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Writing in the Disciplines

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Rhetorical Analysis

Sometimes it’s not what you say, but its how you say it that makes a difference. Rhetorical analysis is the examination of exactly that, how things are being said. The two pieces of literature I have analyzed are, “Ballistic Body Armor: A Closer Look at the Follow-Up Inspection and Testing Program”, an academic journal entry by Michele R. Coppola, and “NIJ tests body armor for performance, durability” an article off of PoliceOne.com. Both of these writings talk about the follow-up program in regards to the testing of ballistic body armor for law enforcement personnel. In this case both of these pieces of writing can be deemed the same after a rhetorical analysis of both even though they both have two different ways of showing the same information.

The journal article it is coming from the words of Michele R. Coppola. The purpose of the article is to explain to people in the criminal justice field that not only was the Follow-Up Inspection and Testing program a very valuable addition to the body armor standards, but it will also in time continue such progress. He starts by using a statistic in his first paragraph saying that since 1970 the National Institute of Justice has been developing performance standards for body armor. And due to this, the armor has been given the credit of saving countless lives of law enforcement officers. Right off the bat the author not only touches on the pathos appeal but the logos as well. He reminds the audience that the law enforcement officers do frequently face firefights and are put into dangerous positions. The pathos appeal is used here to give a feeling of empathy to the readers. For any reader that possibly knows someone that is in the law enforcement field this will automatically grab their attention. At the same time however, the logos appeal is used as well when he uses the actual statistic of “more than 3,100 lives have been saved.” He gives an emotional outlook as well was hard evidence within the first couple of sentences in his article.

Coppola then proceeds to break down the entire process of how body armor becomes available and put on something called the Compliant Products List through the Compliance Testing Program. This gives the reader some background knowledge to better understand later on in the article how the follow-up testing actually makes a difference. He states that after phase one and the initial selecting of the Compliant Products, phase two is then initiated. This is where the Follow-Up Inspection and Testing Program has its time to shine. The CTP staff reviews the models on the list and any product that has not been tested in the last 10 months is then put onto another list for a follow up inspection. At this point obviously the next step is the models of ballistics vests actually being tested. This would be the point where it would resonate in most people’s minds that this is a good idea in order to “double check” the models and validate them being deemed “safe”. By explaining the entire process to the audience it gives them a complete understanding and allows them to make their own conclusions.

More of the logos appeal is used when Coppola then goes on to talk about what occurred after the first follow-up inspection. He says that after the first inspection was conducted, out of the 222 body armor models they tested five sustained multiple perforations throughout the testing. At that point the manufacturers issued out recalls and replaced upwards of 1,750 ballistic armors. The manufacturers corrected the problem that was causing the perforations. This then of course put them back in compliance with the National Institute of Justice’s standards. Once again Coppola uses hard statistics to further convince the efficiency of the follow-up testing.

Finally, Coppola talks about moving forward with the inspection process. He states how manufacturers and assessors have increased their communication between each other and gives them a more likely chance of the armor meeting the NIJ standards. At the very end of the article, in the, “About the Author”, it states that Michele Coppola is a senior writer and editor at the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System’s National Center. This finally touches on the ethos appeal. By seeing this, the audience then gives the author even more credibility by his standing and position. At this point it concludes the article touching fairly equally on all three appeals of the Rhetorical Triangle. By using all three appeals, it can get it’s point across to almost any reader, depending on which appeal means most to them. The logos appeal was slightly dominant, which makes sense because in the field of criminal justice facts and evidence are the driving force.

As for the second article, it touches on all of the same appeals as the first one verbatim, except for the ethos appeal. The reason behind this is that it’s actually an article written about the journal article, so therefore has exactly the same content its just slightly presented differently. The emotional appeal is there as well as the logos but there author doesn’t reveal his identity or really give any sort of information that would make us think he was a credible source. The article relies on using the same statistic based information to get its point across about the follow-up inspections taking place. The author also relies on quoting things other people said as a way of giving himself credibility. Instead of his or herself being credible he or she uses what others have said to show valid facts.

All in all both articles had the same points and views on the Follow-Up Inspection Program. They both would appeal to really anyone that’s specifically in some sort of law enforcement that uses these ballistics products as well as anyone that would vote for or against the matter because they give detailed and specific information about the program so that the audience completely understands and can draw their own conclusions. I feel they made good use of the rhetorical appeals in order to really convince any nonbelievers that the follow-up inspection program was a necessary addition. The logos appeal remained the dominant one as statistical evidence is extremely important when dealing with criminal justice. All laws are based on statistics and numbers. Though one article was slightly less convincing than the other they both still made their case to their particular audiences.

Works Cited

Coppola, Michele R. "Ballistic Body Armor: A Closer Look at the Follow-Up Inspection and Testing Program." *National Institute of Justice Journal* 271 (2013): 14-16. Print.

"NIJ Tests Body Armor for Performance, Durability." *PoliceOne.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Sept. 2013.