

**From:** Stu Yahm <ilisten65@yahoo.com>  
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**To:** Stuart Yahm <ilisten65@yahoo.com>

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In a conversation about the seeming lack of depth in current news reporting, a friend wrote me that "no one is watching". I rather believe the real problem is that they are watching but not paying attention to what is being left out. If they were really "listening" to what they were "watching" it would soon become apparent that they weren't getting any real news at all. The network news departments are fearful of offending their sponsors and cable is the land of screaming partisanship. If one takes a small step back and views TV news from a bit of a distance one can see that news is now presented as merely another "show" and an entertainment show at that. Years ago, even pre-Murdoch, the "suits" at the networks came to the conclusion that "news" was not a money maker. (The fact that it was losing audience to cable didn't come until later). Previously it had been a tenet of the news departments that "news" was not supposed to make money. It had a responsibility to "inform". That was the trade off: The government will give you a license to use the public airwaves for free and you will have the responsibility to devote a set amount of your free air time to informing the public -- presenting the news of the day from a non-partisan viewpoint -- and also make time available for so-called Public Service announcements. After a time the radio stations began to complain that delivering the news on the hour and half hour "disrupted the flow of their format" and "our audience isn't interested in the news" so they were allowed to bundle the news at certain hours say 6 P.M. Public service announcements were relegated to 3 and 4 A.M. when no one was listening anyway.

After Reagan deregulated the media completely and especially after the emergence of All News Stations (that's a very long story with enough background to make you very sick), loss of your free license was no longer a threat (unless you said a naughty word to protect the tender ears of "our children" and some frigid housewife in N. Dakota ... well who wouldn't be frigid in N. Dakota ...) the networks slowly began to craft their news shows to consist of less hard news and more soft news: Hollywood divorce stories, man bites dog stories, younger more "attractive" anchors (goodbye Cronkite, bald guys, and especially women over a "certain" age), sensational car chase stories, more feel-good stories, more boobs both physical and intellectual, etc. As a result the news hours were no longer charged with just delivering the news of the world they had to make money and not rely on the the entertainment departments to subsidize their costs. Budgets were cut, staff was cut, foreign correspondents were done away with and news pooling became the new way to gather news from the world at large so everyone had the same news to show, sort of a cookie cutter version of uniform news. The news was now held to be a profit center. They had to pay their own way with --- COMMERCIALS!

Welcome to the world of news presented straight to you after being cleansed and approved by G.E., Walt Disney, Ford, Morgan-Stanley, Standard Oil, Budweiser, Sony, Nike, Wal-Mart, etc.

You may now take a moment to absorb all this conveniently forgotten history and draw your own conclusions.

Stuart Yahm  
Carrollton, Ga. 30116

