

automotives and the beers would be there for a show with the kind of dual audience that tunes in to *NYPD Blue*."

"If this medium is going to survive, these types of shows have to be supported," says Jon Mandel, senior vice president, Grey Advertising, who calls the series "the best show on television." Mandel is critical of advertisers who boycotted the series from the start. "That brings up First Amendment questions that advertisers have to be concerned about themselves. You can't talk out of both sides of your mouth. We're in the business of trying to reach the greatest number of people possible."

Whether ABC is getting top dollar for its inventory in the series or not, advertisers predict that the network will pull in premium advertisers and rates for the second season. "Because of the environment, ABC is unable to get premium prices for the show," says Schulman. "But after this year they'll have advertisers clamoring to get in the show. In the first year of *Maude*, every time they did anything off-color there were advertiser pull-outs. In the second season, *Maude* did what *Maude* wanted and there weren't any problems. It wasn't that they toned down the show, people just accepted it, the same way they did *All in the Family*."

Bolstering the network's hopes for stronger advertising clients and rates, say advertisers, is the audience the series attracts. The show's audience is built on strong male and female demographics, with many falling in the urban, upscale and educated categories.

While it's too early to begin estimating *NYPD Blue*'s back-end revenue potential, the show's content and controversial beginnings won't be a detriment, says Greg Meidel, president, Twentieth Television Distribution. "As you can see, the controversy tends to be dying down and the creative recognition is on the rise," he says.

"Absolutely not," he responds when asked if the content of the show will limit Twentieth's options for distribution. "Ratings overcome content problems. The quality has risen, and the content controversy is yesterday's news." As for its potential, Meidel says: "It's one of the few hits, and that's what we look for in syndication. The show wins its time period and the demos are impeccable. It has all the signs of a syndication success." ■



'Blue' safe from indecency action

Not surprisingly, the rough language and partial nudity of *NYPD Blue* have drawn complaints at the FCC of indecency. But they are unlikely to yield sanctions against the ABC affiliates that aired the controversial drama.

Most of the complaints have been summarily dismissed because they lacked the required substantiation—a transcript or tape. Of the 12 complaints (against 10 stations; two stations attracted two complaints) with substantiation, four have been dismissed and six others are likely to be because the show airs after 10 p.m., according to the FCC's Roger Holberg.

The anti-indecency law does not ban indecency but requires stations to "channel" it to times of the day when few children are likely to be in the audience. The times of the so-called safe harbor are the subject of litigation. Until the matter is settled, the FCC has decided not to enforce the statute after 8 p.m. The six stations with complaints pending: WRTV(TV) Indianapolis, WTAE-TV Pittsburgh, WEWS(TV) Cleveland, KUSA-TV Denver, WHBQ-TV Memphis (two complaints) and KATU(TV) Portland, Ore. —HAI

'NYPD Blue': here, there and nowhere

By Joe Flint

After five weeks without *NYPD Blue* because ABC affiliate WFAA-TV refused to carry it, residents of Dallas finally were able to see David Caruso's backside.

Paramount-owned independent UHF KTXA(TV) Dallas—airing the show in pattern for the first time—delivered a 12 rating/18 share, good enough for second place.

KTXA had prepared viewers for the show by running the first five episodes of *NYPD Blue* two weekends ago. The first three episodes gave the station second place on a Saturday night and first place on Sunday with episodes four and five.

According to the station, telephone calls during the weekend ran 60% in favor of airing the show. By Wednesday, the station's vice president, Walt DeHaven, said some callers were asking whether the show had been edited, not believing that what they were seeing was the cause of all the uproar.

Selling time for the weekend *NYPD Blue* marathon was no problem, according to DeHaven. In fact, ABC liked the marathon idea so much that they encouraged other independents that had picked up the show to follow suit before joining the show in pattern last Tuesday.

Although the controversy has faded somewhat since *NYPD Blue* premiered