

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

EDITORIAL

America needs to re-evaluate its reasons for censoring TV

What is it with this country and nudity?

In 2002, ABC News reported that Attorney General John Ashcroft demanded the placement of a large \$8,000 drape to cover the exposed breast of the "Spirit of Justice" statue located in the U.S. Justice Department. The tasteless, nay, perverted display of the art apparently offended his virgin eyes.

Now, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell is expressing his "outrage" at the breast mishap during Sunday's Super Bowl halftime show. For anybody who doesn't use halftime as a good opportunity to take a short nap, Janet Jackson's breast was exposed — complete with some odd-looking, sun-shaped device to cover the nipple — when favorite drama queen Justin Timberlake apparently ripped off a portion of her outfit. (He later blamed a "wardrobe malfunction.")

At least, that's sure what it looked like. Of course, everybody denies that it was planned, now that public fury has since reached a boiling point.

Luckily for us, Internet newshound Matt Drudge had an EXTREME CLOSEUP of "the breast" posted on his Web site, along with his infamous anonymous sources he loves so much who insisted that the event was planned. And further inspection of the nipple in question shows that the "metal 'solar' nipple medallion" that Jackson was wearing does not, in fact, cover much of anything; one could see the whole shebang. We imagine it was coincidence that Timberlake exposed "the breast" — excuse us, *accidentally* exposed "the breast" — seconds after singing the end of his annoying hit, "Rock Your Body," which concludes less-than-subtly, "I'm gonna have you naked by the end of this song!"

But the circumstances of whether broadcast executives planned the exposure pales in comparison to the absurdity of the public and regulatory reaction to "the breast" (of course, nobody seemed to care about the national broadcast of Timberlake's lyrics, which glorify and explore the potential consequences of rocking one's body). The FCC on Monday launched a full-scale investigation into "the breast," causing many to believe that Jackson's nipple may quite possibly be the most controversial thing since Bill Clinton's appreciation for them, or at least those that didn't belong to his wife.

Well, what did the FCC expect? MTV — the channel that markets cleavage like IHOP markets pancakes — produced the half-time show.

Said Powell: "I am outraged at what I saw during the half-time show of the Super Bowl. Like millions of Americans, my family and I gathered around the television for a celebration. Instead, that celebration was tainted by a classless, crass and deplorable stunt. Our nation's children, parents and citizens deserve better."

NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue said "the breast" incident was "offensive, embarrassing to us and our fans, and inappropriate."

"We will change our policies, our people and our processes before the next Super Bowl to ensure that this entertainment is far more effectively dealt with," he said.

For some reason, any remote possibility of seeing some skin broadcast is treated like the end of days, as evidenced by Powell's reaction. It's almost as if he thinks his kids will be forced to undergo years of invasive therapy to correct the dramatic psychosexual damage that a single nipple inflicted upon their fragile psyches. Never mind the rapes and murders beamed into our televisions daily that Powell's kids probably witnessed before the game — those are all OK. It's those damn nipples that should be regulated.

America is indeed a prude nation when it comes to the human form. Our priorities are misaligned when it's perfectly acceptable to depict a woman being raped on television, just as long as you don't show any body parts.



Steve Baggs Illustration

Vote Hockaday Today

Hi. My name's Peter, and I'm officially throwing my hat in the ring for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

Why not? I know, today the Democrats have five primaries and two caucuses, and unless we start delivering Emeralds to South Carolina I'll be nine states behind when I start my campaign. But I figure I've still got a good shot.

I mean, does anybody really know anything about this Sen. John Kerry guy? No. They know he's not Howard Dean, who, with his little post-Iowa "yee-haw!" speech, made Michael Jackson look sane. See, I crack lots of Michael Jackson jokes! Don't you want me as your president?

Oh, believe me, there's tons more reasons to elect Hockaday in '04. If elected, I pledge to make NFL Sunday Ticket available to all cable subscribers, not just dish owners!

If elected, I promise to fund the creation and development of thousands more reality television shows! I'll appoint Britney Spears to the Supreme Court and officially declare the Monday after the Super Bowl a national holiday!

Who wouldn't want to live in that America?

"The case on the docket is abortion, Justice Spears, not Michael Jackson. I know you worship the man, but he allegedly molested

a child, OK?"

"Hit me baby, one more time."

Seriously, though, my only platform is a column in this newspaper, but I feel like I



Peter Hockaday
 Today is Hockaday

have just as much of a voice as any of these Democratic candidates. What I wonder is whether a vote for Kerry is really a vote for Kerry. Or is it a vote against Dean?

As you're reading this, thousands of voters in six states are lodging their votes for Kerry, but do they really know why?

I'll give you a little test. I'll give you some of Kerry's campaign issues and some of Dean's campaign issues, and you have to choose which is which, like a blind cola taste test. Here goes:

Candidate No. 1: Wants to increase taxes to fund homeland security. Voted for the USA

PATRIOT Act but now opposes the American presence in Iraq. Wants to fund education, repeal Bush's tax cuts and cut off terrorism by rebuilding relationships with the Middle East. Supports same-sex marriage.

Candidate No. 2: Wants to increase taxes to fund social security, education and health care. Has always opposed American presence in Iraq. Wants to cut off terrorism by rebuilding relationships with the Middle East. Supports same-sex marriage.

So, basically, who cares which is which? Except for minor differences, Kerry and Dean are the same candidate! In case you really care, Kerry was No. 1 and Dean was No. 2. But when you really examine the issues, Kerry and Dean are basically Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. They're so similar — why can't we just like both?

So that's why you, the American voter, should vote for me. I may not pay attention to those important "issues" like the war in Iraq and "taxes." But I do care about the things that really matter, like football and Michael Jackson.

So remember, kiddies, don't throw your vote away! Vote for Hockaday!

Contact the columnist at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Use law library, but with respect

It seems there has been an influx of non-law visitors to the law library lately, and it is causing quite a stir! Not only because we are completely isolated and love

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seeing new faces, but, unfortunately, because the law library seems to be losing some of its decorum, for lack of a better word. It has been really great to realize that dorm-dwellers no longer have to make the big hike across campus in the dark to study at the Knight Library. Campus women have long considered this a "safety" issue. However, it is

important to emphasize that the law library does have some major differences from the Knight Library.

It appears there are two rules of etiquette imposed on law students that non-law visitors have had difficulty following: cell phone usage in the library and serious use of personal study rooms. First, of course, everyone gets a call now and then, but the call needs to be taken outside of the library. Second, personal and group study rooms are primarily for law student use. In fact, they are labeled, "Law Students Have Priority for These Study Rooms." Therefore, it is very disconcerting to see non-law

visitors sleeping or goofing around in them. Law students have the right to kick non-law visitors out of the rooms, but that is very uncomfortable for both parties. If one of the rooms is available, please use it productively.

I apologize if this letter encourages law students' reputation for being "exclusive;" that was not my intention! I only hope that by sharing the guidelines law students are expected to adhere to, that there will be less tension when non-law visitors choose to enjoy the law facilities.

Lacy Westfall is studying law.