

Editorial

Media guidelines vital in courts

Here's a case where what's good for the media is good for the public.

The decision came about two weeks ago from Nebraska's high court. Chief Justice Norman Krivosha was ready to allow cameras in the courtroom.

Still photographers and television photographers have sought entry to the courtroom for years. Now all journalists and their customers — their readers and viewers will benefit from the victory. That is, if the journalists follow the rules set by Krivosha.

Krivosha is allowing the cameras in for one year as an experiment. He's set some pretty stringent — but necessary — rules about media operations in his court.

One intent of the rules is to keep peace and quiet during proceedings. Still cameras can't have motor-driven film advances and television cameras must operate in silence.

The men and women who run the cameras must act and dress in accordance with proper courtroom decorum. Cameras can't use light bulbs or other obtrusive artificial lighting. Additionally, only one TV camera, one still camera and one radio hookup will be allowed in the court at one time. The other media members must "feed" off one of those three.

The other major intent of Krivosha's rules on the experiment is to guarantee fair treatment of persons involved in cases. The parties can object to camera coverage (although that doesn't mean the court will automatically bar them), and microphones won't be allowed to pickup conversations between lawyers and their clients.

The most important stipulation Krivosha put on cameras in the courtroom is that the experiment be in the public's interest. That may be the hardest directive to follow and yet is the one over which the media have the most control.

To Krivosha, working in the public interest apparently means covering proceedings other than appeals to major crimes.

"Hopefully, the media will recognize the public's interest and provide an opportunity for people to hear arguments on important legislative issues and tax matters, not just sensational cases," he said in a recent Lincoln Journal interview.

For the experiment to be successful, and thus to allow cameras to continue in the court after next fall, local electronic media should heed that advice. The easy story, the one that makes the best pictures, is often the most sensational. But, it is often the least newsworthy and the least in the public interest.

Scandals: A diversion from reality

When the tittering stops and the titillation passes, there really is something bothersome about all the attention given to the latest sex scandals.

At first it's awfully hard not to giggle at the recent exploits of Randy Prince Andy. Randy, known in proper circles as Prince Andrew, the 22-year-old son of the queen of England, recently has been seen with an actress named Koo. Koo, in proper circles, is 25-year-old Kathleen Stark, who has had small parts in several movies.

Koo's role in two semi-steamy flicks — "The Marquis de Sade's Cruel Passion" and "The Awakening of Emily" — combined with her steamy relationship with the prince has given the British press a field day. The media went to town with exposes on the weekend-long dates of Andy and Koo.

After you read an account for yourself and chuckle a bit, you can't help but think "who cares?"

The same thought emerges after some reflection on the Peter Pulitzer case.

Peter, heir to the Pulitzer publishing fortune, is in the middle of a very messy divorce trial, trying to win custody of his twin sons. During testimony last week, Peter and wife Roxanne admitted to using cocaine and traded accusations of sexual practices ranging from incest to menage-a-trois to lesbianism.

Again, after the initial "oohs" and "aahs" comes a common sense of "who really cares?"

Apparently, readers who buy the papers that print the story and viewers who watch it on TV.

And writers (like this one) who comment on it all.

Thus a theory on why we all love to read and hear about the nasty lives of popular people: They provide us with a diversion from what is real — death in Lebanon, record high unemployment, threat of nuclear war — and give us a chance to laugh at the unreal with a smug smile and an "isn't that terrible?"

Business breakfasts the newest rage

The business breakfast, just a few years ago, was all but unheard of. Business discussions were handled over lunch. You would have a few drinks, took a little, stay away from the office for 2½ hours and then charge it all to your company's expense account.

For many American business men and women, the business lunch was a way of life. No one even pretended that a whole lot of business actually got conducted over lunch. But that didn't matter. The business lunch was one



Bob Greene

of the perks that came with being an executive sort of like a parking spot in the company lot.

Business people had no hint that things would ever change.

But, in the last 12 months, they have. Suddenly, the phrase "let's have breakfast" has become part of the American corporate language. For many of us, those words are enough to strike raw fear in our hearts.

I don't know about you, but for me breakfast has always been a simple routine. The alarm sounds. I fall to the floor. I moan. I crawl to the bathroom. I look in the mirror. I scream.

And I'm ready to face the bright new day.

The business breakfast threatens to change all that. Now, corporate managers are telling us, the early morning hours are supposed to be used to *get things done*. Before a businessman even shows up at the office, he is supposed to have a big jump on finishing off the day's business.

I know how this got started. It's that Reagan bunch again. The president's three top aides — James Baker, Edwin Messe and Michael Deaver — have made a big deal out of their daily 7:30 a.m. business breakfast in the White House. It's supposed to be symbolic; while much of the rest of the world is sleeping, the president's men are deciding policy.

So naturally, the rest of us are becoming swept up in their break-of-day fervor. There is no graceful way to say

no to an invitation to a business breakfast; if you say you can't make it, you are admitting that you are a lazy, slothful soul who can't hear to drag himself out of his warm bed in time to talk turkey.

The talking turkey, by the way, is one of the most horrid parts of the business breakfast. Many of us cannot stand the sound of another voice before, say, 11 a.m. Our mornings at work are spent staring at the floor, waiting for our skin to wake up and wincing every time the telephone rings or someone slams a door.

Now, we are being told, we are expected to walk into a restaurant at 7 a.m. and greet someone who slaps us on the back, bellows "You're looking good this morning!" and proceeds to laugh at a high volume and pound his fist on the table to make his points.

And yet, the business breakfast portends to be the wave of the future. The big bosses love it. For one thing, it is immeasurably cheaper than a business lunch: your boss knows that if you're taking a client out for a 7 a.m. breakfast, your expense account is going to be only a fraction of what it would be at noon.

For another thing, it doesn't take place on company time. Your boss doesn't have to worry about you goofing off over your fourth martini at 3 p.m.; the business breakfast takes place before you're even due at work.

There's no getting around it. If you turn down an invitation to a business breakfast, you are admitting things about yourself that are only bound to hurt you in the end.

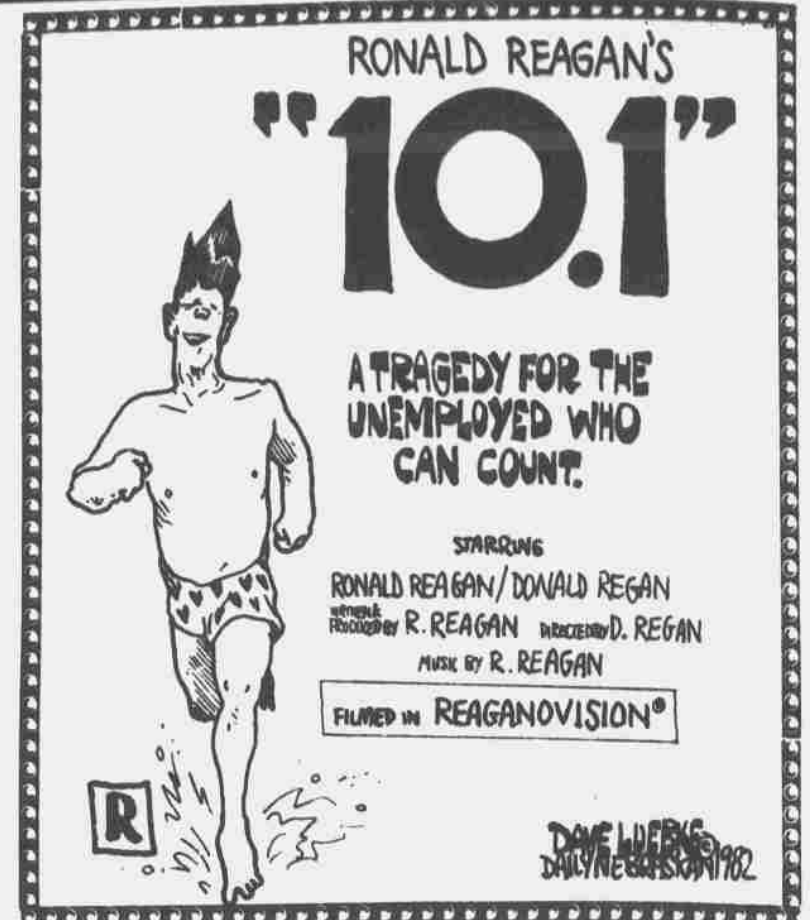
But if you can't say no, you can at least do everything you can to make your host know how you feel about the whole thing.

You don't have to make a big deal out of it. The last business breakfast I was invited to, I showed up promptly at 7 a.m.

My host bellowed a hearty "good morning" to me.

And I crawled across the restaurant to his table, pulled myself up by his trouser legs, gagged, cried, grabbed his glass of water with both hands, gagged again and poured the water down my throat.

"Morning," I said.



Student annoyed by the floor show

"God didn't create the world in six days. He screwed around for five days and pulled an all-nighter." —

Love North men's room

To escape the continual distractions of my apartment, I sometimes resort to studying in the library. Thinking is challenging and stimulating, but it's also hard work.



Matthew Millea

When I go to Love Library I prefer to sit near a drinking fountain so I can break for a bit of water and a few deep breaths as I work.

Since I needed to meet a good friend last Monday, I suggested he look for me in the common study area at the north end of the second floor where the carpeting ends.

"You're kidding," he scoffed. "Not the *floor show!*"

It didn't take long to realize he wasn't exaggerating. The floor show is the social hub of the university on Monday nights. I couldn't help sitting back to marvel at the chaos around me. Directly in front of me sat a pretty young student who'd obviously discovered the wonders of \$12 worth of makeup and bleached blonde hair. (Maybe I should call it two-tone. I'm never certain if they're dying their roots dark or their hair light. Either way, women who still feel it's their purpose in life is to attract men might think about going brunette. There's a glut of the other kind, so they'd be sure to clean up.)

She was successfully attracting a procession of young men with scraggly moustaches who disturbed her reading with inane questions and/or passionate avowals of their undying lust for her.

Further ahead sat what appeared to be a herd of football players. Their builds gave them away even faster than their study habits. Nobody is born with a body designed to do tremendous violence to another in a split second. It takes years of pain and neglect of one's education to develop that level of physical distortion. Their highly tuned competitive drives had them outdoing each other in violations of library norms.

The same was true of virtually everyone in the floor show, all of whom were rapping with their pals as if they were gathered at the Brass Rail. I smiled, imagining them boasting, "Hey, I spent six hours at the library last night."

I've never been exactly thrilled to see a university police officer, but all that changed Monday in the library.

You might have heard there have been a couple muggings in the bowels of the library (the stacks, where the authentic scholars go, if they dare). To restore some sense of law and order, the police evidently have begun patrolling the building.

An officer strolled through twice during the three hours I intermittently observed the floor show. Each time the hubbub stopped.

I'm sure that the officer didn't comprehend the historical significance of his act, but I honestly believe he did more for the quality of education at this institution in those two strolls than he had in year upon year of writing parking tickets.

Keep up the good work, university police. If the "students" get a little too used to having you around, don't be afraid to give them a little tap on their empty heads with that big stick you never get to use.

I'm sure there will be those who might raise a fuss over your keeping the peace in Love. But always remember that education is the only purchase people make in which they do everything they can to get the least for their money. It's for their own good; they'll appreciate you someday. Meanwhile, you might consider reassigning the parking patrol to the library detail. . . .