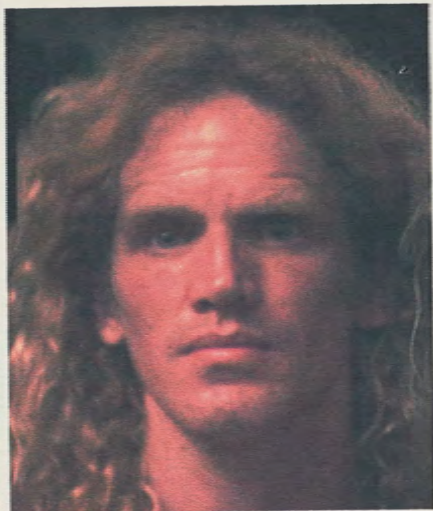




[REDACTED]
Mendham NJ 07945
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500 Word Essay

Cable System:
RNC of New Jersey

"Describe or demonstrate what you have discovered about democracy in
America through C-SPAN's Alexis de Tocqueville tour."

Being that the mechanics of America's democracy were never discussed, I could not, in spite of my best efforts (watched most segments) "discover" anything about democracy in America by viewing C-SPAN's Tocqueville tripe--I mean tour. However, what I did discover about television in America, is that there is more to resent about C-SPAN then just its illegitimate financing.

There is probably no word or subject in greater need of thoughtful definition and examination then democracy. At a time when our own democracy is faltering, if not lost (less then 50% participation) the fact that C-SPAN has chosen to trivialize the subject with their "Life Styles of the Rich and Famous" tribute (had bust commissioned) to Tocqueville, indicates a staggering lack of appreciation for what is at stake.

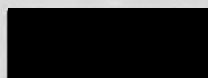
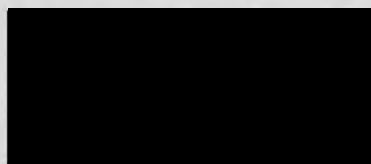
The insult that C-SPAN has added to this certain injury is that it has the audacity to expect 500 words expressing anything other then my utter contempt. This behavior helps prove my long-held belief that private corporations cannot be trusted with control of any public service, especially those services that involve how the public is informed, or in C-SPAN's case, disinformed.

I suppose I should not have been surprised by C-SPAN's willingness to slop the whitewash of distracting irrelevancy and frivolity upon the subject of democracy--after all, there isn't a democratic bone, even vestigial, in C-SPAN's whole corporate body. Since its inception, C-SPAN hasn't even tried to be a fair or democratic institution. From its undeniably unrepresentative call-in programs, through its exclusive guest list, to its placating decisions on what events it covers, C-SPAN offers the bill-paying, cable public no practical control.

Perhaps some of the executives that run C-SPAN believe their own propagandist rhetoric and actually think they are planting the seeds of understanding and inspiration- but only the weeds of indoctrination can grow in the fertilizer they're spreading. Like our democracy, C-SPAN has no tolerance or respect for any individual or point of view that falls outside of the realm it has narrowly and arbitrarily defined as legitimate and worthy. Like our archaic, district-based, electoral system, which uses the irrelevancy of geography to eliminate all hope of fair and proportionate representation for tens of millions of people, C-SPAN uses the questionable standard of journalistic credentials to ensure disproportionate representation on its airwaves.

To have legitimacy a democracy must provide more then just the right to vote--it must provide fair access and exposure to the candidates (i.e. ideas) that give the vote meaning. Just as our party-based (controlled) money-driven political system critically flaws our democracy, C-SPAN is critically flawed as a public service by its willingness to frame and enshrine that system.

If C-SPAN really gave a damn about democracy in America, instead of wasting its ill-gotten resources and valuable air-time documenting, in tedious detail the travel itinerary of history's most misquoted Frenchman, and asking stupid questions about it, C-SPAN would provide the real people of our democracy a real opportunity to examine, explore, and debate what our democracy was, is, and should or could be.



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