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At Oregon forum, Bernstein, Deaver agree media lazy

Watergate reporter, former Reagan aide tell McCall Forum that TV is the worst offender

By JEFF MAPES
of The Oregonian staff

FOREST GROVE — A prominent journalist and a former top Reagan administration official agreed Thursday that the main problem with the American news media is simple. It's lazy.

Carl Bernstein, one of the journalists who broke the story of the Watergate scandal, and Michael Deaver, who managed public relations for Reagan, were the featured speakers at the Tom McCall Forum at Pacific University.

Despite their different backgrounds, the two largely agreed on what's lacking in so much of American news coverage.

Deaver said it was too easy to manipulate reporters, and Bernstein said too many of his colleagues skim the surface of an issue.

"It's hard work and we're lazy in journalism today," said Bernstein, a former Washington Post reporter and ABC bureau chief who is now an author and correspondent for Time Magazine.

"The media I've had a lot to do with is lazy," agreed Deaver. "Yes, we fed them and they ate it every day."

Deaver was Reagan's deputy

chief of staff and conceived the practice of having the president appear in front of visually appealing backdrops to make his point.

Deaver later left to form a consulting firm but was embroiled in controversy over his lobbying work and was convicted in 1987 of three counts of perjury for lying to a congressional subcommittee and a federal grand jury.

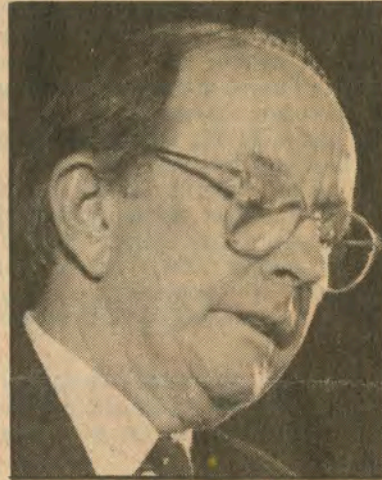
Both men were particularly critical of television journalism, which is highly dependent on photogenic events and pithy "sound bites" from politicians.

"TV's dirty little secret" is that it is largely an entertainment medium, where how something is said takes precedence over what is said, Deaver said.

Bernstein said good reporting requires long interviews and a great deal of research. "I don't go in with a camera crew and leave in 10 minutes" after getting a few quotes that confirm a preconceived story idea, he said.

This doesn't necessarily take more money. Deaver and Bernstein both agreed that the television networks waste a large amount of money following every staged event by the presidential candidates.

"They don't need to cover those



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candidates," Deaver said. "It's a death watch. They're waiting for these guys to make a mistake."

Instead, Deaver suggested, the networks should insist that candidates agree to spend several hours in one-on-one interviews or participating in call-in shows.

"Unless they're going to say something that is news, they shouldn't get on the news," agreed Bernstein, scoring the news media for the way it covered the 1988 presidential race.

Bernstein said the news media tends to cover politics and government from a celebrity point of view. Bernstein cited the example of the coverage given to his former Watergate reporting colleague, Bob Woodward, for the latter's book on the CIA.

Instead of covering the Reagan administration's questionable use of the CIA as portrayed in Woodward's book, Bernstein said the



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reporting focused on whether and how Woodward got a deathbed interview with CIA chief William Casey.

"The challenge for reporters is to find ways to use our skills in less sexy types of coverage," Bernstein said.

Deaver said he was encouraged by the growth of cable television that provides services with more in-depth coverage of important issues.

Bernstein praised some print journalism and said there were a few bright spots on television. Still, the problem with reporters "is there are not a lot of good ones," he said.

The Tom McCall forum is held annually by Pacific University in memory of the late Oregon governor. Deaver served as a replacement for Republican National Chairman Lee Atwater, who bowed out for health reasons.

Judge refuses bail to murder defendant

Court decides there's convincing evidence that Morimoto killed his wife and children

By NANCY MCCARTHY
of The Oregonian staff

Yoshio Morimoto, accused of killing his wife and two children, will remain in jail until his trial in September, a Washington County judge ruled Thursday.

Circuit Judge Donald C. Ashmanskas ruled during a bail release hearing that there was "clear and convincing" evidence that Morimoto had committed the killings.

Morimoto, 34, also was arraigned on three counts of abuse of corpse, for allegedly carrying away the bodies of his wife, Kiiko, 31; daughter, Miya, 3; and son, Show, 9 months. He pleaded innocent to the charges.

Authorities found the bodies at a construction site on Southwest Barnes Road, near West Burnside Street on Jan. 17, a week after Morimoto reported his family missing.

Ashmanskas' decision came during the seventh day of the hearing, which was conducted to determine if Morimoto could be released on bail. Although bail hearings usually last only a day or two, the hearing was complicated by scheduling problems for interpreters who translated testimony of Japanese witnesses and by the amount of evidence offered.

State law requires a judge to have "clear and convincing evidence" that the defendant is guilty of aggravated murder before bail can be denied, said Scott Upham, Washington County district attorney. In this case, there was no confession or eye-witness to tie Morimoto directly to the killings, he said.

Upham called in 10 witnesses, and

defense attorney Steven Houze had two witnesses and brought in a videotape.

Morimoto, a Japanese businessman, is accused of six counts of aggravated murder, two counts each for allegedly strangling his wife and daughter and for asphyxiating his son. His trial is scheduled to begin Sept. 10 and could run through until November, Upham said.

During his summation speech, Upham said a "mountain of evidence" existed to prove Morimoto committed the murders. Morimoto had a romance with a Florida woman, whom he telephoned the night he committed the killings, the prosecutor added. After the call, Morimoto beat his wife, who scratched his face, hands and chest, Upham said.

"He and his wife, Kiiko, got into a fight ... and he had to kill the children as well," Upham said.

But Houze repeated testimony by Morimoto's boss, sister-in-law and co-workers who characterized Morimoto as a "gentle, loving, kind man, a good husband and a great father."

Houze said no evidence existed to indicate Morimoto committed the killings. His involvement with the Florida woman was a "harmless, innocent flirtation" that did not go beyond three phone calls and a few letters she sent to him that he did not respond to.

"He was attracted and flattered by the attention, but he did not want to jeopardize his relationship with his wife or family," Houze said.

Andrus says abortion bill may be too restrictive in some cases

Idaho governor worries about limited access in instances where abortion might be justified

By FOSTER CHURCH
of The Oregonian staff

BOISE — Gov. Cecil Andrus said Thursday he was concerned that the wording in an anti-abortion bill passed by the Idaho Legislature might overly restrict access to abortion when it might be justified.

"I am concerned that this bill may narrow it to the point where a woman who has suffered rape, incest or the life of the mother is in danger may not be able to receive an abortion, and that is what I am agonizing over," Andrus said at an impromptu news conference.

He did not say he would veto the bill, and he refused to elaborate on the definitions that concern him in the eight-page measure. But abortion-rights advocates took the remarks as a hint that Andrus may be leaning toward vetoing the measure, which would be the most restrictive abortion law in the nation if it becomes law.

Andrus has said he will take action on the measure before the end of the week. Although Andrus opposes abortion, he has taken no public position on the measure. Andrus could either sign the bill, allow it to become law without his signa-

ture or veto it.

"I am very hopeful that this is the direction he is leaning," said Linda King White, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Idaho. She added that these comments and his remarks Wednesday concerning the potential harm that a boycott of Idaho potatoes by abortion-rights activists could do to the state appeared to be part of a strategy to send out a message of concern about the bill's consequences.

And Jack Van Valkenburgh, legislative coordinator for the Idaho chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the comments were a sign that the governor was looking at the bill "and recognizes some of the flaws that are inherent in it and which were not fully understood by

many legislators."

But one of the Senate's strongest supporters of the bill, Sen. Roger Madsen, R-Boise, said the comments merely showed that Andrus is doing "a thorough, objective study" of the bill and is talking to authorities on both sides of the issue.

The bill would ban abortion except in cases of rape reported within seven days, incest if the victim is younger than 18, severe fetal deformity or a pregnancy that is a threat to the life or health of the woman.

Pressure on Andrus increased Thursday as pro-choice and pro-life forces staged a series of media events.

A group of Idaho students protesting the bill dumped 10,000 bagged

Idaho potatoes on the steps of the state Capitol and urged Andrus to veto the bill.

Potatoes have become an emblem of the controversy, ever since some national women's organizations threatened to launch a boycott of Idaho potatoes if Andrus signed the bill.

But also Thursday, in a reverse boycott, Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America, a Washington D.C.-based anti-abortion group claiming 600,000 members — flew to Boise to meet with Andrus and announced a nationwide grass-roots campaign that she said her organization would conduct to promote purchases of Idaho potatoes and also encourage families to take their vacations in the state.

"With the recent boycott of Idaho potatoes ... the feminists are attempting to cost Idaho's farmers their very livelihood," she said in a news conference. "Simply put, these militant feminists are holding Idaho's farmers and their families hostage."

Andrus met briefly with LaHaye but said afterward that pressure imposed from outside the state would not affect his deliberations.

The response was typical of Andrus, who for the last few days has appeared good humored and relaxed, almost appearing to enjoy the political cyclone narrowing to funnel around him.

In interview Wednesday, the governor said no matter which way he goes, the decision could hurt him politically.

Doctors find Denny Smith has tumor

Benign growth to be treated with drugs

WASHINGTON — Doctors have discovered a benign tumor on U.S. Rep. Denny Smith's pituitary gland, his office said Thursday.

Smith, an Oregon Republican, began taking medication this week in hopes of controlling excessive secretions from the gland that the tumor is causing, said his press aide, Tony Williams.

Smith, 52, is at his home in Oregon and has not curtailed his



The Oregonian/DOUG BEGHTEL

Remembering — Bob Schroeder (left) gives the opening prayer for a ceremony at which about 40 people gathered to remember Oregonians still listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia, Korea and World War II. The ceremony at Portland City Hall took place Thursday, the 17th anniversary of the release of prisoners of war by North Vietnam. Holding a POW-MIA flag are Chip Primoli and Angie McKinney.

Legislators agree on spending plan

\$506 million would boost welfare payments, raise pay for teachers in Washington state

From staff and wire reports

OLYMPIA — House and Senate negotiators announced agreement Thursday on a "win-win" supplemental state budget of \$506 million that includes welfare increases and pay boosts for some teachers and state employees.

"We have liftoff!" exulted House Appropriations Chairman Gary Locke, D-Seattle.

House Democrats and Senate Republicans broke through a monthlong standoff over how to spend a record revenue windfall of \$762 million. The new spending plan reflects both the GOP priority of school construction and

sour on us."

The budget includes \$303 million for continuing programs, including salary boosts, and \$203 million in one-time costs, such as school construction and classroom equipment.

Lawmakers agreed to put the rest of the state's revenue windfall into reserve, including \$200 million in "rainy day" account that would require a 60 percent vote of both houses to spend.

Legislators refused to release details Thursday, saying they still were working on budget provisions to limit how the new funds may be spent.

Administration officials and lobbyists said the plan would include: