Right To Privacy Essay, Research Paper

Right to Privacy

The right to privacy has become a very heated issue in recent years and it concerns the lives of many people around the world. Constitutionally speaking, citizens within the United States are not protected against having their picture taken, no matter where they are, and they are also not guarded against being interviewed. Over the last 20 years or so, people have become very interested in the lives of others and are always left with wanting for more, friends and neighbors overhear conversations and are automatically drawn to them, feeling as if they have the right to know what is going on. We live in a society, nowadays, where every little action is scrutinized, whether it is good or bad, and it is picked apart in every way imaginable throughout all conversations. There are mixed feelings concerning this topic, on one hand there are those kind of people that live for that special kind of attention and on the other hand there are the type of people, under any and all circumstances, who do not want the publicity.

The media, both television and newspaper, has the job, sometimes very difficult and uncomfortable job, of reporting the news to the public in order to inform them nationally and worldwide. Reporters and photographers want to get the best stories and pictures they can, mainly for two reasons, to sell newspapers and enhance their careers. But the bottom line for the newspaper company is to sell newspapers, sometimes disregarding the feelings and beliefs of the people they are covering. The news media, through the articles and words, has the unbelievable ability to portray someone as a hero or a crook, no matter how true the story actually may be. These companies can make people become famous whether they want to be or not and sometimes the media goes to far. Photographers and editors have different views on what is news and what should be private in relation with the public and sometimes they do show some bad taste in terms of the material they choose to print.

The stories that were discussed in class demonstrated how productive the paper could be as well as how harsh it can seem. When families suffer tragedies, such as when the little boy drowned in the lake, it is a time when the family would like to be alone and comfort each other. The photographer took a very revealing photograph, which in the family s opinion should not have been taken, and it disturbed many people. The photographer decided to take the picture in order to further illustrate the story and make it hit closer to home, but the fact of the matter is that the picture showed the family, with the boy not even fully in the body bag, at the most inopportune time. In defense of the photographer, he or she was only trying to do their job and get the best picture for the paper, but it was not their decision to which picture would be illustrated. The editor has the final say in terms of what will or will not be printed and in regards to this picture, the editor and the photographer showed poor taste.

As a result of the increasing interest of the public to know all the happenings around the world, it has become a case of entertainment versus information. The media is the main source of circulation and it decides what will be printed by what the public wants to hear. The public has at times become more interested in what happens to celebrities rather than the politics and economics of the world and therefore photographers and reporters must go to more dramatic lengths in order to get the dirt they need to satisfy the public. At times, these reporters and photographers take it too far by invading the privacy of others just so that they can enhance their careers. It is only natural to have a difference of opinion in terms of what should or should not be printed, editors have the obligation to put out the best material they can in order to help the business, but the people also have the right to say no to the reporters that ask for interviews, who at times try to make the story as juicy as possible. Sometimes the border between good taste and bad taste is crossed and in order to maintain that right to privacy, the public must understand when it is time to decline interviews and the media must fine tune that border line and back off a little bit.