PRIMETIME MISOGYNY 2007 MEDIA SURVEY

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REPORT OF FINDINGS

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PRIMETIME MISOGYNY 2007 MEDIA SURVEY —REPORT of FINDINGS—

by Mimi Yahn

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SUMMARY

The Primetime Misogyny 2007 Media Survey, conducted during the Spring 2007 television season, tracked levels of bias language and hate speech on primetime television on all six networks (**ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, MY TV** and **the CW**).

The survey, which ran from March 19 to April 27, 2007, taped each network's three-hour evening primetime period, each for a single week (Monday through Friday), for a total of 80 hours of programming.

The purpose of the media survey was:

1) Track levels of hate speech and bias language on primetime network television;

2) To determine what groups were the targets of bias language and hate speech;

3) To determine whether any particular groups were targeted more frequently than others;

4) To compare this survey with the findings of the first Primetime Misogyny survey conducted in the Spring of 2000.

The Primetime Misogyny 2007 Media Survey found:

1) There were a grand total **1,874** language incidents in 2007, as compared to **590** language incidents in 2000. This is an increase of **1,284** incidents, representing a three-fold increase of **218%** from 2000.

2) There were a total of **36** target groups in 2007, as compared to **22** in 2000. This is an increase of **14** target groups, representing a **64**% increase from 2000.

3) As in the 2000 survey, females were the target of the majority of language incidents on all networks in all language categories. Overall, females were the target of **1,111** language incidents in 2007, or **59.3**%, as compared to **416** language incidents in 2000, or **70.5**%. This represents an increase of **695** language incidents, or **167**%. The next five most frequently-targeted groups in 2007 were:

(a) *Males* at **193** language incidents, or **10.3**% of the overall total (compared to **84** incidents in 2000, or **14.2**% of the total);

(b) *Gay males* at **71** language incidents, or **3.8**% of the overall total (compared to **16** incidents in 2000, or **2.7**% of the total);

(c) *Physical attributes* at **68** language incidents, or **3.6**% of the overall total (compared to 14 incidents in 2000, or **2.4**% of the total);

(d) *Age* at **65** language incidents, or **3.5**% of the overall total (compared to **9** incidents in 2000, or **1.5**% of the total);

(e) *Class* at **61** language incidents, or **3.2**% of the overall total (compared to **1** incident in 2000, or **0.2**% of the total).

METHODOLOGY

To differentiate between various forms of bias language and hate speech, each "language incident" was assigned to one of four categories:

<>Category 1 consisted of dismissive, exclusionary or marginalizing language; examples included "mankind," "kiddo," "geek," and "the Christian thing to do." Category 1, which is considered bias language, includes also language that reinforces stereotypes or that might be considered positive; for example, "Southern men are gentlemen."

Category 2 consisted of language that was disrespectful, patronizing or negatively stereotypical; examples included "girl," "hormonal," "frat boy," "drag queen," "Sister Cleeshayah," and "old coot." Category 2, which is considered bias language, includes also language that might be considered positive, but that reinforce biased societal attitudes towards a particular group; for example, "She [an adult woman] is the sweetest little thing" or "I like show tunes—I must be gay!"

<>Category 3 consisted of demeaning, objectifying or insulting language; examples included "chick," "heifer," "fat butt," "dork," "moron," and "trailer trash." Category 3, which is considered hate speech, also included non-obscene language that was sexually objectifying or racially insulting.

Category 4 consisted of derogatory or pejorative language (epithets, slurs, etc.); examples included "bitch," "slut," "douchebag," "bastard," "spaz," "spic," and "coon." Category 4, which is considered hate speech, included obscene language that was sexually objectifying, language that promoted, trivialized or exploited for comedic purposes rape, stalking, sexual molestation or harassment, sex trafficking, violence against any group, and language that accompanied gender or racial minstrel shows.

Language incidents consisted of single words, phrases and sentences. Language incidents were also occasionally "dual target" language incidents: These were words, phrases or sentences that targeted two groups simultaneously. For example, the phrase "son of a bitch" is a dual target language incident when used as an insult directed at a male because of the use of the gender epithet "bitch" which is a slur against females.

In addition to quantifying, by number of incidents and percentages, what groups were targeted ("Target Groups"), the survey tracked the data by individual show and by network.

The Primetime Misogyny 2007 Media Survey used the same methodology as the original study conducted in 2000, and includes a set of comparative analyses between the two surveys. However, it should be noted that two factors could not be reconciled within the framework of a traditional statistical analysis because of the nature of the study itself, which is to track all language incidents, regardless of target group, on all available network channels during the pre-determined survey time period.

1) The first factor was the number of target groups. In 2000, there were 22 target groups; however, in 2007, there were a total of 36 target groups. Only 20 of the 36 target groups in 2007 matched the 2000 target groups. To account for this difference using traditional statistical methods, a separate table was set up to compare changes only in the matching target groups. **Table VII** shows the adjusted figures for 2007 by excluding all groups not targeted in the 2000 survey. This reduced the 2007 grand total number of language incidents by 112, from 1,874 to 1,762.

2) The second factor was the number of networks. In 2000, there were 5 networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and WB); however, in 2007, there were a total of 6 networks (Fox, the CW, MY TV, NBC, ABC and CBS), with only four of the networks in 2007 matching the 2000 networks. The additional network meant an increase in the number of hours of programming.

However, the increase was slight due to the fact that in both years, the local news was part of the primetime schedule on some networks. Because local news is not relevant to the rest of the country, these hours of programming were not included in either survey. In the 2000 survey, there was one network (Fox TV) which included a half-hour of local news during each primetime schedule. In the 2007 survey, there were two networks (Fox TV and the CW) which both included a full hour of local news in their nightly primetime schedule. Therefore, the 2000 survey tracked a total of 75 hours of programming, while the 2007 survey tracked a total of 80 hours, a difference of 5 hours.

This difference in programming hours and number of networks has not been accounted for in separate tables: Setting up an adjusted table to account for the relatively small increase (6.7%) in the number of hours would result in minor to no changes for most of the target groups and would not change any of the relative percentages for any groups. Moreover, providing a separate table to compare the same number of networks would not be useful: Reducing all target group totals by one-sixth would be an unrealistic adjustment, as it arbitrarily reduces all networks despite the fact that each network had widely varying biases with respect to target groups. In addition, the purpose of the survey is to objectively reflect what is being shown currently on network television, and the addition of another network can, in itself, be seen as a valid marker of the increase in the levels of hate speech and bias language on primetime television.

FINDINGS

As noted in the Overview, a grand total of 1,874 language incidents were recorded on all six networks during their regular primetime schedules. A total of 83 television shows were represented in the survey, including sitcoms, animated sitcoms, dramas, news magazine shows, reality shows, game shows, and sports shows. *See Table IX for a complete program listing*.

The Primetime Misogyny 2007 Media Survey found that the overwhelming target of all bias language and hate speech in all categories and on all networks were females, with males coming in a distant second: **1,111** incidents targeting females (**59.3**%) versus **193** incidents targeting males (**10.3**%). The remaining 34 targeted groups were:

Gay males (**71** incidents at **3.8**%); *Physical attributes*, primarily related to weight (**68** incidents at **3.6**%); *Age* (**65** incidents at **3.5**%); *Class* (**61** incidents at **3.2**%); *Mental illness* (**40** incidents at **2.1**%); *Social attributes* (**32** incidents at **1.7**%); *African-Americans* (**30** incidents at **1.6**%); *Disabilities* (**30** incidents at **1.6**%); *Political left/liberals* (**24** incidents at **1.3**%); *Hispanics* (**22** incidents at **1.2**%); *Whites* (**16** incidents at **0.8**%); *Asians* (**14** incidents at **0.7**%); *Political right/conservatives* (**14** incidents at **0.7**%); *Lesbians* (**13** incidents at **0.7**%); *Foreigners* (**10** incidents at **0.5**%); *Arab/Middle Eastern* (**9** incidents at **0.5**%); *Jews* (**6** incidents at **0.3**%); *Russians* (**6** incidents at **0.3**%); and *Police* (**5** incidents at **0.3**%). Groups targeted by fewer than 5 language incidents were: Africans, Americans, British, Children, Christians, Eastern Europeans, French, Greeks, Gypsies, Indians/Pakistanis, Irish, Non-Christians, Polish, Scots, and Southerners.

Along with the dramatic increase in language incidents targeting a larger number of groups, the survey found a trend on all programming that promoted disrespect, bullying and insulting language. A prime example is the sitcom format, which traditionally has utilized a wide range of humor genres, including puns, sight gags, slapstick, vaudeville routines, self-deprecating humor, dry wit, situational humor, sexual innuendo, sarcasm, satire, and insults.

However, in the 2007 survey, much of the humor focused on the last category: insults, with most of the rest being primarily sexual innuendo, sarcasm and occasional sexual assault gags. In addition, groups and topics previously considered off-limits are now targeted with insulting, negatively stereotypical and derogatory language incidents for comedic purposes, including disabilities, depression and suicide, and working class people.

LANGUAGE INCIDENT BY CATEGORY

In **Category 1**, females were the target of **125** out of **188** language incidents (**66.5**% of Category 1). The remaining incidents were spread out over 13 other groups: **23** targeted age (**12.2**%), **9** targeted Whites (**4.8**%), **7** targeted social attributes (**3.7**%), **4** targeted class (**2.1**%), **4** targeted physical attributes (**2.1**%), **3** targeted Blacks (**1.6**%), **3** targeted males (**1.6**%), **3** targeted non-Christians (**1.6**%), **2** targeted Arab/Middle Easterners (**1.1**%), **2** targeted Southerners (**1.1**%); and **1** incident each (**0.5**%) targeted foreigners, gay males and Asians.

In **Category 2**, females were the target of **654** out of **1,204** language incidents (**54.3**% of Category 2), with the remaining incidents spread out over 32 other groups: **146** targeted males (**12.1**%), **67** targeted gay males (**5.6**%), **53** incidents targeted class (**4.4**%), **41** targeted physical characteristics (**3.4**%), **40** incidents targeted age (**3.3**%), **33** targeted mental illness (**2.7**%), **23** targeted political left/liberals (**1.9**%), **21** targeted Blacks (**1.7**%), **19** targeted Hispanics (**1.6**%), **17** targeted disabilities (**1.4**%), **13** targeted Asians (**1.1**%), **9** targeted foreigners (**0.7**%), **9** targeted political right/conservatives (**0.7**%), **7** targeted Arab/Middle Easterners (**0.6**%), **7** targeted lesbians (**0.6**%), **6** targeted Russians (**0.5**%), **6** targeted Whites (**0.5**%), **4** targeted Jews (**0.3**%), **4** targeted the police (**0.3**%), **3** targeted Africans (**0.2**%), **3** targeted Americans (**0.2**%), **2** targeted children (**0.2**%), **2** targeted children (**0.2**%), **2** targeted the Irish (**0.2**%); and **1** incident each (**0.1**%) targeted the British, Polish, Scots, social attributes, and Southerners.

In **Category 3**, females were the target of **175** out of **256** language incidents (**68.3**% of Category 3), with the remaining incidents spread out over 17 other groups: **24** targeted social attributes (**9.4**%), **12** targeted males (**4.7**%), **9** targeted disabilities (**3.5**%), **8** targeted physical attributes (**3.1**%), **6** targeted lesbians (**2.3**%), **4** targeted mental illness (**1.6**%), **3** targeted Blacks (**1.2**%), **3** targeted class (**1.2**%), **3** targeted gay males (**1.2**%), **2** targeted Hispanics (**0.8**%), and **1** incident each (**0.4**%) targeted age, children, Greeks, Gypsies, the police, political left/liberals, and Whites.

In **Category 4**, females were the target of **157** out of **226** language incidents (**69.5**% of Category 4), with the remaining incidents spread out over 11 other groups: **32** targeted males (**14.2**%), **15** targeted physical attributes (**6.6**%), **5** targeted political right/conservatives (**2.2**%), **4** targeted disabilities (**1.8**%), **3** targeted Blacks (**1.3**%), **3** targeted mental illness (**1.3**%), **2** targeted Africans (**0.9**%), **2** targeted Jews (**0.9**%); and **1** incident each (**0.4**%) targeted age, class, and Hispanics.

Two items of note concerned language incidents targeting males and physical attributes:

1) **30** of the **32** Category 4 language incidents targeting males were either dual target incidents which also explicitly targeted females or were "female-derived"; i.e., their origin was related to females in a derogatory manner.

◊"Son of a bitch": **10** incidents

◊"Bitch" (directed at males): 3 incidents

◊"Bastard" (an insult derived from the male's mother being unmarried): 14 incidents ◊"Douchebag" (an insult derived from calling the male a douchebag, the instrument a female uses to remove semen from her uterus): 1 incident

◊"Megadouche" (see above): 1 incident

◊"I am a rapist" gag (comedic intent language incident on *Family Guy* which turned rape into a joke): 1 incident

The only male target term not female-derived was 2 incidents of the word "dipwad." (The first part of the word, "dip," is a word meaning a stupid person, while the addition of "wad" probably has its origins in the male's ejaculate during sex.)

2) The language incidents targeting physical attributes were primarily related to weight, especially those whose weight was perceived to be heavy:

◊In Category 1, all 4 language incidents targeted those perceived to be heavy.

◊In Category 2, weight accounted for 70.7% of the 41 language incidents, with 27 (65.8%) targeting those whose weight was perceived to be heavy and 2 (4.9%) targeting those perceived to be thin. Of the remaining 12 incidents, 8 (19.5%) targeted appearance and 4 (9.8%) targeted short height.

♦ In Category 3, of the 8 language incidents targeting physical attributes, 7 (87.5%) targeted those whose weight was perceived to be heavy and 1 (12.5%) targeted appearance.

♦ In Category 4, all 15 language incidents targeted those whose weight was perceived to be heavy.

NETWORK SUMMARIES

Fox TV had a grand total of **259** language incidents targeting **23** groups (compared to 97 incidents targeting 11 groups in 2000), as follows:

In Category 1, there were 19 language incidents, with 10 incidents targeting females, 3 incidents apiece targeting social attributes and age, and 1 incident apiece targeting Asians, Blacks, and foreigners.

<>In Category 2, there were 169 language incidents, with 62 incidents targeting females, 13 incidents targeting males, 12 incidents targeting mental illness, 11 incidents targeting class, 10 incidents targeting Asians, 9 incidents targeting age, 9 incidents targeting gay males, 8 incidents targeting physical attributes, 6 incidents targeting Arab/Middle Easterners, 5 incidents targeting foreigners, 5 incidents targeting Hispanics, 4 incidents targeting Blacks, 2 incidents apiece targeting the French, Jews, lesbians, Russians, and Whites, and 1 incident apiece targeting Americans, the British, Christians, disabilities, and Indian/Pakistani.

Solution <->In Category 3, there were 41 language incidents, with 25 incidents targeting females, 4 incidents targeting disabilities, 4 incidents targeting social attributes, 3 incidents targeting lesbians, 2 incidents targeting males, and 1 incident apiece targeting age, gay males, and physical attributes.

<>In Category 4, there were 30 language incidents, with 16 incidents targeting females, 13 incidents targeting males, and 1 incident targeting mental illness.

The CW had a grand total of 442 language incidents targeting 15 groups (this network did not exist in 2000), as follows:

<>In Category 1, there were 42 language incidents, with 32 incidents targeting females, 4 incidents targeting age, 4 incidents targeting physical attributes, and 1 incident apiece targeting class and Whites.

<>In Category 2, there were 327 language incidents, with 257 incidents targeting females, 27 incidents targeting males, 17 incidents targeting gay males, 5 incidents targeting mental illness, 5 incidents targeting physical attributes, 3 incidents targeting Blacks, 2 incidents apiece targeting Africans, class, Irish, and political left/liberals, and 1 incident apiece targeting age, disabilities, Hispanics, Russians, and Whites.

<>In **Category 3**, there were **61** language incidents, with **53** incidents targeting females, **5** incidents targeting males, **2** incidents targeting Blacks, and **1** incident targeting mental illness.

<>In **Category 4**, there were **12** language incidents, with **8** incidents targeting females, **2** incidents targeting Africans, and **1** incident apiece targeting males and physical attributes.

MY Network TV had a grand total of 307 language incidents targeting 18 groups (this network did not exist in 2000), as follows:

Sin Category 1, there were 38 language incidents, with 26 incidents targeting females, 5 incidents targeting age, 4 incidents targeting Whites, 2 incidents targeting Southerners, and 1 incident targeting class.

Sin Category 2, there were 161 language incidents, with 73 incidents targeting females, 40 incidents targeting males, 14 incidents targeting age, 7 incidents targeting physical attributes, 6 incidents targeting gay males, 4 incidents targeting class, 3 incidents targeting Hispanics, 3 incidents targeting mental illness, 2 incidents apiece targeting Blacks, foreigners, and Whites, and 1 incident apiece targeting Africans, Americans, Christians, disabilities, and social attributes.

Sin Category 3, there were 48 language incidents, with 26 incidents targeting females, 18 incidents targeting social attributes, 1 incident apiece targeting disabilities, Gypsies, males, and physical attributes.

<>In Category 4, there were 60 language incidents, with 53 incidents targeting females, 4 incidents targeting males, and 1 incident apiece targeting physical attributes, disabilities, and mental illness.

NBC had a grand total of 354 language incidents targeting 27 groups (compared to 112 language incidents targeting 12 groups in 2000), as follows:

Sin Category 1, there were 30 language incidents, with 14 incidents targeting females, 4 incidents targeting Whites, 3 incidents targeting non-Christians, 2 incidents apiece targeting age, Arabs/Middle Easterners, class, and social attributes, and 1 incident targeting Blacks.

<>In Category 2, there were 202 language incidents, with 71 incidents targeting females, 21 incidents targeting political left/liberals, 19 incidents targeting males, 13 incidents targeting disabilities, 12 incidents targeting mental illness, 11 incidents targeting physical attributes, 10 incidents targeting Blacks, 9 incidents targeting class, 9 incidents targeting political right/conservatives, 6 incidents targeting age, 4 incidents targeting the police, 3 incidents targeting Eastern Europeaners, 2 incidents apiece targeting Asians, Hispanics, and Jews, and 1 incident apiece targeting Arab/Middle Easterners, Christians, foreigners, gay males, Indian/Pakistanis, lesbians, Polish, and Russians.

Solution <> In Category 3, there were 47 language incidents, with 24 incidents targeting females, 5 incidents targeting physical attributes, 3 incidents targeting class, 3 incidents targeting mental illness, 2 incidents apiece targeting disabilities and lesbians, and 1 incident apiece targeting Blacks, gay males, Greeks, males, the police, political left/liberals, social attributes, and Whites.

<>In Category 4, there were 75 language incidents, with 43 incidents targeting females, 12 incidents targeting physical attributes, 5 incidents targeting political right/conservatives, 3 incidents targeting Blacks, 3 incidents targeting disabilities, 3 incidents targeting males, 2 incidents targeting Jews, and 1 incident apiece targeting age, class, Hispanics, and mental illness.

ABC had a grand total of 257 language incidents targeting 14 groups (compared to 103 language incidents targeting 5 groups in 2000), as follows:

<>In **Category 1**, there were **36** language incidents, with **30** incidents targeting females, and **2** incidents apiece targeting age, males, and social attributes.

Southerners.
<>In Category 2, there were 197 language incidents, with 102 incidents targeting females, 26 incidents targeting class, 24 incidents targeting males, 19 incidents targeting gay males, 8 incidents targeting Hispanics, 7 incidents targeting physical attributes, 5 incidents targeting age, and 1 incident apiece targeting Asians, foreigners, the French, lesbians, Scots, and Southerners.

Sin Category 3, there were 15 language incidents, with 10 incidents targeting females, 2 incidents targeting Hispanics, and 1 incident apiece targeting gay males, males, and physical attributes.

<>In Category 4, there were 9 language incidents, with all 9 incidents targeting females.

CBS had a grand total of **255** language incidents targeting **14** groups (compared to **96** language incidents targeting **10** groups in 2000), as follows:

<>In **Category 1**, there were **23** language incidents, with **13** incidents targeting females, **7** incidents targeting age, and **1** incident apiece targeting Blacks, gay males, and males.

<>In Category 2, there were 148 language incidents, with 89 incidents targeting females, 23 incidents targeting males, 15 incidents targeting gay males, 5 incidents targeting age, 3 incidents targeting lesbians, 3 incidents targeting physical attributes, 2 incidents apiece targeting Blacks, children, and Russians, and 1 incident apiece targeting class, disabilities, mental illness, and Whites.

Sin Category 3, there were 44 language incidents, with 37 incidents targeting females, 2 incidents apiece targeting disabilities and males, and 1 incident apiece targeting children, lesbians, and social attributes.

<>In **Category 4**, there were **40** language incidents, with **28** incidents targeting females, **11** incidents targeting males, and **1** incident targeting physical attributes.

END NOTES

In addition to the increase from 2000 to 2007 in language incidents associated with bullying, disrespect and insult, there was an astonishing hyper-sexualizing of females on all networks which went so far as to enter the realm of pornography. This pornification of females included entire programs devoted to teaching young women how to dress, dance and behave in highly pornographic manners (e.g., *The Search for the Next Pussycat Doll* and *America's Next Top Model*); programs which taught females how to be submissive or appropriate mates for men (e.g., *Wife Swap* and *The Bachelor*); and programs which displayed females in various stages of partial dress, including bikinis, g-strings, and revealing lingerie, often dancing or posing in highly pornographic ways (e.g., *Identity* and *Dancing With the Stars*).

This objectifying pornification can also be heard in the contemptuous language used against females: In addition to the 343% increase in the use of the gender epithet "bitch" (23 incidents in 2000 versus 102 incidents in 2007) on primetime network television, crude language that defines females as sexual property of males has also become more popular. The continual invention of "hip" misogynist phrases like "who's your daddy?" and "taking the trip to Whipville" promote a popularization of turning women and girls into obedient sex toys for men, a cultural ethos which teaches boys and men to have contempt for females and teaches girls and women to aspire to sexual slavery in order to be socially accepted. In one particular instance, a comedic intent language incident on *Two and a Half Men* has become popular enough to be quoted on several websites not related to the show's network, CBS: "He bought us prostitutes and gelato!"

Although not part of this survey, there appeared to also be a marked increase, not just in the levels of violence directed at females, but in the extraordinary brutality of the misogynist violence. Females are no longer just raped and killed; the brutality and sadism played out in the storylines is stunning.

In one show (Fox's *Bones*), a female victim was beaten, strangled, poisoned, sliced open, every bone in her body removed, then sewn back up and dumped in a river. In another show (CBS's *CSI: NY*), several women were abducted by a serial murderer, beaten and raped for weeks at a time, then had their eyelids sliced off while they were still alive so that the last thing they would see was the killer as he raped and killed her. And these were not just descriptions, they were accompanied by repeated, graphic close-ups of the dead, mutilated bodies. Nearly every crime drama featured highly graphic violence against girls and women.

This intensified climate of normalizing violence against females—a climate of contempt and dehumanization that makes even the most horrific crimes against females not only acceptable and feasible, but a male prerogative—is reflected in the language incidents on all networks. In the sitcoms, crimes against females—including sexual harassment, molestation and even rape—is turned into a comedy routine, while on the drama programs, rape is characterized as "seduction," "just boys" having fun, a man's right, or the normal, expected routine for a sex worker.

In an article written in 2000 about the first media survey, I reported:

"The misogynist humor that has always been standard fare for male comedians and writers has simply been updated. Instead of 'take my wife, please' jokes, terms like 'crack whore' and bitch-slap' are routinely used for comic relief. And instead of the old joke about the secretary being chased around the desk by the boss to avoid being raped, we now have jokes about stalking women and violating restraining orders."

Sadly, on primetime television in the year 2007, we now have all of that and more. The predominantly young white male television writers have created their pornographic men-ontop ideal of America, with images and phrases that are straight out of the sleaziest Las Vegas adults-only nightclubs. All the misogynist icons of the 1950s and 1960s have been revived and glorified: the slavegirl of *I Love Jeannie*, the James Bond harems, the Playboy bunny, and the mother-hating, womanizing bachelor hero, along with words like "doll" and "broad."

While one woman is being chased around a pool table and her ass grabbed by her girlfriend's father (the CW's *Girlfriends*), the male game show host on another show is reaching his hand under a female contestant's blouse and grabbing her breasts (Fox's *Family Guy*). And that's just the comedy.

What is most astonishing of all is that all of this is what America watches during the "family" primetime hours on network television, what the FCC has deemed suitable for children and what is considered tame compared to cable and satellite television.

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Mimi Yahn August 2007©