

C BEHIND THE IMAGE -- Florian Sauvageau

The film entitled "Behind the Image" was made by us in 1978, a long time ago now. In it, we were trying to decode the process used to manufacture information. We were trying to explain what was happening behind the screen itself, behind the image.

What we were saying in the film, and what I think has been confirmed by events in recent years and television criticism, is that television has to be taken for what it is. I should first make one point clear: namely, that despite what I'm going to say, I like television. I have done a lot of television in my life and I hope to do a lot more, so I am not begging for a job. I like television but I don't think it is always put to good use. Mr. Turner said that technology can make a great contribution "if we are smart enough to use it." I do not think we are always "smart enough" or that we always use it correctly.

In the 1978 film, we were trying to explain that television is a medium of emotion, action and personality. If you are looking for explanations or ideas, don't try to find them in television. This does not mean that television is not important, or that television would not be a useful tool in a period of conflict, for example, because emotion is important. Feeling and emotions are an integral part of conflicts, just as much as thinking is. But television stresses emotion and feeling because it stresses image and intensity. As Mr. Cohen explained, television stresses action and emotion far more than explanation or thinking.

So we tried at the time to show the limitations of television. It was not an anti-television film, just as what we are saying this morning is not anti-television. It is very important that we understand the process used by television to manufacture information, given the position of supremacy television enjoys in the dissemination of information. For two-thirds of the people who watch television in the industrialized world, that medium is their primary source of information.

In his introductory remarks at the beginning of the conference yesterday, Mr. Wood referred to those images we all recall: young girls who had been bombed with napalm in Vietnam. In our film, we also used a very moving sequence of a cameraman filming his