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cc: S. Trahern ✓

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[REDACTED]
New Milford CT 06776

CSPAN
Washington D.C.

Dear CSPAN:

I have a partial suggestion for a guest on CSPAN. I say partial, because I don't know what other author/writers would round out discussion of inevitable changes on the home front of small town America adequately. The author I would like to see on CSPAN open phones in the morning, is Ron Powers, his book is "Far From Home."

I enjoy real anecdotes and metaphors for change, diversity, and difference in our country, and there certainly is evidence of change in this snap shot look at two tiny towns of Kent CT and Cairo Ill. I wonder what response the viewers across the country could have, about discussing the upheaval and change that they are living through, which is re-defining the quiet life in the hinterlands. It seems that constant "re-definition" is essential to the psyche of this country. I wonder if America is in the midst of an identity crisis at the small town level, no one believes what is happening and how quick things go boom, or bust. It seems that the quiet life has become like a fast video game that has to be played ruthlessly, where winning big is it, or you'll get gobbled up real fast.

I see the American people sometimes frustrated at the uncertain direction they may see in their small towns. I wonder if things aren't going to speed up a bit more in the future. Who knows, with regards to boom and bust cycles; they could become more pronounced with more volatile high tech mechanisms, governing the pulse of free markets. Merrill-Lynch may be bullish on America, but I feel somewhat ghoulish on America when I see public interest being spread thinly in this age of increasing diversity, as booms glow more brilliantly, and busts get meaner and dustier. We do not have any legislation to cushion social upheaval of the magnitude on the horizon. Yet Bush is brilliant by playing dead on domestic issues, until the American public turns green, and the dim witted Democrats jump in to offer

solutions that will become loud partisan Poo-Poo cushions. It is then possible for our bright President to laugh, and then boil the domestic agenda down to a one syllable word that could be taught to a Chimp, and get re-elected in a circus of elephants. Somehow I wonder how stimulated the viewing public could be on expressing the agony of change and the pain of recession in small town America, where real people must save up if and when the circus may come to town.

Just up the road, in Kent CT., "home" is the "perfect" town. Oi. In some ways, it is like an antique Disneyland for the rich to play at, in a shrewd and self serving way. They savor and harvest the agrarian past for big bucks, through purchase of over-restored antiques in their over-restored colonial farm houses, that were greedily over inflated in price. In a sense, the town has been restored to glory, yet some would argue it has been restored beyond recognition, with inbred upscale New Yorkers who can only survive by living on the cream that has risen to the top, they are at the pinnacle of consumerism, so gone is the town's soul, yet it is re-enacted with post card utopian verve by the finest purveyors of "country life," shop keepers who sell bits and pieces of the quentessential Kent experience, as if they were selling Hoola-Hoops during the popular craze of the 1950's.

Art galleries now haunt the once credible buildings of a once simple main street. The artist in Kent appears to have become what the monkey once was to the organ grinder. For sheer oddity of filling an empty facade the rich are easily amused, by that bohemian, those who artfully monkey around with consciousness, packaged thoughtfully for the masters of the master card.

On the other hand, there are hundreds of towns that have silently died in America. Whether it be Kent, Cairo or somewhere inbetween, small towns are changing for better and for worse. The dying town is like an Edsel automobile, the public wont have it. I feel that Kent Ct. is just as dead as Cairo Ill., only Kent has been embalmed, preserving the dead past by morticians of the business world who have huge undertakings feed their excessive needs to spend and spend for their reserved lifestyle. Gone from American life is the genuiness that was there for those who worked for it in a humble way. Are slaves really free, or are they repackaged in exciting new colors? America will progress, with wave upon wave of change in our disposable society. I wonder how many American Indians lamented the onslaught of white civilization, and I wonder how many "have nots" today lament the hardened steel piles driven into the structure of our government, designed to feed greed, where the easy subtleties of the rich get easier and

more subtle, as the focus of their future becomes more vivid and more effortless.

If you did do a telecast with Ron Powers, perhaps Alvin Toffler would also be on the panel, to discuss the "what ifs" of the future, from his new book too. After all, change is the most certain aspect of the future, and I would be interested in what kind of comments the viewers would air, though I don't perceive Powers as a futurist at all, I think a futurist's input could be interesting.

These are very good times we live in now, yet people I talk with think the economic problems and tax burdens are too pervasive to excite the public into spending any time soon.

I wonder if our American system is the proverbial candy bar at the picnic, only a matter of time before too many ants crawl in and devour it for the taking. The consumer society that consumes itself? Will Americans learn to cope with increasing diversity (which we have asked for and need), yet will this fragment, frustrate and destroy us if we do not learn to harness this potential source of continuing greatness?

Sincerely,

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