

Media not guilty of mind control

Societal woes should be blamed on citizens, not journalism

The media is one of the most widely scrutinized organizations in the country.

AMY UPTMOR
COLUMNIST



If there is one organization that is in the hot seat almost as much as the government, it is the media.

They say the media does nothing but publicize lies. It exploits suffering and pain, as in the case of the Oklahoma City tragedy.

They tell me that if I become a part of the "liberal media," I'll be in the business of controlling minds, because the media tells us how to think.

How sad. The last time I checked, people had minds of their own, and took pride in forming their own opinions.

The power of the media is undeniable. News would be based on word-of-mouth without newspapers and television. Disasters such as the Oklahoma bombing would be reduced to mere rumors without a viable, responsible media, which is what we have.

The media has made a more educated public. Newspapers, radio talk shows and the nightly news make people think. It makes us concerned about what is happening in the world. It makes us react.

They say the "liberal media" helped Clinton win the presidency — because of bias, that is.

I don't think night reports on unemployment, violence and lack of education represented a bias towards Bill Clinton. It was all true, and it made Americans realize a change was needed.

As for those who think that members of the media make a lifetime practice of publishing lies that reflect their own opinions, I would encourage all of you to take JOUR 301. It is called "Mass Communication Law and Society."

The moral of the class is that any reporter who has any desire to stay in the field of journalism will do anything possible to ensure everything they ever print is accurate.

There is a thing called libel — written defamation — that constantly hangs over the media's head. Printing lies is not an option — you can sue for it. And if you are even threatened with libel, your career is basically over. The media is a little bit more ethical than most people think.

That leads to the issue of shows like "A Current Affair." I don't really consider shows like this to be a part of "The Media."

Nor do I consider tabloid newspapers to be legitimate forms of written journalism. Their purposes are to exploit, not to inform.

Do these shows tell lies? Not usually. They just make a practice out of exploiting things that, if nothing else, could be proven to be true by their lawyers.

People say that shows such as these have no place on TV. I agree, but the truth is that there is a huge audience for such shows.

People watch tabloid TV, talk shows and anything else that exploits people and their personal tragedies.

Soap operas just don't do it for people anymore — the general public wants real human suffering, and wants a lot of it.

This brings us full circle to the question: "Why does the media go so far?" People often wonder why there are exposes of medial problems on the nightly news. Or why the media feels it necessary to show bloody children being carried away from the

The media is not your enemy. Society is not under the control of Big Brother. Tom Brokaw is not in the business of controlling what you think, say and do.

bombed Murrah building, in Oklahoma City.

My answer is that the media is mirroring society. It is all supply and demand.

The media shows what it thinks people want to see. And we are a nation that is composed largely of tabloid junkies who are, if nothing else, intrigued by tragedy.

It keeps us watching.

And, if there is a positive aspect to showing such gruesome scenes, it could get some of us to send money or volunteer.

I'm sure that if an overwhelming proportion of society boycotted the media for showing the horrors, like the Oklahoma City bombing, the media would calm down with regards to what they show.

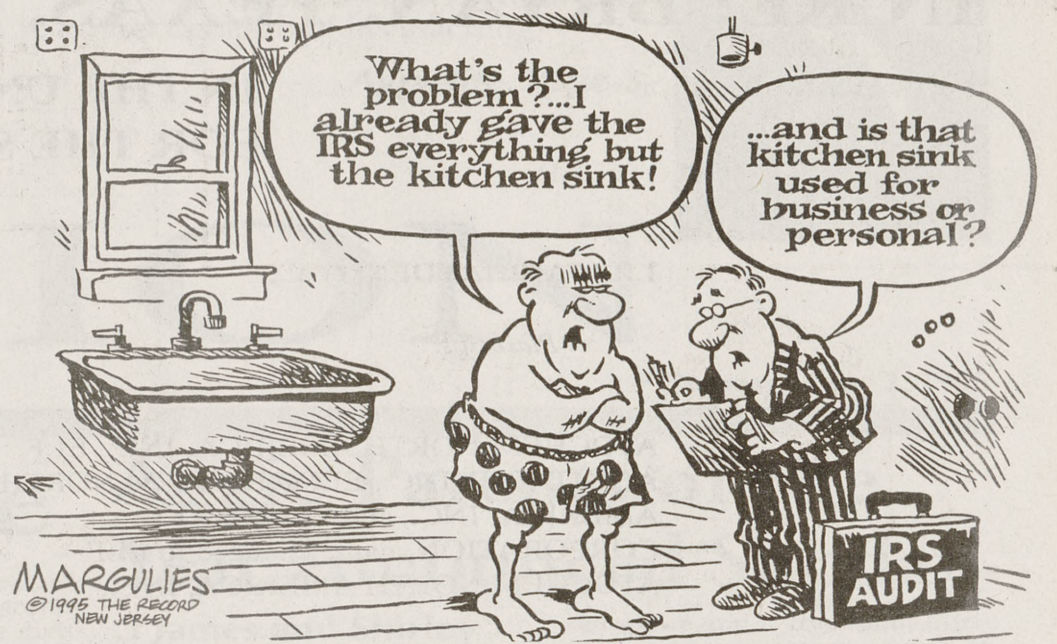
In truth, society controls the media much more than the media controls society.

The media is not your enemy. This is not "1984," and society is not under the control of Big Brother. Tom Brokaw is not in the business of controlling what you think, say and do.

The media is powerful, but so is the human mind. People are more than capable of thinking for themselves.

Unfortunately, they sometimes choose not to. After all, it is much easier to blame the media for everything that is wrong with society, rather than the people who make it up.

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EDITORIAL

Who knows best?

Should doctors have to inform the parents of a minor before an abortion is performed?

Last Wednesday, the Texas Senate Health and Human Services Committee approved legislation that would require doctors to notify parents before performing abortions on minors. If the bill is passed by the full House, it must go before the Senate and then to the desk of Gov. George W. Bush to become law.

This piece of legislation will surely be the subject of much controversy.

Proponents argue that the bill should be passed. For one, it only requires notification of the minors parents, not their consent. Also, the bill includes an "out," which under certain circumstances would allow minors to challenge the notification requirement through the decision of a county court.

Minors also do not have the right to vote, nor should they have the right to make choices about their pregnancies without their parents' knowledge.

Parents are, and should be, responsible for the actions of their children. Parents are responsible for criminal acts that their children might perform, their behavior at public schools and for their finances and debts. This realm of responsibility should definitely include the knowledge of a child's abortion.

Parents have the right to know of such an occurrence so that they may

be prepared to deal with the medical, emotional, psychological or other ramifications of the choice.

Opponents argue that this piece of legislation is a smack in the face of Roe v. Wade, and should not be passed.

For one, the bill provides unnecessary stress to minors who find themselves in such a predicament. Not only are they faced with the choice of whether to abort, but they also must worry about the reaction of their parents.

This watered-down bill gives the parents no decision regarding the abortion; however, it would allow for them to receive information that the pregnant child may not want them to know.

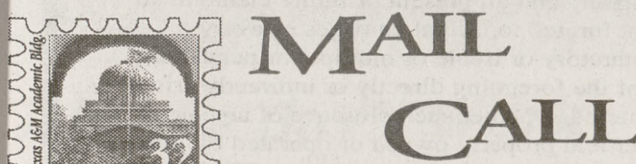
Abortion is an extremely difficult decision for anyone to make — especially a minor. Legislation that would make public such private matters is only detrimental to the relationship between the pregnant minor and her parents.

Whether to have an abortion is a very personal, moral decision that only the mother of the child should make. If anyone should be informed of the decision to abort, it should be the father of the child — not the grandparents.

Searchers looking through the twisted wreckage, seeking some sign of humanity



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Earth Day: does it raise our awareness or cause trouble?

While reading Zach Hall's article in yesterday's paper, I was appalled by his comments. To begin, the Earth does not belong to humans. The Earth existed for billions of years before humans evolved. Humans could not survive without the environment; however, the Earth could exist without humans. Each time a body of water is polluted or acres of rainforests are destroyed humans are hurting future generations.

Hall referred to statistics that show how the Earth has improved over the past hundred years, but he failed to show them. Although extinction is a natural process, since humans have inhabited the Earth, the rate of extinction has increased one-hundred fold.

While it is true that some people have taken advantage of Earth Day to voice political and social beliefs, the purpose of the event is still evident. Earth Day is still necessary to increase the public's awareness about the significance of ecological conservation.

Julie K. Young
Class of '96

I'm writing in response to Zach Hall's column, "Activists overreact on Earth Day." I feel that this column represented an inaccurate depiction of the environmental movement.

As a person who strives to be environmentally conscious and thus recycles and bikes to school each day, I resent Hall's assertion that this makes me, and those like me "Liberal environmental wackos." My guess is that conservation and natural appreciation groups, such as Ducks Unlimited and the Audubon Society would take issue with this label as well.

In my opinion, environmentalism should not be a political issue, but rather a human issue. When persons like Hall seek to divide people along political lines, we lose sight of the true issue at hand. Besides, by sheer semantics, conservation groups would be

"conservative," while those opposed to conservation would logically be "liberal." Seemingly, Hall's column is railing against persons with beliefs like his own.

Furthermore, if Hall only saw Earth Day as "liberal, environmental indoctrination," he missed the point.

The point is that we as students can educate ourselves on environmental issues and take simple steps to insure that the earth and its resources are passed on intact to the next generation. Hall, for instance, can do his part by refraining from polluting our environment through columns like his last one.

In closing, my only complaint about the Earth Day concept is that it hasn't been expanded and celebrated the other 364 days of the year.

Let's all do our part to make that a reality.

Brian Bullard
Graduate Student

I would like to thank Zach Hall for his column "Activists Overreact to Earth Day." He has it totally right in his comment, "It is long overdue that we start putting humans before the environment." In America we still have rape, murder, children living in poverty and discrimination.

How many members of these environmental groups visit the elderly in nursing homes regularly? They will tie themselves to a tree to prevent it from being cut down while a 90-year-old lady is longing for someone to talk to. I am not saying conservation and recycling shouldn't be an issue, just not as big of one.

In some parts of America a black man will be discriminated against no matter how many whales are in the ocean. Although it is good there are organizations there to clean our Earth, they need to get their priorities straight.

Shelia Boudreaux
Class of '98

America's Future in good hands with Generation X-ers

Michael Landauer produced a memorable column April 21 on the spirit of Aggie Muster and why Aggies should participate. He wonders about his own generation and whether it can prove worthy.

It can. Do not put down your own generation. You are our future, and the future could not be in better hands.

If you want to know how the older generation

did all that we did, survived the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, ask us.

We're all over. We're your grandparents — yes, even women played major roles in everything — your great uncles and great aunts, even your professors.

If you did ask us, we probably would tell you that we just did it, that we did what we had to do, the same as your generation is surviving and overcoming challenges and accomplishing great deeds.

In truth, your generation has fought and is fighting wars — hot and cold. You fought and died in Desert Storm, and you are fighting and dying in Korea, the Middle East, the Balkans, and Africa, and even in Oklahoma City.

As you pointed out, you are fighting other wars: AIDS, drugs, a yo-yoing economy and apathy.

The old values are still there. They need to be implemented by more people more of the time. Just as it was in earlier times.

Douglas P. Starr
Journalism Professor

Orwellian-style authority not answer to global terrorism

This is in response to Adam Hill's April 24 article on a solution to terrorism.

What an interesting theory, giving "Total Authority without fear or repercussions" to our government. This is the same government who without fear of repercussions sent thousands and thousands of our brave men to die in the jungles of Southeast Asia, without any truthful accountability to the public for which it exists.

Yeah, we really need to create a group or "agency" who is not accountable to anyone or anything. A group who has all power and every unlimited means to do what they feel is in our best interest. Boy, it scares me to even read your article.

Here we are struggling to keep our government from achieving such powers and now you just want to give it to them?

That sounds like a terrorist group to really be feared!

Ge, we wouldn't want these agencies with "total authority without fear of repercussions" to hesitate and think rationally or logically.

I guess that is the problem with too many of

us old-fashioned Americans today.

We like to exercise our freedom to come up with solutions to our own problems without having to rely on our "Big Brother," the government, to do what they know is best for us little people.

Would you hire an exterminator to come into your home, who told you he mercilessly exterminated all living creatures inside your house at any cost?

Kurt Heidmann
Class of '95

Lallapalooza should provide cutting edge music, not Live

I was writing to comment on Rob Clark's article on Lallapalooza. I think before disregarding bands such as the Jesus Lizard and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, that he should acquaint himself with music besides "popular" music shoved down people's throats by Z-Rock.

Clark says Perry Farrell, the creator of Lollapalooza, is trying to give the public "cutting edge" music. Well, he gave Lollapalooza "cutting edge" music and Clark turned it down.

He said popular bands such as Live and Nine Inch Nails should be headliners.

Clark tries to dictate what "cutting edge" music is without opening his ears to music other than commercial rock. The true purpose of Lollapalooza is to accommodate everyone's taste and not just regurgitate what is played on the radio.

So, when I go to Lollapalooza this year, I will enjoy watching and listening to the bands Clark called "curious at best" just as well as the "headliners." I myself, will keep my enthusiasm the whole day, just glad I won't have to listen to another Live song.

Scott Marek
Class of '98

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