

Corporate Control

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Who controls free speech in this country? CBS apparently, at least they control who gets to say what to millions of viewers who are going to watch the Super Bowl this year. What viewers are not going to see are two ads from MoveOn.org and PETA, both of these organizations had their bids for commercial spots during the Super Bowl rejected.

MoveOn.org is a Democratic political organization that wanted to air a commercial featuring images of children working in adult jobs with the message being "Who's going to fix the deficit?" This ad is apparently too anti-Bush for CBS.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) wanted to air a commercial in which two scantily clad women try to seduce a meat eating pizza delivery guy who has his own "delivery" problems, the caption reads "Meat causes impotence."

This year CBS accepted ads from the United States Anti-Drug office, from beer companies, and even from erectile dysfunction drug companies. In a response to questions about their rejection of the commercials from MoveOn.org and PETA, CBS cited a policy adopted in the 1950's to not allow commercials that take a stand on controversial public policy issues.

The problem with this is that CBS is allowed to decide what controversial public policies are. Drugs, terrorism, and alcohol have all been the subject of past Super Bowl commercials. Anybody else think these are controversial public policy issues? CBS stated, "If you can find somebody responsible who is for drug abuse... then it would be a creditable rebuttal to our policy." I am for responsible drug abuse, does that count?

Drugs, terrorism and alcohol are controversial issues. To allow them while not including other commercials of similar nature is censorship.

CBS has the power to reach millions of viewers. CBS controls who reaches those viewers. CBS allows some messages to be conveyed and rejects others. So, who controls free speech in this country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Time has Come to Remove your Blindfolds

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Monday, the Twenty-fourth of November—a couple of days before Thanksgiving break—was not just another day at St. Andrews Presbyterian College. It was not just another day for the whole of Laurinburg either. The day-long drug-bust was a wake up call for everyone living in the town, especially students at St. Andrews. Many students believed St. Andrews shielded them from the law. It is no longer possible to carry this ignorant belief. The day was especially atypical for those who opened their doors to see Detective Dean Murphy, Head of Narcotics at the Laurinburg Police Department, and his crew. For them, this was a day that would have a significant impact on the rest of their lives.

The most minor of those charged, a 28-year-old man charged with possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, faces financial and social repercussions. In many cases, one repurcusion comes when those arrested are presented with the chance to plea bargain; they are given the choice between possibly suffering full judicial punishment or receiving reduced penalties in exchange for assisting drug-enforcement officers in future operations. As with many choices, this one can lead to two very different results. If they accept the bargain to ensure a lessened sentencing, then they face possible animosity from those they help to bust, should they ever be discovered. According to Murphy this is an easy choice; one must plea bargain.

Dealing drugs, according to Murphy, is like playing a game of Russian roulette: eventually the bullet will fire. The question, he maintains, is not if, but when that bullet will be fired. He concedes that it is possible to deal for years and never be caught, but is quick to assert that it is also possible for an individual to be caught their first time. "If you're selling drugs", Murphy divulges, "somebody's gonna tell on you." Once caught, Murphy maintains that it is in the best interest of the individ-

ual to work with the police. Those accepting a plea bargain are assured secrecy to protect their safety. Often the choice is between prison-time and a plea bargain. Going to prison Murphy continues, "is where it gets ugly." When faced with the reality of jail-time, many individuals opt for the plea bargain. "It's one of you that's gonna let me in" (to campus) Murphy frankly remarks.

Many students who arrive at St. Andrews do not understand the social and legal dynamics of Laurinburg, the detective suggests. Like any other "controlled environment", Laurinburg has its own cultural expectations, nuances, and standards. Understanding the dynamics of this environment is a key to survival. To solve this lack of understanding, Murphy suggested an interesting solution: "Laurinburg 101." He maintains this class would give students an opportunity to grasp the basic social structure of their surrounding environment. Such a class would give students the opportunity to cease claiming ignorance against the background of their current existence: Laurinburg.

Murphy will be the first to admit that an experimental pot smoker caught for minor-possession should not face jail-time. If the drug war is a war on experimental pot smokers, we are at war with a rather large percentage of our country. We would be at war with lawyers, doctors, homeless persons, professors, pastors, good people, bad people, and all those in-between. The real drug war is not a conflict with the experimental user. It is a war against the suppliers; a war that travels all the way up the chain, to ruthless drug-lords who rule lawless parts of this earth. The point is that dealing drugs brings violence to a "controlled environment". Such violence should not be tolerated.

Rev. Glenn Batten, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Services at St. Andrews, embodies the caring spirit at St. Andrews that Murphy referred to. "It's a good town and we try to be good neighbors", Batten states with consideration. Since the merger of Flora Macdonald

College and Presbyterian Junior College, in 1958, Laurinburg has been the home of St. Andrews Presbyterian College. It is important that we, as a college-community, remember and respect the larger community of Laurinburg and Scotland County.

Students who choose to deal inevitably have suppliers from which they obtain their drugs. This is where the real problem--safety of students and faculty on campus--enters the equation. Batten recalls numerous examples of suppliers entering campus to collect moneys and/or drugs. Many of these situations have turned violent. Even the situations that do not result in violence bring an unwanted element of crime to campus, as well as Laurinburg.

I hope that this unfortunate, but significant, event allows everyone involved to reassess their choices. As Dean Murphy emphatically states, "what you do can affect you forever." If you chose to participate in illegal activities, whether it be smoking pot or speeding down the highway, do yourself the favor of becoming educated to the laws that you may well face. Ignorance is not an excuse for ill-advised action.

Many people never take the time to learn about even the things that most directly affect them. To prove my point, here are a couple of drug-related facts that even most drug-users wouldn't know: LSD can now be tested for within 24 hours of consumption. GHB (a date rape drug) is actually floor stripper. In NC, even residue amounts of cocaine can constitute a felony offense.

What you do and consume is completely your choice. No matter what others tell you or do, you are the only one who can choose your action. Just realize that your choices have an effect on not just yourself, but those surrounding you. An uninformed decision is much like driving a car blindfolded; you're going to crash. The car is packed full of your family and friends as well, and they will crash with you. So do yourself a favor and take off the blindfold.

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