

# Gender and Genre in Sports Documentaries: Critical Essays

From David Boaz's essay *What Rights Do We Have?* It seems that the First Amendment and the Declaration of Independence is getting more and more publicity. Since the 1990s politicians and people jumped on the train of "I have the right to..." which blitz across the nation like a tornado. Boaz tried to draw out the significance of America's most important document on the issue of rights—the Declaration of Independence. According to Boaz, the theory of rights starts from the most fundamental right, the "Basic Rights." Inside the "Basic Rights," he provided us with two of the most important rights—property rights and Freedom of conscience. Of course, none of these would be possible without the "Self-Ownership" which means that every one is the owner of themselves, including their bodies and minds. Boaz later concluded that all human rights can be represented by property rights, because we are the owner of our bodies and we have the right to do whatever we desire to our legally owned property as long as we are not forcing others to serve our needs. If we support Boaz's point of view, then our government is clearly violating and constantly restricting our rights.

"No one has the right to prevent another person from expressing his thoughts and trying to persuade others of his opinion" (Boaz 740). And "murder is a person's greatest possible violation of his rights" (Boaz 735) it all seems a very agreeable statement right? But Dr. Jack Kevorkian is serving his time for helping his patient taking their legal property away from them when they are voluntarily giving up their own property while some of them are unable to perform the task on their own. Some people might also argue that in Dr. Kevorkian's case, he actually performed the injection into his patients' body, which sentenced him to prison for second-degree murder but nevertheless his patient all signed the agreement which granted Kevorkian the right of taking their property away and he did not force any of his patients to die, he just simply "persuaded" others to believe his opinion.

People have the right to say whatever they want but there are some things that people should not say, if they know it is not "right to say it" but they do it anyway they are going to end up in court. For instance, a office manager sitting in his office and staring his young, sexy female secretary and making sexual comments about her such as "do you know that your dress fit you really good, just the way I like it" and she ask him to stop that, but he refuses. If she sues the office manager for sexual harassment in court, she would definitely win the case because she is protected by the workplace harassment law. But what if that guy was doing is exercising his First Amendment right by expressing his thoughts and feelings? Later on in the essay, Boaz mentions that the ways the United States government "interfere with freedom of speech are legion" (Boaz 741) even though the First Amendment explicitly words that "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech..." but the politicians kept passing laws like the workplace harassment law to limit what we can say. However the government is not wrong for doing this, because the government is simply protecting the working environment so it is suitable to a working place. Nevertheless, it is a violation of the "Freedom of Conscience" and the First Amendment right.

Freedom of conscience is probably the most controversial freedom that the Bill of Rights contains. According to Boaz freedom of speech and personal freedom is the libertarianism's view of freedom of conscience. This freedom allows the people to communicate, express feelings, judging what is good or bad, and allowing people to weigh the pros and cons based on one's own "conduct, intentions, or character." As Boaz mentioned this right "must extend to radio and television, cable, the internet, and other forms of electronic communication" (Boaz 740) because technology brings the world closer each day, and it also changes the way we used to communicate, express our feelings and compare the pros and cons. Libertarians and many common people see many violations in free speech, media, or presses in American law. Just recently, as the aftermath of September 11th attack, Attorney General John Ashcroft requested a new anti-terrorist bill, on October 26th President George W. Bush signed legislation that gives law enforcement officials powerful and controversial new powers—including the most far-reaching invasion of internet privacy which include E-mail tracking, and internet use, and unauthorized "cyber break-in" if the authorities can prove that it is relative to a criminal investigation. This new law grants the law enforcement a greater power but in the same time, it also weakens the power of the citizen and the "Basic Right" that they had.

Boaz uses the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Department of Health as an example to illustrate how much is in the government's control. He also identifies the power that the government has on media and presses. If you dig deep enough in our government's roots, you will be surprised that almost everything we do is being regulated by the government. There are more than fifty independent government agencies, and over sixty of Boards, Commissions, and Committees for the government; each part of our daily life has been regulated by these agencies, boards and committees. Our government constantly passes on the information that they think is best for the community, but they forget that many people does not like the idea of someone else's orders, they have the ability to determine what they want and how they want to accomplish it. As Boaz states "the right to self-ownership certainly implies the right to decide for ourselves what food, drink, or drugs we will put into our own bodies," what kind of life we want (regardless if it is healthy or not); and whatever we want to do with our own bodies (regardless of what others might think).

In conclusion, government utilizes its powers to keep society in a very balanced and well behaved way for the majority and still give individual freedom of conscience. If freedom of speech was full-fledged, society will be out of order in this "free country." Freedom of expression comes in many forms, such as harassment, hate, love, insult, and so on. It is impossible to control freedom of speech, but when it comes to expressing oneself, one must express in the form that no religious discrimination, no sexual discrimination, and no hatred. Then one can express one's thoughts, feelings, and expressions freely.

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