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Humanities

Plane and Simple: How Satire Lands the Truth about Boeing

In October of 2018, Lion Air Flight 610 crashed shortly after takeoff from Jakarta, Indonesia, killing all 189 people on board. Then again in March of 2019, Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crashed after takeoff from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, killing all 157 people on board. The similarity between these two aircrafts? They were both Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircrafts. After 346 people died in two similar crashes in less than five months, the Boeing 737 MAX passenger airliner was grounded worldwide. The crashes were devastating, and they raised urgent questions about the company's priorities and safety practices. In the aftermath, Boeing employed various strategies to divert public attention from the accidents, which caused global concern. Two articles, *SatireWire*'s "Boeing Declares Its Aircraft Will Not Be Made of Meat" and Beasley Allen's factual report on the crashes, offer contrasting approaches to analyzing how the company handled the crisis. While both articles shed light on Boeing's responses, the satirical approach of *SatireWire* is ultimately more effective in highlighting the absurdity of the company's tactics and capturing the audience's attention because of its use of humor, clever jokes, and hyperboles.

SatireWire's article uses humor and exaggeration to critique Boeing's response, making its argument highly impactful. By declaring that Boeing's aircraft "will not be made of meat," the article mocks the company's potential attempts to distract from critical safety concerns with irrelevant statements. The article is also

poking fun at Boeing's PR tactics and highlighting how Boeing's PR is performing absurd stunts to avoid addressing what actually happened. For example, in the article, in a repartee between a reporter and a representative from Boeing, the representative asks the Boeing rep to clarify whether or not the new planes will be exactly the same, and the Boeing rep says "An FDA ingredients label will be posted by the exit door showing our passengers that Boeing aircraft are 100 percent meat-free. Also no GMOs. And no trans fats!". This is followed by the reporter saying " We're saying your planes aren't going to be different. This seems like maybe a PR stunt to boost your stock price and make us forget about the 737 Max." ("BOEING DECLARES"). This directly reflects how Boeing is trying to divert attention. The Boeing rep not only dodged the question, but also talked about something completely different and absurd, and while this is an exaggeration, the hyperbolic tone here draws attention to the absurdity of Boeing focusing on anything other than addressing the root causes of the crashes. This satirical approach is not only entertaining but also forces readers to reflect on the priorities of corporations during times of crisis. The humor simplifies a complex issue, ensuring the critique is both accessible and memorable. By using satire, the article holds Boeing accountable in a way that sticks with its audience.

Beasley Allen, on the other hand, takes a more direct, logical, and statistical approach, appealing to the logos of the reader. The article gives an approach rooted in logic, data, and rational arguments, all while focusing mainly on the specifics of the crashes and subsequent lawsuits. For instance, the report says, "Two separate Boeing 737 Max 8 crashes, one involving Lion Air and the other Ethiopian Airlines, killed 346 people in a span of less than five months."(Allen). It goes on to

detail exactly why the crash happened, namely as a result of the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS). Not only does the report go into detail about the MCAS, but it also goes on to talk about the steps that Boeing was taking after the first crash to 'fix' the 737 MAX which eventually failed again. While informative, this approach lacks the sharp critique needed to expose Boeing's diverting tactics. Detailed reporting on the technical and legal aspects of the incidents is valuable for understanding the events but may fail to engage readers emotionally or critically. The absence of humor or strong commentary means the article relies heavily on the reader's prior knowledge or interest in corporate accountability. Compared to SatireWire, it does not emphasize Boeing's strategies to shift attention away from its failures, making its critique less effective overall.

In conclusion, both SatireWire and Beasley Allen address Boeing's response to the 737 MAX 8 crashes, but SatireWire does it more effectively. Its satirical approach keeps the reader interested while highlighting the ridiculousness of Boeing's diversionary efforts, guaranteeing that the reader properly understands the criticism. This satire also highlights how effective satire can be holding businesses responsible and igniting public debate on important topics. In the end, humor may be one of the most effective tools for exposing the truth and sparking meaningful change.

Sources

Allen, Beasley. "Boeing 737 Max 8 Crashes." Beasley Allen,

www.beasleyallen.com/aviation-accidents/boeing-737-max-8-crashes/.

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