

rejected a move to enforce the act, as it has in past situations when U.S. troops were introduced into war zones. Individual congressmen shy away from going on the record about whether they support or oppose U.S. involvement in hostilities.

At this point, the administration should overcome its reservations about infringement of its powers and realize that Congress can effectively thwart its will, with or without formal consultation. At the same time, Congress should take its adviser's role seriously and stop evading responsibility. Invoking the act would not only force Congress to share some responsibility for the Persian Gulf policy, it would strengthen whatever policy is agreed upon by making it clear that it represents the will of the American government, not just the American president.

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Reporters Could Find Plagiarism Examples In Their Own Copy

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FOR THE VALLEY NEWS

HANOVER — Americans don't want to be deceived.

Journalists, well within their role as watchdogs, exposed two presidential candidates who were not what they seemed. Perhaps it's time to look at the deceptive practices of journalists.

Plagiarism, which occurs when a speaker passes off another person's expression as original, is a lie by omission. The speaker is omitting the author's name, thus allowing the audience to assume that the words are original.

Journalists, who fashion words and ideas as their art, are particularly sensitive to the charge of plagiarism.

In newsrooms, where ethical disagreements are as common as deadlines, you'll find universal agreement that plagiarism is wrong. But, sometimes, when a reporter uses material without giving the source, it's not considered plagiarism, but conventional practice.

The public might well ask how Biden's use of speech material without attribution differs from reporters failing to attribute the source of material they didn't gather. For example, charges that one news organization has lifted quotes from another

Michael Jackson Can Do As He Pleases

LEWIS GRIZZARD

SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

down town. especially in the Tall Corners region they'll fight the project.

mon's Associated Press editors.

how much makeup he wants to wear, what shape he wants his nose in and how he wants to style his hair.

I will admit that the few times I've seen Michael Jackson on television, he did tend to remind me more of a Michael than a Michael, but Willie Nelson has gone to wearing earrings and I still play and enjoy his music as I did before he decided to bewitch his looks.

Black people still have a lot of problems, and one of them seems to be they get a lot of pressure from so-called black leaders on how they should look, who they should vote for and how they should fit in with other blacks.

While people used to do that for blacks, but as soon as they cast off those shackles, here came somebody else — their own — with a set of guidelines.

What's so wrong about a black kid looking up to Michael Jackson? He's got all the money in the world, he's known throughout the world and he probably gets all the free Pepsi he wants.

He gets a little weird at times, doing things like sleeping in an oxygen chamber, making friends with a chimpanzee and trying to buy what's left of the Elephant Man.

But consider this: Roy Rogers was my role model as a child and he rode a horse decorated like a Christmas tree and had a friend named Pal Brady, who talked to his Jeep.

What's so wrong about black kid looking up to Michael Jackson? He's got all the money in the world and he probably gets all the free Pepsi he wants.

Other than the fact I put garlands on my Christmas tree and have a friend who jogs, I'm out fairly well adjusted.

Michael Jackson's new album *Bad* is atop rock charts, incidentally, and he'll make enormous money off the sales to buy himself a real elephant if he wants one.

Meanwhile, don't anybody tell the Association of Black Psychologists about Charlie Pride, country music star who happens to be black. He's getting rich selling white people's music to them.

Knowing something like that could make black shrink have a nervous breakdown.

without attribution echo throughout the journalistic world. Newspaper reporters cite examples in news magazines, news magazine journalists cite examples in newspapers of quoted material taken from a news account without attributing that account and without contacting the primary source used by the first publication.

This practice is not confined to print media. A news director told me that the practice is widespread among broadcast news organizations, although it's most likely to occur at small stations that have few resources for gathering their own information.

The moral problem with "lifting" quotes is obvious. Readers or listeners assume that the news account is solely the result of one reporter's or news organization's work. The audience is led to believe that the source who is quoted spoke to the reporter and that the published quote was the result of a conversation between them.

A quote is not a factual piece of information, like the length of a bridge or the fact that it collapsed at a particular time. A quote occurs in context.

When a reporter chooses to include a particular quote, I trust that it summarizes or focuses a lot of talk that could not be fit into the story. If I read in *Newweek* that Joe Biden said something to the *Wall Street Journal*, then I'm alerted that the News-

In most newsrooms, wire service copy, complete with quotes and facts gathered by a wire reporter (or gathered by a subscriber news organization and sent across the wire without attribution), often serves as unattributed fodder for a story.

Not knowing who wrote the original material or collected the original quote is not the same as writing or collecting it oneself. Some news organizations require wire service attribution unless a "substantial amount" of the material is generated by the reporter. How much is "substantial"? Half the story? Three-quarters?

Not many journalists think twice about using wire service copy without attribution, although they're quick to blame the service when inaccuracy of the wire has led to errors in their stories.

This practice is as morally problematic as lifting quotes. The readers are misled by the omitted attribution. They believe, with good reason, that the material is original.

Journalists respond that news organizations pay for wire service privileges, that the work they lift is "in the public domain." The end result — their synthesis — is original.

One journalist told me that it's "like compiling information for a term paper." I wonder what sort of instructor would allow that sort of academic compilation without citation, references and bibliography.

Once one gets in the habit of looking for and providing attribution, the habit is hard to break. The form of this opinion piece, for example, allows me latitude in attribution that makes me feel uncomfortable. The thrust of the piece is my opinion, not the definition of what others think, but I wonder if I'm kidding myself. Does the public understand the difference between opinion pieces and news stories, between original speeches and oral interpretation?

Sen. Joseph Biden reportedly used, without attribution, stories and language that belonged to others — expressions that were not, in the journalistic convention, within the public domain.

Yet, the effect on the public is the same. The audience is led to believe that the material they are receiving is original.

Journalists' reluctance to cite other news organizations as sources seems no less self-serving than Biden's lack of attribution. It looks better if the information presented appears to be their own.

The public may ask if the watchdogs are barking at their own shadows.

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