

This complaint to the FCC is in regards to the sensationalist practices of media news outlets in the wake of the shooting in Connecticut. I would like to first quote Morgan Freeman's response as to the real reason why shootings like this are becoming more common:

"You want to know why. This may sound cynical, but here's why.

It's because of the way the media reports it. Flip on the news and watch how we treat the Batman theater shooter and the Oregon mall shooter like celebrities. Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris are household names, but do you know the name of a single victim of Columbine? Disturbed people who would otherwise just off themselves in their basements see the news and want to top it by doing something worse, and going out in a memorable way. Why a grade school? Why children? Because he'll be remembered as a horrible monster, instead of a sad nobody.

CNN's article says that if the body count "holds up", this will rank as the second deadliest shooting behind Virginia Tech, as if statistics somehow make one shooting worse than another. Then they post a video interview of third-graders for all the details of what they saw and heard while the shootings were happening. Fox News has plastered the killer's face on all their reports for hours. Any articles or news stories yet that focus on the victims and ignore the killer's identity? None that I've seen yet. Because they don't sell. So congratulations, sensationalist media, you've just lit the fire for someone to top this and knock off a day care center or a maternity ward next."

While this may be the land of the freedom of speech, there is also an inherent duty for responsible reporting by the media. As the conduit for public information, I demand regulation on how the media (T.V. News and T.V. documentaries and dramas) reports such mass shootings and other events that tend to drum up the celebrity that often these criminals receive, especially in the eyes of other like-minded individuals. Because of the instant infamy these criminals and maniacs are given, other potentially disturbed, often mentally ill, people are inspired with their own desire for notoriety, even in death, for their psychotic delusions which in many cases lead to the destruction of human life. The media on television needs to be held accountable for the means by which it portrays these incidents. Some of the elements that contribute to such sensationalism include the way a perpetrator is conveyed (in a dramatic narrative oftentimes), repetition of key/signal phrases that cause alarm and fear in the audience, repetition of images that may be emotionally or graphically disturbing, giving the name of the perpetrator, and anything else that may be construed as fuel for other like-minded individuals with intent to harm or who may be so mentally or emotionally unstable that they may find a fanaticism with the event which may lead to copycat crimes and other venting of such destructive behavior. In addition, television media outlets should not spend an inordinate amount of time on such

stories. By removing the sensationalism and the drama of these events which are only drummed up for the purposes of viewership and ratings, there will be less potential for other disturbed, self-destructive individuals to act on their psychoses for the sake of instant infamy.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Scott

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