

PERSPECTIVES

Trivializing tragedy

MTV's coverage of the Littleton shootings lacks dignity and respect

Admit it. I like MTV.

It's one of those channels you can leave on while you clean the house or cook or do whatever. MTV is sort of like the brainless portion of the day. It entertains me enough, provides interesting programming and doesn't have much impact on my life.

But the other night, probably around 1 or 2 a.m., I tuned into MTV and was absolutely appalled with MTV News 1515's coverage of the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo.

Opinion



Amy Goldhammer

The images of the students running from the school was set to upbeat, almost fun music. The interview clips were edited as if the kids were at a concert talking about their favorite band members. The captions were composed of trendy writing and implied a glamorization of the incident.

In the past week, the media were overflowing with Columbine High School shooting clips, information and reports. It has all been cut and dry — like it should be, with no sensationalism.

There is nothing glamorous about murder.

MTV News 1515 completely sensationalized the Columbine shooting.

Short cuts and quick edits are commonly associated with MTV programming, advertising and style, but in this case it was not appropriate.

The Columbine High School incident was the first piece of news reported on MTV News 1515, immediately followed by reports of Sean "Puffy" Combs' arrest and other music/entertainment/celebrity/glam news.

MTV News' presentation of the shooting came across more like it was a civic duty to report it rather than a mat-

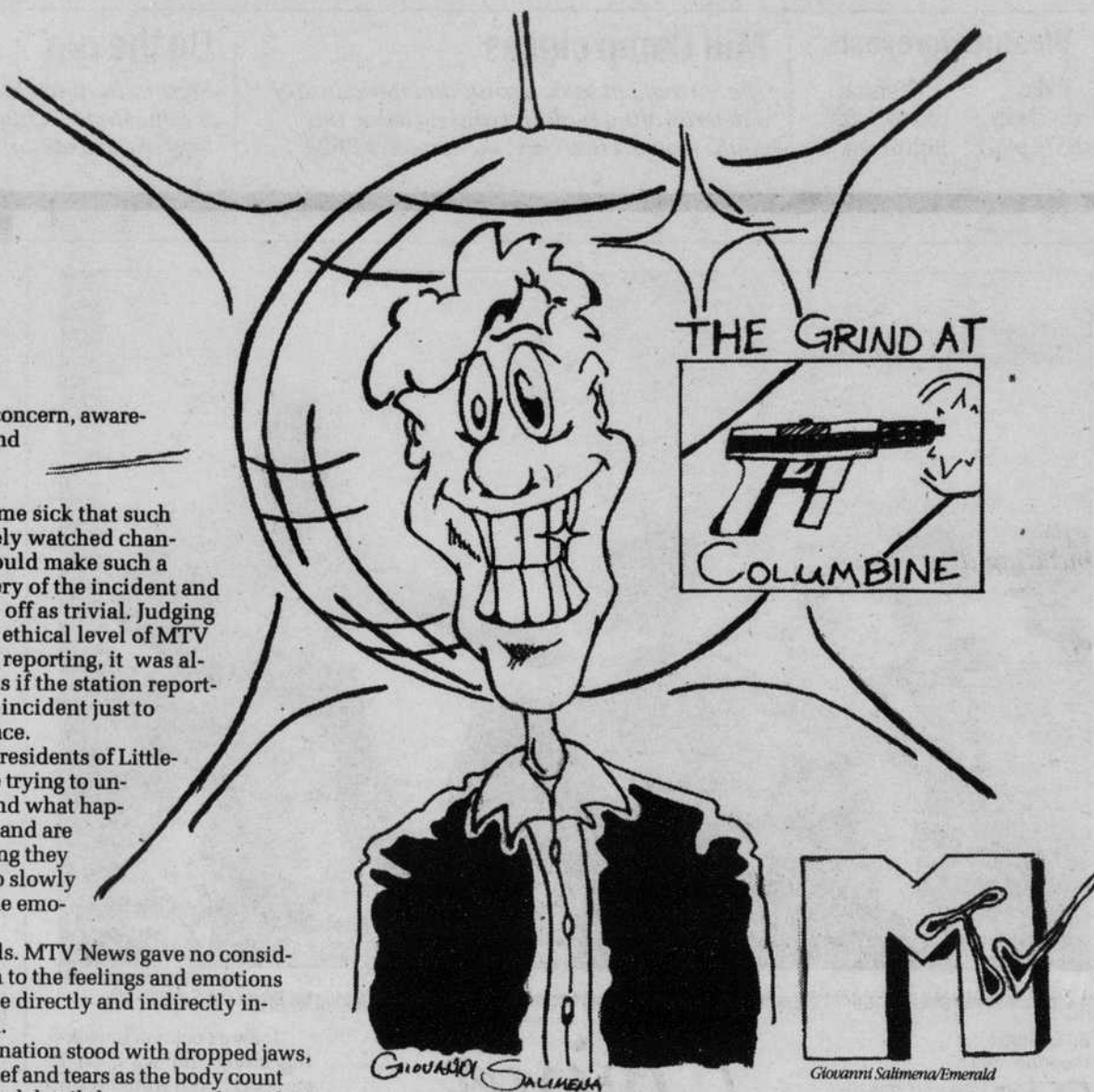
ter of concern, awareness and news.

It made me sick that such a widely watched channel would make such a mockery of the incident and pass it off as trivial. Judging by the ethical level of MTV News' reporting, it was almost as if the station reported the incident just to save face.

The residents of Littleton are trying to understand what happened and are realizing they have to slowly heal the emotional wounds. MTV News gave no consideration to the feelings and emotions of those directly and indirectly involved.

The nation stood with dropped jaws, disbelief and tears as the body count grew and details began to surface. This is a time when people should be supporting Littleton, its residents and, most important, the students. But MTV has decided to turn the situation into a glitzy, good-for-its-station piece of journalism — if you can call it that.

MTV News 1515's reporting of the Columbine High



Giovanni Salimena/Emerald

School shooting was absolutely wretched and the entire network owes an apology not just to Littleton and Columbine High School, but to the entire nation.

Amy Goldhammer is a columnist for the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

Letters to the Editor

Unjustified accusations

I am writing in response to the "Sore Losers" editorial (ODE, April 19). This editorial showed so little class on the part of the Editorial Board.

Rules were broken during the election and actions were taken to punish the violators. ASUO Executive candidates Dan Reid and Matt Swanson were not responsible for filing the grievance against Wylie Chen and Mitra.

In your editorial you implied that Reid and Swanson lacked strength of character and maturity.

I would like to hear your justification for the "sore losers" remark. Maturity includes not slandering the competition in the school newspaper.

If you truly believed in the candidate you were supporting, then you should have highlighted their positive points and not reached so low as to put down the opponent. I see this as a clear-cut case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Lauren Smith
Eugene

Special interest groups

Well, well, well, OSPIRG, you've arrived back on campus to the tune of \$128,000 over the next two years. I suppose once again it'll be dumped into your "corporate hell hole" and we, the students, will never see it put to good use.

Answer me this. How much of the "loot" is going to stay on campus or in the local community? How much money will be wasted on overhead?

Are you going to divulge where "our" money goes? Or are you going to be so caught up with yourselves that you don't feel the need to tell us?

It annoys me to fund any "political" group with student fees. What's next? Funding the OCA or the Democratic Party, or how about the NRA or even the Republican Party, or better yet, how about some neo-Nazi organization? I don't believe in any of those organizations and I sure in hell don't believe in OSPIRG!

I don't think any "campus" organization should take money away from the University. I don't want any organization with a political agenda funded with my fee money. I'm more than willing to fund organizations and support groups that directly help or assist the student body.

I don't want my money going to a bunch of bureaucrats — I'm talking to you OSPIRG! — who will waste the money as quickly as the military wastes money on \$600 toilet seats for multimillion-dollar bombers.

You know, maybe I should get funding from student fees to support "Students Against OSPIRG" so we can play this game on a level field ... who's with me?

Kenny Gates
Computer Information Sciences

Move debate on-line

I attended SETA's sponsored "forum" hoping for discussion of views on University research with animals. SETA's previous uncivil attacks caused the Institute of Neuroscience to decline its invitation. However, I and several others were interested in

giving our personal views on the validity of University research with animals.

Instead of hearing SETA's concerns and questions on this issue, I was faced with a repetitious, two-hour monologue delivered by a SETA-invited speaker, Javier Burgos. Not only does Burgos not have his science facts straight, he also belittled SETA's cause of animal rights.

SETA has publically bemoaned its lack of discussion with scientists at the University. The Forum for Science Education set up a discussion table at the Neuroscience Open House last month specifically for SETA and those with questions about animals in research to express their views. Unfortunately, SETA chose not to visit the table. At its own forum, SETA dodged discussion by hiding behind a non-SETA professional speaker who even inhibited the discussion of his views.

Because establishing new venues for discussion hasn't proven successful, let's use one that works. As a medium for dialog, campus newsgroups are currently in use and widely accessible. Perhaps this is a mode we can try. I'm sure SETA would find a uo.org.animalresearch group to be useful for discussions the whole campus can join in on.

Jocelyn McAuley
Forum for Science Education

Act against neon

"For an organizing campaign to be successful, two groups of people must change:

The people who become involved in the campaign and the people with the power to make decisions to stop poisoning," said Lois Marie Gibbs in "Dying From Dioxin."

Each individual within the campus community holds the power to make the wise decision not to use neon-colored and heavily dyed paper. Please exercise this privilege in order to save the environment and ultimately ourselves from exposure to dioxin.

Students involved in the Neon Kills campaign are trying their hardest to get the word out regarding this harmful paper. But remember, without your help the goal will not be accomplished. No one can act as a bystander. It takes the entire community to work together and educate each other to make a real difference.

Please make a conscious decision in your paper use and realize that there are other effective methods to convey a message beside using neon, goldenrod and heavily dyed paper.

Katie Hayes
Journalism

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.