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# Brittany and Baby; Immigration Wars; Courthouse Weapons

by BILL RITTER

We have huge issues facing us as a society, as a planet.

Oh, c'mon Ritter, now tell us something we don't know.

I suspect that's what you're thinking. I bring it up because I'm looking at the front page of one of New York 's tabloids, and there's a picture of Britney Spears, driving a small convertible, with her baby in the back, head drooped forward and to the side, and apparently strapped into a car seat that is facing the wrong way.

An exclusive picture, to be sure. But does it belong on the front page? I mean with all the huge issues we face?

What I think when I see a picture like this on the front page is: Oh oh. Slow news day. And, with summer -- typically a slow news time -- just a few weeks away, it's not an irrelevant thought. Especially as we plan tonight's 11 p.m. newscast.

We're downtown where there's yet another immigration protest. Both sides are now lining up after Pres. Bush's speech last night,

calling for 6,000 National Guard troops to help stem the flow of illegal immigrants from Mexico .

And oh how the stats and political spins are flying. I'm holding a report by a conservative group that predicts the President's guest worker program will bring in 100 million new legal immigrants over the next 20 years. That's a third of the current U.S. population.

I'm also looking at a liberal assessment of the plan, and it estimates that deporting the undocumented population will cost up to \$230 billion over five years. Lost in the vitriol are the real questions: How do you create jobs for people who come here? How do we pay for schools and health care for the children of guest workers? How many new immigrants can we really afford to allow in every year? And, to quote the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, can the environment in the desert along the U.S.-Mexico border survive thousands of additional troops and border patrol agents trampling around the fragile ecosystem?

I have no answers to these questions. I get paid to ask the questions.

Sometimes viewers provide some answers. Our Eyewitness News poll tonight shows that 54% of the people in our area think that posting National Guard troops on the border is a good idea; 40% think it's a bad idea.

And since it's Pres. Bush's idea, we also have the results of the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, which shows the President's job approval rating slumping to 33%, tying the all-time low for Presidential approval in 25 years of ABC poll taking. Mr. Bush's disapproval rating was 65%, a new high.

The war in Iraq is the main reason for the poor poll ratings. In fact, his handling of the war is at a new low, with 62% saying it was not worth fighting; that's a new high. And 59% now say the war was "a mistake." That's about the same number of people who felt that way about the Vietnam war in the early 1970s.

Lucy Yang is following the immigration issue for us tonight at 11.

Also at 11, our investigative reporter Jim Hoffer has a rather disturbing story about the kinds of weapons that have been seized recently at one local courthouse.

Talk about your weapons of individual destruction.

And finally, if I can return to that Britney Spears picture for a moment -- maybe I should reassess my position about it. I mean, as seemy as it is, at least the papers in our country have the right to publish the picture. Today in Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah has told newspaper editors to stop publishing pictures of women because they can "make young men go astray."

The king, in a meeting with editors, and aware of newspapers publishing pictures of women in recent months, told them that these pictures are inappropriate. This -- in a country where women do not have the right to vote or drive.

"The youth," said the King, "are driven by emotion ... and sometimes they can be led astray. So, please, try to cut down on this." And when a King says "cut down" -- that means "cut it out."

Charming.

We'll also have any breaking news of the night, plus Sam Champion's AccuWeather forecast, and Scott Clark with the night's sports. I hope you can join Liz Cho and me, tonight at 11, right after the season finale of Boston Legal.