

Where is the Truth in the Media?

These days it is hard to find true facts and information. The news sources deliver their opinions or highlight opinions of public figures, instead of just telling the story, plain and simple. This method disables us and prevents us from forming our own thoughts. For instance, Michael Moore and Eminem are two people who have gotten a lot of attention from the media. Michael Moore has become known through his films, books, and interviews. Eminem is a rapper and actor, and is frequently in the news because of his turbulent personal life. This essay will use these two people as examples of why it is hard to find the truth in the media.

Michael Moore is an extremely controversial and versatile man. He has directed, produced, written, and acted in many movies, including *Canadian Bacon*, *Roger & Me*, *Two Mikes Don't Make a Right*, *The Big One*, *Sicko*, *Bowling for Columbine*, and his most recent, (and probably his most controversial), *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Michael Moore has also written many books, some of which are *Adventures in a TV Nation*; *Downsize This! Random Threats from an Unarmed American*; *Dude, Where's My Country?*; and *Stupid White Men...and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation!*

I have seen *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and I thought it was excellent. Moore has a very unique way of expressing his opinion. I greatly admire his ability to make a political film that is serious, interesting, clever, and humorous. And although I am a big fan of his, naturally I know that not everyone else in the world admires him as much as I do. I have found an extensive number of fan sites, as well as slam sites, some actually a bit scary. In addition, Mel Gibson's company, Icon Productions, the film company where Michael Moore originally started to work on *Fahrenheit 9/11*, backed out, only to be replaced by Miramax, a branch of Disney, which later, at the last minute, also backed out, finally to be replaced by Lions Gate Films. Michael Moore's agent, Ari Emanuel, said Michael Eisner had expressed particular concern that it would endanger tax breaks Disney receives for its theme park, hotels, and other ventures in Florida, where President Bush's brother, Jeb, is governor.

The interesting thing about Michael Moore is, although we all know that he definitely isn't happy with the government and the way that America is being run right now, we can't actually put a finger on what it is that he does want. Michael Moore's opinion seems so straightforward, but it is actually vague.

The rapper Eminem (whose real full name is Marshall Bruce Mathers III) is another high profile person who has made it very clear that he isn't in agreement with our country's government. He uses music to communicate his views and feelings. In 1996, Eminem released his debut album *Infinite*. It didn't get much press because it didn't get a lot of exposure. Because he was a white rapper, people didn't know how to respond to him. As his albums got more widely known, Eminem gained many fans as well as people who hated him. He released *The Slim Shady LP* in 1999, *The Marshall Mathers LP* in 2000, *The Eminem Show* in 2002, and his most recent album, *Encore*, was released this year. Some of his targets are our current government's policies and President Bush. For example, he says in his song titled, *Mosh*, "Stomp, push, shove, mush, f*** Bush, until they bring our troops home."

Eminem had a mock political convention that was aired on MTV. In it, Eminem gave a speech, rapped throughout the show, and went out on the streets and asked people questions.

During the commercial breaks a fake political ad that was supporting him, or that was completely against him, would play, and it was always ridiculous. For his speech, Eminem walked up to the podium wearing a suit and glasses, looking very professional from head to ... ankle. He was wearing pink bunny slippers on his feet. One of the questions that Eminem asked someone on the street was, "Do I have your support? Will you vote for me?" The New Yorker answered (or, rather, questioned) "For *President*?" not willing to believe that Eminem was serious. Of course, he wasn't serious. In fact, Eminem's answer to the New Yorker's question was, "I don't know what I'm running for but I would like your support."

On one of the anti-Eminem ads that aired during a commercial break, (the ad, of course, was made by Eminem) the ad stated in a *Twilight Zone* voice, "Marshall Mathers is a flip-flopper. I mean, is it 'Marshall Mathers'? Or, is it 'Slim Shady'? or could it be 'Eminem'? Even he says he doesn't know. Therefore, he is not only two-faced, but three-faced."

The way I see it, there are two connected issues here. The first one is that it seems as though people can't form their own opinions anymore because they rely on media sources for information. The second issue is that it is very hard to form an opinion because the media is constantly projecting their opinions. There are few, if no, news sources that are unbiased. For example, *The New York Times* has a reputation for being impartial. However, several articles published during the campaign season have proved otherwise.

I started this paper intending to write about Michael Moore. But, after extensive research, I realized that he represents something much bigger. Similarly, when I thought about Eminem, I realized that he and Michael Moore have something in common in the way they affect people. They raise questions while expressing their opinions. However, I think their intentions are different in that Michael Moore wants to influence and change people's minds. Eminem wants to express himself and get out his feelings, but he doesn't care if other people agree with him or not.

Michael Moore and Eminem's popularity and influence are examples of what is currently happening in America today. We are turning to them and other media sources for information. These days, the media is a huge industry, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. Therefore, it is a whole network of sources. So many sources make it difficult to get to the root of the issues and what's really going on. To get to the real story is hard enough to begin with.

Then, when someone hears or reads a news item and they pass it on to another person, it can get distorted, or, even completely changed.

Typically, children follow their parent's beliefs. But I want to look beyond my parent's opinions. However, I find that I often give up because I get so overwhelmed by all the information.

In conclusion, just because you hear something from a friend, see something on the news, or read something in a newspaper doesn't mean you have gotten the whole story, or most important, the *true* story.