

OPINION

TUESDAY
July 30, 1996

Page 5

TV viewer controls content

According to a recent study by U.S. News and World Report, more than two-thirds of Americans believe television "contributes to violence and erodes family values." What does that mean?



DAVID RECHT
COLUMNIST

The customers of the entertainment industry are American viewers, 70 percent of whom feel the product crafted for them is too violent. Why, then, do Americans patronize a product of inadequate quality?

Capitalism is a wonderful thing. If a consumer purchases a good and isn't satisfied with its quality, the next time around he or she is free to shop for a better good, whether it be plastic forks, tissue paper, milk or beer.

This should also be true for television programming, but it requires viewer activism.

While one isn't directly "purchasing" a TV show, the consequences of either watching or not watching a given time slot have a pronounced indirect effect. Media research by contracted entities such as the Nielsen rating system monitor the size and demographics of audiences for programs. This information is in turn used to gauge the financial worth of an advertising slot for the program. Shows that aren't watched have little advertising demand, which leads to the end of their broadcast lives. Advertising makes or breaks a show.

This is where consumer influence comes into play. The simplest way to eliminate violent programming is not to watch it. Lower ratings for the show and less violence for children who live in the home are the results.

However, consumers can take their activism one step further — directly to the advertiser.

Advertisers respond to their potential clients. If consumers express concern to an advertiser about violent programming and state they do not wish to purchase products that support these programs with advertising dollars, they'll listen. Appealing to the advertiser attacks the program.

By contacting advertisers and not



watching violent television, viewers can take a stab at inadequate TV. One problem remains, though: monitoring what the kids watch.

It isn't troubling to think of a room full of adults watching a portrayal of murder, fighting and gore. Adults have already developed pronounced social and moral values, and are unlikely to be swayed by a TV show.

Children are a different story. Their minds are easily molded by what they are exposed to — both on television and in real life. Parents should keep this in mind before giving their children *carte blanche* to watch whatever they please.

A recent UCLA study did extensive research into the topic of violence in the entertainment industry. The report concluded with practical recommendations to parents about children's television habits. In these suggestions, a central theme can be seen: awareness and communication.

First, it is essential that a parent determines exactly what a child watches.

Children should not be left with the TV as a babysitter.

Second, parents and children should talk about what the child watches. A child should be made to feel comfortable asking questions about violent and scary scenes. On the other hand, a parent should not hesitate to question the child about his or her opinions regarding scenes on television.

Because of television, America has become one of the most informed societies on earth. Television brought the Vietnam War into the living rooms of America. Television brought news of a bomb in the Olympic Village early Saturday morning within seconds of its detonation. TV has the potential to be a great instructor in the future as well. But, like all technology, it requires responsibility on the part of the viewer, or the violence seen on TV could carry over to mainstream America.

David Recht is a Class of '97 civil engineering major



MAIL CALL

NBC commentators show bias against others

I am sorry to say Xiangang Zeng is correct in his analysis of the NBC Olympic commentators. They are blatantly biased. When they referred to the Russian women's gymnastic team winning the competition for X number of years in a row, they were quick to add the qualifier, "except when they boycotted in '84." But the other night when I was watching the Men's 400-meter freestyle relay, the commentators said the United States had won the gold for something like 32 years in a row. I suppose the commentators forgot about 1980.

Christopher Kuhn
Class of '97

Atlanta does not warrant bashing by media

I am a native of Atlanta, a Georgia Tech alumnus, and now a graduate student at A&M. I have a few comments about the media's coverage of the Games. I am appalled at the world press' reaction to the Atlanta Games. We don't hear about the actual sporting events or about how much fun the fans are having. All we hear are the negatives from the world press. I thought responsible journalism meant reporting the good with the bad.

The Atlanta Games are in chaos according to most international, as well as U.S. reporters. I have friends in Atlanta who have been to gymnastics events, equestrian events and the Olympic park. All comments have been wonderful. There is congestion on the Atlanta subway system, but this is to be expected with a sudden surge of millions of people. Yes, there are other problems and some of the problems are quite big. But, let us remember three key points. One, Atlanta is putting on the biggest games of the century. Two, Atlanta is the first city to bring the Olympic movement into the 21st century, technology-wise. Three, Atlanta has put less financial burden on the residents of Atlanta than any other recent games.

Bravo to Atlanta and its incredible job. Shame on the world media for perpetuating every mistake, whether major or minuscule. In this age of instantaneous news, news makes a big impact on our daily lives; therefore, we can do without irresponsible reporting. As for the international media, complain only when you host an Olympic Games of this size and complexity. If the Atlanta Games go down in history as a "Chaotic Experience," the majority of the blame is on the head of the media.

Laura Whitaker
Graduate Student

U.S. should not pay for U.N.'s bloated budget

Steven Gyeszly's column that criticizes the United States for not paying its financial obligations to the United Nations misses the point. The United Nations' budget is indeed a small fraction of the United States' budget. However, it is very well documented that the United Nations is an extremely bloated bureaucracy of extremely overpaid functionaries. If Gyeszly would compare, for example, the average number of staff and their rate of pay to groups who provide similar functions in the U.S. government (which is not exactly a lean and mean organization itself), he would understand why the U.S. Congress is rightly applying financial pressure to redress the situation. Does he think for one minute that this bureaucracy would voluntarily vote to reduce its size or rate of pay?

Walter Bradley
Professor of Mechanical Engineering

A&M's financial woes should be eased soon

In reference to the article dated July 24, 1996, titled "Ogden: No More Money for Higher Education," things are not as bleak as the headline suggests.

Because of an additional \$24 million in revenue as a result of General Use Fee increases and approximately level state appropriations during this biennium, Texas A&M should be in good financial shape and have adequate funds to fulfill its mission.

With respect to the upcoming legislative session, there is cause for some optimism. The Texas economy is doing well and state revenues should increase accordingly. Likewise, with

an improving Texas economy, there should be some moderation in social-service funding demands. Finally, there is a good possibility that advocates for higher education will present a more unified front and request that any new state higher education dollars go to formula funding.

As a result of these dynamics, I am hopeful and look forward to having another opportunity to fight for the legitimate needs of Texas A&M University.

Stephen E. Ogden
State Representative, District 14

British discriminate against Irish Catholics

I am writing in response to Jill Nicholl's column in reference to a parade held by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, the largest and most powerful Protestant organization in Northern Ireland. This volatile parade commemorates the 1689 incident when 13 teenage apprentices locked the gates of Londonderry against a besieging Catholic army.

Nicholl says the people of Northern Ireland are "British." If you go to Europe and call anyone that does not live in the actual borders of Great Britain "British," they will probably be insulted. Try calling someone from Scotland or Ireland "British." They will surely correct you and say I am Scottish or Irish. We do not call Puerto Ricans "Americans" just because they are living in a province of the United States. The Puerto Ricans have a rich culture that is totally separate from that of America and should be recognized as such.

Nicholl points out that it is a custom to march in these areas. What she fails to say is these areas are inhabited primarily by Catholics who were driven there by the Protestants who discriminated against them. Catholics are not welcome to buy houses or get jobs in other areas inhabited by Protestants. Now that they have confined them to these areas they insist on throwing it in their face by marching there and showing their "supremacy."

Nicholl also says Northern Ireland is not torn apart by hatred. This statement is not entirely true. The Catholics have been hated and discriminated against ever since the British Protestants have occupied it.

Nicholl also makes reference to the "propaganda of the minority sympathizers of the I.R.A." Well it sounds to me like she is a majority sympathizer of the Ulster Freedom Federation (U.F.F.), the radical paramilitary group of the Protestants in Ireland.

James Flynn
Class of '96

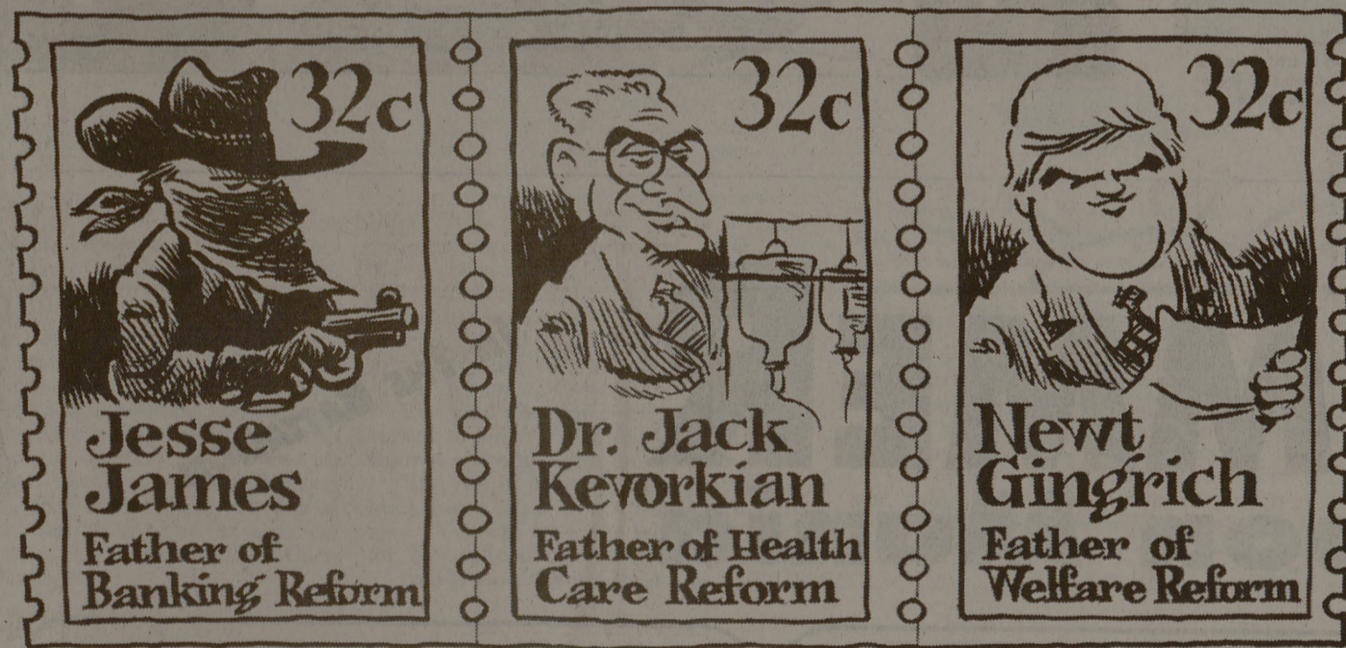
Nike promotes Stewart, not 12th Man, in shirt

A friend and I happened to go into a sports shop in Dallas a few weeks ago and while there we decided to buy the new 12th Man jersey by Nike. He told us that we had better buy one because Nike was only making a limited number of the jerseys. I thought, since when has Nike ever made a limited edition of any product? I came back to College Station after that weekend and noticed that the MSC is also now selling a new version of the Nike A&M jersey. The only problem is that the jersey that they are selling has Brannan Stewart's number 7.

Now I am as excited as the next guy about our heralded new quarterback, and I can only hope that he can lead our football team to a national championship. But since when did we as students become the 7th Man? What about the rest of the team? This school is not about one specific person on the football team, it is about tradition — the tradition of the 12th Man. So I guess that the shopkeeper was right when he told me about the limited edition 12th Man jersey. So all I can say is, get one while they're hot.

W. Morgan
Class of '96

U.S. Commemoratives



MARGULIES
©1996 THE RECORD NEW JERSEY
Jim Marg © 201-276

Stepped-up security will not stop terrorists

In a scene that has become all too familiar in recent weeks, the American flag is at half-staff across the country — and in Centennial Park.

Saturday's early morning bombing at the open park should serve as a wake-up call to each and every one of us. Terrorism is no longer something that only occurs in faraway countries none of us has ever been to.

And although the Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center bombings have become dusty memories for most Americans, maybe the recent attack at Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Games will convince us no one is immune.

While additional national guard troops were dispatched to avoid a repeat attack, Atlantans and visitors from around the world responded in a surprising way — even higher attendance in the days since the bombing.

Instead of bowing to fear and staying home, crowds poured into Olympic venues at near-capacity levels.

This was a much more effective statement than camouflaged GIs with automatic weapons.

And the decision to reopen Centennial Park today and allow it to continue as an open attraction is a significant statement to those inclined to commit terrorist acts. Put simply, the refusal to drape the park in barbed wire is the best defense.

But while the two deaths and scores of injuries were truly tragic, it is a greater tragedy that the evidence is pointing to homegrown terrorism. Americans have long associated terrorism with Middle-Eastern groups. Now we're having to accept the reality that our own citizens are capable of the same.



MICHAEL HEINROTH
COLUMNIST

Yes, the Centennial Olympic Games have been "tarnished." And the city of Atlanta will be forever associated with Munich, whose 1972 Olympic Games witnessed the murder of 11 Israeli athletes.

But there is a greater issue here. This nation is following a dangerous and explosive path.

The domestic tranquility our parents knew is not ours. The United States is no longer immune to the attacks of international and domestic entities.

But will we suffer the fate of Great Britain, Israel, and countless other countries where paramilitary organizations and deranged individuals kill and maim for myopic political gains?

Even optimists are conceding this may be our future, too. The unfortunate reality is that terrorists almost always win no matter what their motives are. They crave chaos and death.

But a false sense of security will be provided by the addition of more metal detectors and baggage searches at the Olympic events — and at entrances to airport concourses and buildings across the nation. More elaborate security will only breed more elaborate attempts by terrorists.

Therefore, reopening Centennial Park under minimal security is purely rational.

Because in the end, if someone is determined to bomb an airplane, building or even the Olympic Games, he will find a way. We learned that the hard way in Oklahoma City and at the World Trade Center.

We also learned that these two atrocities, along with Saturday's bombing at Centennial Park, are not merely isolated events. Rather, they seem to be the onset of an epidemic.

Fortunately, Atlanta realized that more barbed wire and checkpoints are not the cure.

Michael Heinroth is a Class of '96 political science major

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student ID is required. Letters may also be mailed to: The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-1111 Fax: (409) 845-2647 E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu