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ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

Madonna performs a medley of 'Shanti' and 'Ray of Light' at the MTV Video Music Awards on Thursday. Behind her are the Patnaik sisters of Encinitas: Laboni, 19, Shibani, 16, and Shalini, 15.

Madonna, Smith top Video Music Awards

UNIVERSAL CITY (AP) — Will Smith shared family secrets, Madonna nearly bared herself and there should have been a trophy for bleeps at Thursday's MTV Video Music Awards.

Smith, winner of the best male video for "Just the Two of Us" and best rap video for "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It," said it takes three to make his family life work: him, his wife, and his ex.

"It's really a song about the other side of divorce," the rapper said of "Just the Two of Us" as he held his young son in his arms. "So I really want to thank my wife and, actually, I want to thank my ex-wife for both of them being mature enough to make the situation turn out on the positive, happy side."

And that was about as thoughtful as it got in the slow-moving ceremony where even the show's trademark raunchiness seemed canned.

Madonna, who sang "Ray of Light" in a virtually transparent T-shirt, emerged as a big winner with four trophies for the "Ray" video and one for her "Frozen" video.

Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey poked fun at rumors the pop divas have a rivalry going, taking the stage in matching brown gowns. "Nice dress," Carey said. "Yeah, you look pretty good, too," Houston said with mock reluctance.

Madonna, the Beastie Boys and Natalie Imbruglia were among those earning censor's bleeps for racy language during speeches or performances.

An apparently offensive patch on a doll used in a Chris Rock comedy routine was made unreadable, but MTV couldn't do anything about the obscene gesture Green Day member Billie Joe Armstrong jokingly made to a friend in the Universal Amphitheatre.

VMA WINNERS

- VIDEO OF THE YEAR: Madonna, "Ray of Light."
- MALE VIDEO: Will Smith, "Just the Two of Us."
- FEMALE VIDEO: Madonna, "Ray of Light."
- GROUP VIDEO: Backstreet Boys, "Everybody (Backstreet's Back)."
- RAP VIDEO: Will Smith, "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It."
- ALTERNATIVE: Green Day, "Time of Your Life (Good Riddance)."
- ROCK VIDEO: Aerosmith, "Pink."
- NEW ARTIST: Natalie Imbruglia, "Tom."
- VIEWERS' CHOICE: Puff Daddy, "It's All About the Benjamins (Rock Remix)."
- BREAKTHROUGH VIDEO: Prodigy, "Smack My Bitch Up."
- R&B: Wyclef Jean featuring Refugee Allstars, "Gone Till November."
- DANCE VIDEO: Prodigy, "Smack My Bitch Up."

LAW & DISORDER

COMPILED BY BRIAN WALLACE

Wallace in hospital

2 immigrants' bodies found

EL CENTRO (AP) — Two bodies and two illegal immigrants suffering dehydration were found at different sites in

the Colorado River near the Lowe Cibola Bridge at La Paz County, Ariz.