

Daniel Cappello did not watch last night's premiere of MTV's new reality series "Jersey Shore." He watched a few clips this morning to get a feel for the show. He didn't like what he saw. "There seemed to be physical violence, a very brash attitude toward sexuality — certainly a lot of focus on vanity," Cappello said. "It portrays the Jersey Shore as a culturally vapid place." Capello is the executive director of the Jersey Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau. He's worried the image of New Jersey portrayed on the show will make visitors stay away. Considering the content — the tagline is "Get ready for a whole new crazy" — this isn't an unfounded concern.

The show follows eight deeply tanned Italian-Americans who share a house for the summer in Seaside Heights. Their lives appear to revolve around casual sex, getting into fights and hair gel. One girl named JWOWW describes herself this way: "I am like a praying mantis. Once I have sex with a guy I will rip their heads off." The most compelling aspect of the show is that it seemingly contains no reality TV contrivance; the characters behave this way naturally.

"I don't want someone from Bucks County saying I'm not going to the Jersey Shore when they see these, frankly, shocking images of people who are visiting there," said Cappello, who issued a statement today criticizing the series. He was reminded that MTV already fished these waters for a previous documentary, "True Life: Jersey Shore," and still crowds flock to the state's beach towns every summer. Cappello said the earlier show was less visible. "It wasn't as branded," he said. "The name of this show is 'Jersey Shore.' MTV is documenting one small section of people, in one town, with every intention of making it as sensational as they can."

An MTV spokesperson said, "We understand that this show is not intended for every audience and depicts just one aspect of youth culture. Our intention was never to stereotype, discriminate, or offend."

It was pointed out to Capello that the show feels more like *cinéma vérité* than the semi-scripted, edited reality of "The Hills" or "The Real World." "The point I'm making is to say what you're seeing is one piece of the pie," Capello said. "We have some of the most beautiful beaches on the East Coast. We have culture, starting from when Winslow Homer painted Long Branch."

Capello, who is Italian, was asked if he will watch the series, if only out of curiosity. "I suppose I have a moral duty now," he said. "But it's just not my thing. If I'm going to rot my brain, I'll watch an episode of 'Project Runway.'"

Feel free to leave your thoughts about "Jersey Shore" in the comments section.



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