

Advertisers, media mergers compromise objectivity

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avoid the wrath of advertisers.
Other examples he used suggested more serious ethical violations. Simmons quoted Morgan Strong, whose article appeared in last month's *TV Guide*:

"By now, it is well known that some portions of the Persian Gulf War effort were stage-managed in an effort to rally public opinion for military action against Iraq."

Among examples of this was the appearance of Nayirah, a Kuwaiti girl, in front of a Congressional caucus in 1990. Not only did Nayirah turn out to be the daughter of Kuwait's ambassador to the U.S., her rehearsal for the appearance was headed by Craig Fuller, former chief of staff to George Bush during his vice presidency.

"According to that same report, Hill and Knowlton coached, rehearsed, scripted and even clothed appropriate refugees from the war in efforts to produce emotion arousing video tapes to be used by the press corps to evoke support for the war back in the U.S.," Simmons added.

Public relations firms play a new role in today's newsrooms by producing video news releases

(a collection of pictures and information produced to look like a news report) for use by television stations.

Simmons stressed the fact that both print media news releases and video news releases are designed to "sell products, ideas and individuals to the public."

"Think about the temptations involved here," asked Simmons.

"If there is one hard and fast rule in journalism, it is that advertising pays the bills."

**-Dr. Mike Simmons
Associate Professor of English**

Stories are handed to news directors and they don't have to expend time and money producing original work.

Simmons mentioned that another problem with these news releases is the fact that they are given to the producer at no cost.

"Video news releases carry a hidden agenda... they are produced to sell something and the news content is merely the means by which that something is

packaged."

Adding to Simmons' ethical concerns is the increased buying of news organizations by big business.

"The potential for conflict of interest is obvious."

Simmons said that many people are watching the watchdogs. They have discovered that the press is not always able to just say no. He added that "other watchdogs, the reading, listening and viewing public need to become even more vigilant in their own judgement regarding what they consume in the form of daily news."

Ending on the need for the media to watch itself, Simmons suggested, "sensationalism, convenience, subjugation to advertisers and cost effectiveness...none of these are ever substitutes or excuses for irresponsible journalism."

Simmons, nationally known for his outdoor writing, also

writes a weekly outdoor column for *The Erie Times*.

The Council of Fellows Excellence in Teaching Award is presented every year to a faculty member who, in the opinion of faculty and students, best exemplifies the idea of an inspiring and committed teacher.

Film series examines challenges of social, mental changes

by Jeremy Race
The Collegian

"On the Verge of Overcoming", a film series devoted to individuals confronting social and psychological change, is being presented this semester as part of the 1991-92 Human Relations Film Series.

The series, sponsored by the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee, Women Today, the Office of Student Services, and the Office of Student Activities/Union, hopes to accomplish two main goals.

"We want to help students explore different controversial issues, such as interracial relationships and incest, which they may face at certain times in their lives," said Maureen Finn, coordinator of student organizations and program development.

The other goal is to present a positive way to overcome the obstacles or problems students may face should they find themselves in one of these situations.

Three films will be presented during the remainder of the semester.

"Jungle Fever", a modern love story that deals with the harsh realities of interracial relationships, will be featured tonight in 101 Otto Behrend Science Building. The film starts at 7 p.m.

"The Color Of Purple" will be featured on Thursday, April 2.

• "Who Killed Vincent Chin", a movie about the issue of anti-Asian sentiment in our country, will be held as the last film in the series on April 9.

Group discussions are held after each film to encourage open consideration of the topic at hand. All films are held in 101 Otto Behrend Science Building and are free and open to the public.

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