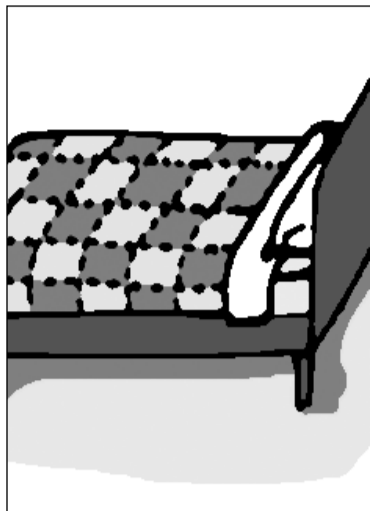


Embedded reporting: Is it ethical?

Bethanne Sevcech
Assistant news editor



Are embedded reporters "in bed" with the government?

They are a public relations professional's dream come true.

They are embedded reporters. Reporting from the depths of war, embedded reporters tell the straight truth, or maybe this is what America would like to believe.

In the past, there have been many debates over journalists being allowed to report in the war. Recently, the United States government has given these journalists what they want, but at a price.

Many journalists defend embedded reporting as a good source for in-depth news. But while reporters are on the front lines, they are not always allowed to give full details on the war.

An embedded journalist's news report must be viewed by military officials before it can reach the gen-

eral public. Some, if not all the important information, is frequently

disposed of before broadcast or publication.

Another issue that is of importance is journalists becoming too personal with the subjects of their reports. Some critics have complained that reporters tend to have a harder time reporting on soldiers when they have to "eat with them the next day."

Unbiased stories are hard to come by when reporters are "in-bedded" with troops. Reporters are valuable because they get a first hand look at war, but are hindered by the fact that they often times become friends with soldiers, a situation that could affect a reporter's objectivity.

In one instance, an embedded reporter shared his cell phone with a soldier whose wife was having a baby soon.

When the reporter lent his phone to the soldier, the subject of his journalism assignment, he was proving

that he would be less objective in his later reports. Most likely, that reporter would not write "bad" things about that soldier.

Is it possible that a decent human being would not be affected by the interactions around him?

No, not likely. Reporters give the information they have to give, but not without respecting the men and women who protect them.

People from all over the world are getting the information they crave, and reporters think they have done their job correctly.

The president also maintains positive publicity when the media is satisfied by the access they receive.

From a practical standpoint, embedded reporting is not only a bad idea, but it has the opposite effect of what is intended.

The point of embedded reporting is to get the full "real" story, not the hype.



Where does YOUR money go?

If there is one subject that motivates college students more than anything it's money, especially when we are talking about numbers as large as \$1.8 million.

The University of West Florida's Student Government Association recently passed a \$1.8 million Activity and Service Fees budget.

The \$1.8 million comes from a fee added to student tuition. Students are assessed a fee at the time of registration depending on the number of credit hours they are taking. I am sure you have seen these fees on your tuition bill. I know that my wallet notices.

The money is used to fund student activities and organizations on campus. SGA is responsible for disbursing the money to the various organizations and events that apply for it annually. As a student myself, I was extremely interested in knowing just exactly what my money was being used for. The great thing about living in America is that all of the information is public record. What does that mean? It means that anyone has the right to view the budget documents on file in the SGA office. I was astonished by what I saw.

Over the past several years, the total funds available from activity fees has increased, yet many student organizations have not felt this increase in their budgets. In fact, some organizations over the past several years have seen their operating budgets cut in half. Nautilus News, UWF's student run broadcast news program, witnessed its budget slashed to pieces. It went from receiving approximately \$9,000 in 2003-04 to only \$775 for the upcoming fiscal year.

In early March, the SGA held a budget hearing where each organization's budget was read, and each organization had 5 minutes to speak to the SGA senate. As the editor of *The Voyager*, I was there to speak on our behalf. When I left the hearing, I was amazed at the number of people I heard talking about it on my way back to the newsroom, and the feedback didn't stop that day. Throughout the coming weeks, I heard many people expressing their concerns over this year's budget. I overheard many different people voicing their opinions, from business majors to biology majors and even faculty members.

On the other side of the coin, some organizations were quite pleased with their budgets. In fact, some received considerable increases. According to budget documents, SGA itself received an approximate \$3,000 increase giving them an operating budget in excess of \$80,000. Also, the University Commons Student Association Administration appreciated a \$30,000 increase.

I don't pretend to think that the SGA Finance Committee had an easy job dividing the money between the numerous clubs and organizations that requested funding. What I do believe is that the students at UWF who provide the funding have a right to know where it goes.

I encourage each student to exercise their right to be informed. Stop by the SGA office and take a look at the budgets. Remember, SGA officers are people that we vote into power. Our vote is what allows them the opportunity to serve. SGA elections are coming up next month, so keep those facts in mind as we make the decision on who we choose to lead us next



Marcus Ditty
Editor in Chief

Are we naive, or are we hypocrites?

Ron Besser
Photo Editor



Photo by Ron Besser

UWF students dump \$300 to \$350 worth of Styrofoam containers in the trash per week.

Can we talk about hypocrites?

I hear students complain about high prices in the food court, yet see them do nothing to reduce University of West Florida Dining Services' costs. Also, many students complain about environmental problems, yet do nothing to reduce waste.

What am I talking about? I'm talking about the students who ask for their food in the to-go Styrofoam containers, then sit at the tables in the food court to eat their food, and throw the empty containers in the trash.

If you think I'm exaggerating, take a look at the people eating in the food court any time it is open, and you'll see more than half of them are eating out of the throwaway containers rather than reusable plates.

Then take a look at the garbage cans near the empty tray conveyor, and you'll see they're full of Styrofoam containers.

Amanda Peterson, UWF Dining Services' retail manager, said they use six to seven cases of Styrofoam containers each week. Each case holds 200 food containers at a cost of about 25 cents each. When you add it up, that comes to \$300 to \$350 per week for throwaway food containers alone.

Since less than half of the containers are used for their original purpose — take-out — that leads to an unnecessary expense of at least \$200 per week.

And that doesn't address the amount of space required for the garbage created by the extra containers.

Students do seem to have less of a problem using the silverware rather than plastic utensils.

A person must specifically ask for the takeout containers. Pizzas are served on a plate, and require extra effort to place the slice in a Styrofoam container.

It requires a conscious effort to create this extra cost and waste.

Yet there is "concern" voiced about non-recyclable/non-degradable waste in our landfills by the

same students who create the problem.

Is it a case of being naive, or merely unconcerned about a problem that is easily solved. UWF Dining Services pays good money to people who wash the plates and silverware using a machine that insures the dishes are clean and meet sanitary standards.

Why aren't reusable plates used? Some say it's because they didn't intend to eat in the food court, yet head straight to their regular table to eat with their friends who also have throwaway containers. Others say it's because they might not finish all of their meal, and want to be able to take what's left with them.

For those people — you can go back, and ask for a container if you have leftovers you want to take with you. Dining Services will be happy to oblige.

Styrofoam is a necessary evil since it maintains food temperature better than plastic or paper containers.

However, it should not be abused and overused, thereby creating a problem.

The next time I walk through the food court, it would be nice to see no one eating from styrofoam containers. Be a part of the solution — use real plates.

Oh yes, one other point. Have you checked out the "Recycle 2004" cups near the checkout registers?

They cost \$3 with tax, and can be refilled with anything but juice for 65 cents, including tax. Take a look at the price of coffee and other drinks, and you'll find the insulated mug/cup will pay for itself in a very short time, and once again we can cut down on the amount of trash we create.

Disclosing 9/11 truth should be civic duty

Dan Lamothe
Massachusetts Daily Collegian
(U. Massachusetts-Amherst)

AMHERST, Mass. - The panel of investigators looking into the events leading up to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have urged national security adviser Condoleezza Rice to reconsider her refusal to publicly refute testimony by former White House aide Richard Clarke.

Clarke's now bestselling book, "Against All Enemies," claims that Bush did not do enough to protect the country from terrorist attacks and that in several instances he ignored warnings that a massive terrorist strike was imminent.

"We do feel unanimously that [Rice] should testify in public," said former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean, who was appointed by President Bush to lead the commission. "We feel it's important to get her

case out there. We recognize there are arguments having to do with separation of powers. We think in a tragedy of this magnitude that those kind of legal arguments are probably overridden," added Kean.

Rice is just one of many officials in the Bush administration who is being urged to appear in public in front of the 9/11 panel. Rice has "refused" to do so, citing issues of separation of powers, although she has appeared in private in front of the panel.

According to panel members, Rice's private testimony has been "very helpful."

The refusal to publicly testify in public under the blanket of "separation of powers" does have precedent. However, as has been said before, the magnitude of 9/11 does create a need for truth that is greater than most cases.

According to a statement by the 9/11 panel, "[Rice] voluntarily coming

forward to testify under oath during a public hearing without the use of a subpoena would simply set a rare, refreshing, and appropriate moral precedent for all of history to judge."

A key word in that statement is the word "judge." The Bush administration will be forever linked to the 9/11 disaster, and how the findings of this panel are handled will go a long way into determining the legacy of Bush's tenure. Bush will either be remembered as the president who helped America out of its greatest national tragedy, or the president who caused America's greatest national tragedy.

Since his book was published, Clarke has been deemed by some as a "disgruntled former employee of the White House with nothing more than a book to write." While this may or may not be the case, the fact still remains that 9/11 happened, and there is much to learn about the events leading up to it. It is imperative that America is

made aware of what happened, regardless of whether or not it hurts the reelection campaign of President Bush.

We all, as Americans, have civic duties that we must carry out. For example, attending jury duty is one of the most basic and widespread "civic duties" of any citizen. Likewise, high-ranking governmental officials have duties they must perform. Often times a degree of "privacy" is given to these officials to allow them to best execute their duties, assuming that they are acting in good faith. In order for this faith to be questioned, an event large enough to cause severe nation-wide security concerns must occur. Undoubtedly, the events of 9/11 count as such an event, and every American who fulfills his or her civic duty has a right to know the truth.

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VOYAGER

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