

FAMILY FARE

PBS special aims to keep kids off drugs

By Chris Carpenter

Other than the overworked analogy to a fried egg, do children have a healthy understanding of what dangerous drugs can do to a helpless brain cell?

A new 3-2-1 *Contact Extra* titled "Brainstorm: The Truth About Your Brain on Drugs" plays better than a speech from mom or dad and is much more fun to watch. Premiering Monday, Dec. 14, in prime time on most PBS affiliates, "Brainstorm" gets directly to the gray matter at hand by skillfully weaving sight, sound and science into a package children will understand and enjoy.

Stephanie Yu and Z Wright do a fine, understated job as hosts of the special by avoiding the somber melodrama that generally accompanies such serious matter. Armed with plenty of intriguing experts and gigantic, flashing models of neurons, endorphins and the like, Yu and Wright let the facts speak for themselves. The only real editorial comes in short interviews with recovering children, who seem too humbled by their experiences to do more than simply relate the tragedy of addiction.

Powerful footage of brain surgery in progress and an eye-opening chemical breakdown of street heroin also effectively convey the program's message. Children have always been told that drugs are poison, but on "Brainstorm," they're told exactly why.

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P-5135 (90)

LET'S TALK

Damone, not Dean, got girl;

By Taylor Michaels

Q: Please settle a dispute between my sister and me. She says singer Vic Damone's first wife was singer and actress Anna Maria Alberghetti. I say he was married to Pier Angeli, they had one son and she committed suicide at the age of 39. I would appreciate it if you would let me know who's right. —Mary A. Campisi, Casa Grande, Ariz.

A: Vic Damone was born Vito Farinola on June 12, 1928, in Brooklyn, N.Y. He broke into show business on Arthur Godfrey's *Talent Scouts* show, which aired in the 1940s, tying for first place on one night's competition. His good looks and singing voice landed him the romantic

lead in a number of subsequent films and attracted the attention of Pier Angeli (Anna Maria Pierangeli), an aspiring Italian actress who had also dated James Dean. Damone and Angeli were married in 1954 with a jealous Dean petulantly revving his motorcycle outside the church. The marriage was short-lived, and after their divorce just four years later, Angeli moved back to Europe. She died of an overdose of barbiturates in 1971.

Perhaps your sister remembered Angeli's given name, Anna Maria, and confused her with Alberghetti. Take it easy on her — she is your sister.

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