

last month, ABC still has 37 markets where the show is not—and likely will not be—seen this season, down about 20 markets from last month.

ABC decided to play hardball and offered the show to non-affiliated stations a few weeks ago. Besides finding new clearances for the show, the move persuaded several affiliates to rethink their policy and carry the program.

One such affiliate is WTVW(TV) Indianapolis. The station did not air the first few episodes but will carry the rest of the season. "Let's just say ABC's decision to shop the show had something to do with our decision," says Ken Schreiber, vice president and general manager.

Since viewers have gotten used to the show, Schreiber says, the negative complaints have tapered off.

But WIXT(TV) Syracuse still decides on a week-to-week basis what episodes it will carry. "We will not air shows showing people having sex on television. Episodes one and two filled that criteria; the subsequent episodes

have not. If they do, I will not air them," says Steven Kronquest.

So far, ABC does not have an alternative outlet for *NYPD Blue* in Syracuse. Other markets, besides Dallas, where non-ABC affiliated stations carry the show include Las Cruces, N.M. (El Paso); Cape Girardeau, Mo.; Lake Charles, La.; Lexington, Ky.; Norfolk, Va., and Reno.

ABC does not anticipate any other stations coming on board or affiliates changing their minds about the show this far into the new season, says George Newi, executive vice president, affiliate relations.

Despite the controversy and the decision of more than 50 ABC affiliates not to carry the show, no long-term damage to the network's affiliate relations is expected, in part because of ABC's decision not to pressure affiliates into carrying it.

"Sure, there are a few people out there that are angry about [offering the show to other stations]," says Newi. "We fully respect the right of affiliates to make the decision not to carry

the show, but they can't be the gatekeeper for that city. It's one thing to say it is not appropriate for my station, but you can't say it for the whole market."

The decision not to carry the show was especially tough for Clyde Payne, a former affiliate board chairman and vice president/general manager, of WBKO(TV) Bowling Green, Ky. But once he decided, ABC's giving the show to Fox affiliate WKNT(TV) was no problem. "The agreement says they can do this," says Payne, who adds that ABC Chief Executive Officer Dan Burke "has been very fair about this."

Payne even went on *Donahue* to defend his decision and sat between producer David Milch and actor Dennis Franz. "I took heat from everybody," he says.

Like other affiliates not carrying the show, Payne does not have a problem with *NYPD Blue*'s violence—it is the nudity and dialogue that have kept it off his airwaves. "It's just not needed," he says. ■

## Reichblum to be 'GMA' executive producer

By Steve McClellan

**B**ob Reichblum, line producer at *Good Morning America*, has been named executive producer of the broadcast, effective January 1994.

Reichblum, 36, beat out several other in-house candidates, despite his relatively short tenure—just 10 months—with the program.

Phil Beuth, the ABC executive in charge of early morning and late-night programing, says that Reichblum, who was hired for the show last December, was a candidate to succeed outgoing *GMA* Executive Producer Jack Reilly from the start.

"It was a tough decision because we have a lot of talented people on this program who wanted the job," says Beuth. He denies reports from other sources that co-hosts Joan Lunden and Charles Gibson ruled out other contenders, in effect giving the job to Reichblum. "No, you can't let talent make those decisions, and that didn't happen here," he says.

Beuth says Reichblum has the right mix of "creative leadership, natural

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**Phil Beuth**  
ABC

instincts [for doing television] and flair," and that won him the job.

Prior to joining *GMA* last year, Reichblum was news director at WPLG(TV) Miami, and before that he was assistant news director and then news director at WJLA-TV Washington.

Reichblum takes over the *GMA* reins at a time when *Today* has narrowed the *GMA* lead to just two-tenths of a household rating point. And in the key adult demographics, upon which advertising on the shows is sold, the two shows are basically tied. "It's a horse race," admits Beuth.

But Reichblum says that *GMA*'s battle in the morning is not just against

*Today* and *CBS This Morning*. "We battle lifestyle more than anything else," he says, referring to the tendency of viewers to jump in and out of whatever show they watch in the morning while preparing for the day. There is also increased competition from local morning news shows, which in some markets, such as New York, do better than one or more of the network morning shows.

Reichblum says that his main mission is to keep the show vital and interesting. *GMA* will do a lot of traveling in upcoming sweeps periods. This month, it will spend a week on California's Pacific Coast Highway and then head to the Caribbean.

Next February, the program will travel to Hong Kong, and in May it's off to Alaska.

Meanwhile, *GMA*'s Reilly will work closely with Reichblum through the end of the year. Then Reilly will take a couple of months off before evaluating offers to produce other programs. One option under consideration is a new daytime TV show for ABC. ■