

Entertainment or News

M: Hi, Wendy. I'd like to get your opinion about news in the United States.

F: Well, I have very strong opinions about it. We think we're getting the news, but it's really just entertainment. It's based on what's going to keep people tune in, like plastic surgery or celebrities. They actually tease you to get you to watch the news with those stories, because I think they think Americans get bored with international news.

M: You're talking about news on TV.

F: Yeah. They say: "Tune in at 11, find out how this woman lost weight" And that kind of keeps people watching, and that's what they call news. But what about major political problems? Those don't get reported in the way they should be, they don't get reported enough.

M: Yeah, I see what you're saying ...

F: The other thing that bothers me about the news is that it's shallow. Like, there are these people doing voice-overs. But the voice-overs have the same tone as people who do it for movies. It's like "Six Guns to Kill" and then it's like "Plastic Surgery at 11." And it's the same voice, the same style for those two stories. It's equating those types of information. It's all like entertainment.

M: Do you think entertainment is more interesting than news?

F: Good question. I actually think we've gotten used to the idea that news should be just as entertaining as the movies. Like a sitcom. And it should be quick, and sort of like instant gratification.

M: What do you mean by instant gratification?

F: It's something that doesn't require you to think. Easy information. Something that makes you feel like you're learning something, but you really aren't. So, it's quick and it's shallow. And the TV news has to be reported by news anchors who are physically attractive. If they're not attractive, viewers complain.

M: Well, do you think newspapers give you better news coverage than TV?

F: I think newspapers are better, because they're more in depth. But then who has time to really read them? And what's difficult about news in general is ... see, I'm criticizing what's being reported, but the main problem is what's not being reported. And that's hard to criticize, because you don't know what's not there. And I think papers are guilty of that.

M: Do you get any news from radio or the Internet? Are they better? I mean, are there any good places to get news?

F: I do think there are better places. But you have to spend time finding them. And people need quick access. If you want to get specialized news, you have to go to special radio stations or websites, and I don't even know what those are.

M: So, where do you get your news?

F: Mostly on TV. That's the thing. I realize I'm being sucked into it. So I'm critical of it, but it's OK because I know I'm being sucked in!

Questions:

1. What are they mainly talking about in this short conversation?
2. Wendy has several complaints about the news on TV. Which of the following is NOT one of her complaints?
3. According to the woman's comment on news programs, what is a typical example of instant gratification?
4. What does Wendy think of the news in the newspapers, as compared with that on TV?
5. Which of the following media is Wendy's major source of the news?

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