

The culture of fear journals media essay

[Media](#)



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February 2013 The Culture of Fear Journals " ' There is no terror in the bang,

only in the anticipation of it,' said the ultimate master of terror, Alfred

Hitchcock. Fear mongers regularly put his wisdom... [by saying] ' They are all

around you; everywhere you drive, waiting to explode.' " (3) In the start of his

novel, Barry Glassner opens with talking about the Dubious Dangers on

Roadways and Campuses and how they are sold to the general public. He

starts by using the " Ultimate master of terror, Alfred Hitchcock" to describe

how terrors are portrayed to the general audience. By doing so, Glassner

appeals to ethos. He sets his credibility and reveals that he knows what he is

talking about. Additionally, by using Alfred Hitchcock, he also appeals to

logos as the quote used by Glassner is one of Hitchcock's best credible

testimonies. Furthermore, by revealing how " fear mongers" portray

Hitchcock's wisdom, he again appeals to logos. Logically, fear mongers try to

scare the general public so that they can live scared lives. He also

strengthens his argument which is why popular terrors take dominance over

other serious problems. By saying that, "[fear] is all around you; everywhere

you drive, waiting to explode," reveals that there are not only the main

terrors everyone talks about every day, there are also problems like poverty

etc. " waiting to explode" on anyone passing by. In the end, Glassner

strengthens his argument that unpopular problems are ignored over popular

problems (which are sometimes made up) even though the unpopular

problems may be worse." At a time when a disabled black man in Texas was

beaten by racists then chained to a truck and dragged down a road to his

death and a gay college student in Wyoming was tied to a fence, pistol

whipped, and left to die, we would do well to focus our sights on big time

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incivilities such as racism and homophobia. Instead we are diverted by willy-nilly references ...about road rage" (9-10) In this quote, Glassner enlarges the idea of his argument that popular terrors (terrors common in news) take dominance over other serious problems. Even though, racism and homophobia is clearly demonstrated in the quote, Glassner reveals that many are "diverted by willy-nilly references [of]... road rage." He chooses a sound argument to strengthen his side and expose that many problems just die out as they are literally ignored by everyone. He says that everyone is so busy worrying about popular news of the day, they forget about what is happening near them. Furthermore, by using the examples of the cruelly killed "black man in Texas" and the "pistol whipped" gay college student, Glassner appeals to pathos as many would be moved by such rough and unpleasant images. His appeal to pathos can allow readers to know what they are doing wrong and should not do anymore. Glassner uses cogent examples of the "black man" and the "gay college student." Ultimately, Glassner tries to strengthen his argument by appealing to logos and pathos. "Thousands of young lives could be saved each year, and hundreds of thousands of emergency room visits averted, if parents and elected officials paid more attention to simple safety measures... [Yet still] kidnapping remains at the top of the list [for parent concerns]" (66-67). In his book *The Culture of Fear*, Barry Glassner argues the point that news media make up new news segments from a current topic completely ignoring the actual evidence of the topic. This passage is a clear and perfect example of how news media does just that. The passage talks about how even though many deaths "[could] be averted if parents... paid more attention to simple safety measures," kidnapping still takes priority before those simpler measures.

The news media makes its viewers believe that kidnapping is the only major concern about children at risk. By stating a fact about news media making up certain news, Glassner appeals to logos and uses this fact as evidence for his claim about popular topics taking over smaller, easily solvable topics. In conclusion, using an appeal to logos, Glassner tries to strengthen his argument about news media making up random news and scaring people."

The shooters, gang members from a neighborhood nearby [in Pasadena, the quiet neighborhood,] apparently had set out [before trick-or-treaters]. This awful but isolated incident got retold in the media repeatedly over the coming months as... youth violence in safe areas" (69). This passage again strengthens Glassner's argument. The paragraph appeals to logos and acts as support for Glassner's claim that media takes only a minute detail of a story and makes up a totally different, and unrelated news segment.

Logically, making a claim out of one small detail is not correct as it can go either way. He talks about how Pasadena is known as the quiet neighborhood and only one small misunderstanding between trick-or-treaters became the main subject of youth violence. Even though there had been other cases of violence in Pasadena, as Glassner claims, this particular one got "retold in the media repeatedly over the coming months as... youth violence in safe areas." Glassner talks about how only because of a small muddle, the media came right out saying that all previously safe areas are not safe anymore. He repeats that only one small case can make such a huge difference in making Americans believe what they should not believe." After Tupac Shakur was gunned down in Las Vegas in 1996 at the age of twenty-five much of the coverage suggested he had been a victim of his own raps—even a deserving victim" (125). In his book, *The Culture of Fear*, Barry <https://assignbuster.com/the-culture-of-fear-journals-media-essay/>

Glassner argues Why Americans are afraid of the wrong things such as crime, drugs, minorities, teen moms etc. He claims that news media tweaks actual news segments and makes the people fear the wrong things. An example of such thing is this passage. Glassner in this passage argues why black people are treated the way they are? He states that even though Tupac died due to hatred, news came out that " he had been a victim of his own raps—even a deserving victim." He argues that Tupac was a great singer and sang about actual problems that existed. But still, why was he treated this way rather than being praised? He reveals that as Tupac was a black man, he was viewed upon as other black men—hated and discriminated against. He backs this by analysis of different newspaper agencies and what they believed was right. His appeal to pathos (emotion) reveals that Tupac should not have been treated the way he was. He should have received utmost respect. By appeal to pathos, Glassner strengthens his argument that Americans are afraid of the wrong things and they should not be afraid of black men. Furthermore, he appeals to logos as logically, Tupac was not a deserving victim. He died as he hated portrayed so much truth in his lyrics. In the end, Glassner tries to strengthen his argument about fear of wrong crimes." Psychologists call this availability heuristic. We judge how common or important a phenomenon is by how readily it comes to mind. Presented with a survey that asks about relative importance... we are likely to give top billing to whatever the media emphasizes at the moment" (133). In the passages, Glassner argues that media, in coalition with the president and his cabinet, makes what they believe should be the most important news and what will get them popular. He talks about " availability heuristic" which is a phenomenon that talks about the news segments media tweaks.

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He talks about how the latest tweaked news takes priority over previous, more serious news. The news media (alongside the president) makes its viewers believe what is actually not correct. Glassner backs this claim using the analysis of Reagan asking media to do what he wants. By appealing to logos as logically speaking, news media tries to tweak the news so that they can get more views. Glassner uses this statistical evidence to support his claim that news media tweaks up information. He while doing so also strengthens his argument of The Culture of Fear." News is what happens to your editors" (201). In his chapter, " Plane Wrecks," Glassner reveals why journalists prioritize some stories over other. He talks to someone who does not disclose their name to reveal such things. The undisclosed reporter states that, " News is what happens to [our] editors." By doing so, Glassner creates an appeal to ethos as he establishes credibility after talking to the undisclosed reporter. Additionally, he also appeals to logos (logic) as logically, editors have the ultimate power to do what they please. Furthermore, by revealing what happens behind the scenes in a news room, he strengthens his argument that why Americans are afraid of the wrong things. All in all, Glassner reveals that editors try to hide the actual news to make people afraid of the real things." We waste tens of thousands of dollars and person-hours every year on largely mythical hazards... We can choose to redirect some of those funds to combat serious dangers... or we can go on believing in Martian invaders" (210). In this quote, Glassner enlarges the idea that we spend millions of dollars on unnecessary things. He appeals to logos (logic) as he states that " we can choose to redirect some of these funds to combat serious dangers." Logically speaking, we, as a society, should spend less money on nonsense things. Furthermore, he appeals to ethos, as he sets

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his credibility after doing his research. His use of citations in every chapter reveals that he thoroughly researched his topic. In the end, Glassner tries to say that we, as a society, should not spend money on stupid things that are not bound to happen. But in fact, we should worry about things that will happen—for example, natural disasters.