



BRET FÜRTWÄNGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

■ Editorial

Prescription law creates problems, solves none

Last week, the Oregon House voted on a law that requires a prescription for any medicine that contains an ingredient used to make methamphetamine. Decongestants that contain pseudoephedrine are common in both cold medicine (Sudafed, etc.) and meth, the latter of which remains a huge drug problem for Oregon.

As expected, the general public is seriously questioning the logic behind this war on decongestants, and rightly so. Critics of the prescription cold medicine ruling cite a reasonable argument: Inconveniencing innocent buyers will be the only tangible result of such a prescription requirement. Allergy and cold sufferers will now have to spend more time and money to get their medicine. Obtaining a prescription will take a visit (sometimes multiple) to the doctor, a hassle, what with scheduling conflicts and the waiting room.

Without easily accessible and inexpensive cold medicine, allergy and cold sufferers will be the ones who feel the brunt of losing access to decongestants. If families don't have health insurance, a trip to the doctor to get a cold medicine prescription is impossible; the cold will have to clear up on its own. Similarly, those who suffer from severe allergies know that life without medicine can be extremely taxing. Cold and allergy patients in the lowest economic bracket will have a harder time preventing sickness, which could eventually develop into a health problem that they still don't have the money to treat.

The Oregon House is trying to solve one problem, but creating a whole host of others that will soon need their own solutions. As legislators, the House should hopefully be able to come up with a better solution than limiting the public's access to cold medicine. There is no empirical evidence that removing all cold medicine from an over-the-counter operation has an effect on meth rates (no other state has tried a prescription ruling such as that of Oregon). In fact, Oregon already has laws limiting possession of cold medicine and requiring identification for purchase. Obviously, in order to effectively combat the meth problem, these lawmakers must aim much higher, such as at meth users themselves.

Where is this war on drugs that we keep hearing about? More importantly, what is our nation's war on drugs, if America still needs to keep cold medicine off of the shelf?

Innocent people who follow the law will surely be the ones hurt the most: Cold medicine may be illegal to obtain, but meth-heads obviously have no problem with breaking the law. Meth manufacturers will continue to break the law, find cold medicine and make drugs. Innocent people will not break the law, and in return they will have greater trouble curing a cold. Well done.

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■ In my opinion

Turned off by television

In terms of art, television is still careening around its recent turn for the worst. With the help of TiVo, cable, DVDs and the like, fewer people are taking the time to look for good, new shows. It has become an expectation that what's on television will be crap, unless it's Sunday and you're a "Desperate Housewives" fan.

The problem with much of the bad television today is that it refuses to push limits. New sitcoms pop up every day, with the same overweight, foolish man and a gaggle of gorgeous women surrounding his everyday life in the office or the house. Characters (especially female characters) are allowed no depth of any kind. The death of the sitcom had it coming: Modern sitcoms tend to be nothing more than a safe space for stereotypes to make television producers a little more money.

Unfortunately, shows that do push boundaries usually seem to do it in bad taste. Shows such as "Celebrity Fear Factor" are unsettling, not because of an important message or artistic theme, but because naked women are writhing about in a vat of tapeworms.

The other reality shows are not much better. Especially taxing to intelligent viewers is the stream of reality shows that are obviously fake. MTV's "Date my Mom" features three mothers who must persuade a young man to go on a date with their daughter. A simple premise, but watch one episode and you'll understand: There is no way that these people don't have a script. Their speech sounds rehearsed, choppy and anything but real. Watching this "reality" show is akin to watching a sitcom with a boring storyline and heart-wrenchingly bad actors. Who's watching this stuff?



AILEE SLATER
FURTHER FROM PERFECTION

It's like a car wreck: No one is happy about what they're looking at, but people just have to stare at the awfulness of it all.

Another great example of poorly done TV, this time focusing on the poorest people among us (I'm talking intelligence) is "eliminate," and network shows similar to it. On "eliminate," it is usually a man going on one date with four women and eliminating them one by one as the night goes on. "eliminate" women are always clad in too much eye makeup and too little fabric covering their all-important bodies. The personality of each person on the show is hardly distinguishable from the next; the show is entertaining because it is gross, but that grossness is enchanting and unusual in its lack of subtlety.

"eliminate" episodes are a sad reminder of where much of this country remains in terms of gender relations. Women on the show are quick to polarize and fulfill either side of the virgin/whore complex. One girl is always making out with the guy while another is sitting back and discussing her predisposition towards innocence. Most amusing is the fact that, almost always, the women spend the entire date fighting with one another, eager to jump upon the prize of an (intoxicated) "eliminate" man. The happy couple at

the end of "eliminate" always completes the show with glossy eyes and slurred speech; looking toward the camera but not really focusing as they loudly mumble about their perfect fit together.

And yet, we watch the show. I know I do; how can I resist? Reality shows are the ultimate fairy-tale: They each tell the story of a perfect and beautiful maiden, swept off her feet by the rich, handsome prince. Children grew up with fairy-tales based on archaic notions of gender, and modern reality shows develop these themes in exactly the same manner.

Luckily, along with disturbing reality shows, modern television has also produced a great amount of unusual and awesome humor. It is a testament to the intelligence of the average TV-viewer that "Family Guy" is back in business, and "Adult Swim" keeps people up all night with characters such as a Claymation contestant on "Zombie Idol." Comedy, especially animated comedy, is able to both push limits and stay interesting, artistic and intelligent. There is much comfort to be found in the irony of adult animated shows, for they show us how comical it truly is to live in our own rigid world. Gender expectations, such as those relied upon to create reality television, are usually questioned by intelligent animation. Reality shows would rather accept and exploit those rigid expectations.

But, everyone knows that making a really good comedy is often more difficult than making a really good drama. I guess modernity can pat itself on the back for knowing how to be funny rather than how to be real.

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