of misinterpretation arose with John Denver's "Rocky Mountain High." Banned from radio stations for its alleged "drug-related" content, Denver's song was grossly misinterpreted by uninformed listeners (Cutietta 1986). During the PMRC's Senate hearing, John Denver gave a compelling statement and addressed this potential for misinterpretation:

[The mis-labeling of "Rocky Mountain High"] was obviously done by people who had never seen or been to the Rocky Mountains and also had never experienced the elation, celebration of life, or the joy in living that one feels when he observes something as wondrous as the Perseides meteor shower on a moonless, cloudless night, when there are so many stars that you have a shadow from the starlight... Obviously [this was], a clear case of misinterpretation. Mr. Chairman, what assurance have I that any national panel to review my music would make any better judgment? (U.S. Congress 1985, 65).

The perils of labeling extend beyond misinterpretation, though. Seasoned musicians, namely Philip Bailey of Earth Wind and Fire, cite the forbidden-fruit effect, explaining that when you tell a child that "this is a no-no... then that's what they want to go see" (Bowes 2002, n.p). The generic "Parental Advisory" label invited this consequence. Bearing no useful information about an album's explicit content, the "Parental Advisory" sticker marked a record as a tantalizing, prohibited indulgence. In his testimony, Denver discussed the forbidden-fruit effect and its relation to generic labeling, illustrating that "that which is denied becomes that which is most desired, and that which is hidden becomes that which is most interesting" (U.S. Congress 1985, 65).

Throughout history, censorship has been conceptualized as a form of "cultural protection" often motivated by religious or political ideology. Though not explicitly affiliated with religion, the PMRC had various direct connections with Christian groups and drew upon religious doctrine in their campaigns and literature (Korpe, Reitov, and Cloonan 2006). Gore linked the PMRC with religious fundamentalism by referring to the "'religion' of heavy metal" and its corrupting influence on American youth, speculating that metal music's false prophets "seem to play a part in ending young lives" (Gore 1987, 58). Gore further critiques bands like Slayer and Venom for "reject[ing] Judeo-Christian religion" (Gore 1987, 121). Were the sentiments expressed by the PMRC in their literature and labeling practices underpinned by traditional values and sexism? Did the group's affiliation with religious fundamentalism compromise their mission?

The PMRC's most flagrant connection to the Christian Right was Jeff Ling, a Virginian rocker turned youth minister who served as the group's close advisor. Often linked with religious fundamentalism, Ling spread the PMRC's gospel, compiling inflammatory slide show presentations to showcase at press conferences (Sullivan 1987). Ling presented his slide shows depicting "the worst excesses in rock music" at PMRC meetings, the first of which was held at St. Columba's Church (Gore 1987, 19). Ling also authored pamphlets and other distributable material for the group. Additionally, the PMRC recruited Bob DeMoss, member of the religious organization Focus on the Family, to create their promotional video (Chastagner 1999).

Nevertheless, Gore denied the groups ideological connection to religion, asserting that the PMRC's actions were not only secular, but also the "direct opposite of censorship." Gore claimed that the PMRC aimed only to "increase consumer choice" by including warning labels on records. In her book, Gore wrote:

We simply urged that the consumer be forewarned through the use of warning labels and/or printed lyrics visible on the outside packaging of music products. Critics used the smokescreen of censorship to dodge the real issue, which was [a] lack of any corporate responsibility...(Gore 1987, 26-7).

Though the PMRC's original intent may have been to inform and protect, the Senate hearings and the subsequent album labeling evolved into what some would consider explicit censorship. Local authorities began to utilize the "Parental Advisory" label system as a guide to what should be censored (Chastagner 1999). Retail giants like Wal-Mart refused to sell CDs bearing the "Parental Advisory" warning label (Korpe, Reitov, and Cloonan 2006). Other retailers refused to sell labeled records to people under the age of 18. Would the result have been different if the RIAA had listened to the PMRC and allowed for a larger degree of specificity on the album labels? Should the Senate Committee have guided the decision instead of permitting the two groups to come to a decision outside of the hearing?

While the PMRC never advocated for explicit censorship, the "Parental Advisory" label now corresponds with obscenity in the minds of the American people, exemplifying the gendered criticisms too often aimed at female leaders. Though Gore garnered earnest support from similarly concerned parents, the media lampooned her crusade, representing her efforts as the paranoid delusions of an apple-pie housewife. Though Gore's identity as a mother informed the PMRC's mission and goals, it also compromised her integrity in the eyes of the media. Can a woman be a mother, wife, and an activist at the same time? How do these identities complicate one another? This case explores the tension between the various roles women play and how sexuality factors into them through the lens of Tipper Gore and the PMRC's crusade against obscenity. This case highlights a mother's solution to obscenity in the media, prompting the reader to consider whether Gore's push for a more regulated record industry was the last-ditch effort of a well-connected mother or a veiled attempt at censorship.

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Appendix 1: “The Filthy Fifteen” as Printed in *Rolling Stone* Magazine (U.S. Congress 1985, 85)

[From the Rolling Stones, Sept. 12, 1985]

FUROR OVER ROCK LYRICS INTENSIFIES—SENATE MAY HOLD HEARINGS IN SEPTEMBER

(By Robert Love)

The Filthy Fifteen

<i>Artist and song</i>	<i>Rating</i>
Judas Priest, “Eat Me Alive”	X
Motley Crue, “Bastard”	V
Prince, “Darling Nikki”	X
Sheena Easton, “Sugar Walls”	X
W.A.S.P., “(Animal) Fuck Like a Beast”	X
Mercyful Fate, “Into the Coven”	O
Vanity, “Strap On Robby Baby”	X
Def Leppard, “High ‘n’ Dry”	D/A
Twisted Sister, “We’re Not Gonna Take It”	V
Madonna, “Dress You Up”	X
Cyndi Lauper, “She Bop”	X
AC/DC, “Let Me Put My Love Into You”	X
Black Sabbath, “Trashed”	D/A
Mary Jane Girls, “My House”	X
Venom, “Possessed”	O

Appendix 2: Prince's "Darling Nikki" Lyrics (Prince, 1984)

I knew a girl named Nikki
I guess you could say she was a sex fiend
I met her in a hotel lobby
Masturbating with a magazine
She said how'd you like to waste some time
And I could not resist when I saw little Nikki grind

She took me to her castle
And I just couldn't believe my eyes
She had so many devices
Everything that money could buy
She said sign your name on the dotted line
The lights went out
And Nikki started to grind

Nikki

The castle started spinning
Or maybe it was my brain
I can't tell you what she did to me
But my body will never be the same
Her lovin' will kick your behind
Oh, she'll show you no mercy
But she'll sho'nuff sho'nuff show you how to grind

Darlin' Nikki

Woke up the next morning
Nikki wasn't there
I looked all over and all I found
Was a phone number on the stairs
It said thank you for a funky time
Call me up whenever you want to grind

Oh, Nikki, ohhhh

Come back Nikki, come back
Your dirty little Prince
Wanna grind grind grind grind grind grind grind grind grind

[backwards at the end...]
"Hello, how are you? I'm fine. 'cause I know
That the Lord is coming soon, coming, coming soon."

Appendix 3: Madonna's "Dress You Up" Lyrics (Madonna 1984)

You've got style, that's what all the girls say
Satin sheets and luxuries so fine
All your suits are custom made in London
But I've got something that you'll really like

Gonna dress you up in my love
All over, all over
Gonna dress you up in my love
All over your body

Feel the silky touch of my caresses
They will keep you looking so brand new
Let me cover you with velvet kisses
I'll create a look that's made for you

Gonna dress you up in my love, in my love
All over your body, all over your body
In my love
All over, all over
From your head down to your toes

Appendix 4: W.A.S.P.'s "Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)" Lyrics (W.A.S.P. 1984)

I got pictures of naked ladies
Lying on their beds
I whiff that smell and the sweet convulsion
Starts a-swelling inside my head
I'm making artificial lovers for free
I start to howl I'm in heat
I moan and growl and the hunt drives me crazy
I fuck like a Beast

I come round, round I come feel your love (like an animal)
Tie you down, down I come steal your love (like an animal)
I come round, round I come feel your love (like an animal)
Tie you down, down I come steal your love

I'm on the prowl and I watch you closely
I lie waiting for you
Well I'm the wolf with the sheepskins clothing
I lick my chops and your tasting good
I do whatever I want to do, yeah
I'll nail your ass to the sheets
A pelvic thrust and the sweat starts to sting ya
I fuck like a beast

I come round, round I come feel your love (like an animal)
Tie you down, down I come steal your love (like an animal)
I come round, round I come feel your love (like an animal)
Tie you down, down I come steal your love

Come ride, savage seduction
Ride, ride, ride.

Appendix 5: Mary Jane Girls' "In My House" Lyrics (Mary Jane Girls 1985)

Boy, you can just best believe I'm the only girl in your life
I'll be your sugar in the morning and the sweet stuff you need at night
And you can just best believe when it comes down to makin' love
I'll satisfy your every need and every fantasy you think of

So when you need a little piece of mind
Come on over, boy, any time
I'll keep you happy and so satisfied
In my house, in my house

So when you need some love and tenderness
And it's me, baby, that you miss
Here's the key to unlock the door
To my house, my house

Ooh... (in my house...)
Ooh-oooh-oooh... (in my house...)
Ooh-oooh-oooh...

Boy, any time, day or night, when you call me, I will be there
Just call me up on the phone when you need someone 'round to care
And when you feel sad and blue, you just come and see me anytime
I'll kiss away all your tears, and your fears you can leave behind

So when you need a little piece of mind
Come on over, boy, any time
I'll keep you happy and so satisfied
In my house, in my house

So when you need some love and tenderness
And it's me, baby, that you miss
Here's the key to unlock the door
To my house, in my house

Ooh... (in my house...)
Ooh-oooh-oooh... (in my house...)
Ooh-oooh-oooh...

Appendix 6: John Denver's "Rocky Mountain High" Lyrics (Denver 1972)

He was born in the summer of his 27th year, coming home to a place he'd never been before
He left yesterday behind him, you might say he was born again
You might say he found a key for every door
When he first came to the mountains, his life was far away on the road and hanging by a song
But the strings already broken and he doesn't really care
It keeps changing fast, and it don't last for long

And the Colorado Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it raining fire in the sky
The shadows from the starlight are softer than a lullaby
Rocky Mountain high, Colorado. Rocky Mountain high

He climbed cathedral mountains, he saw silver clouds below
He saw everything as far as you can see
And they say that he got crazy once and he tried to touch the sun
And he lost a friend, but kept the memory
Now he walks in quiet solitude, the forest and the streams, seeking grace in every step he takes
His sight is turned inside himself, to try and understand
The serenity of a clear blue mountain lake

And the Colorado Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it raining fire in the sky
You can talk to God and listen to the casual reply
Rocky Mountain high, Colorado. Rocky Mountain high

Now his life is full of wonder, but his heart still knows some fear
Of a simple thing he can not comprehend
Why they try to tear the mountains down to bring in a couple more
More people, more scars upon the land

And the Colorado Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it raining fire in the sky
I know he'd be a poor man if he never saw an eagle fly
Rocky Mountain high, the Colorado Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it raining fire in the sky
Friends around the campfire and everybody's high
Rocky Mountain high, Colorado. Rocky Mountain high
Rocky Mountain high, Colorado. Rocky Mountain high