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C-SPAN'S BEAVIS AND REBUT-HEAD SHOWS

I suppose that Mr. Lamb and his staff feel virtuous about their commitment to "balance" on C-SPAN'S interview and call-in shows. Most of your shows, i.e., the ones that you try to "balance", come across like this:

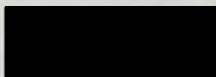
"In this corner, ladeez and gents, C-SPAN presents Christopher Columbus, who foolishly believes that the world is round. And in this corner, we have Ms. Kook, who, as vice-president of the Flat Earth Society, knows better. Now, shake hands, come out pulling hair, and may the best kook win." (Nothing new here. That's the universal TV formula for a balanced presentation.)

Of course, you represent the public interest by letting people call in to express their views and to ask questions. Oh, how touching it is to hear these people, with tears in their voices, thank God for C-SPAN! What kind of satanic cynic am I, to say that you use the same selection criteria as Rush Limbaugh? (And I can hear you snorting, "What's wrong with that?")

But now, thanks to a cartoonist, Barry Blitt, and the September 20 New Yorker, I am inspired to encapsulate my reaction in true media-bite format: You guys are giving us The Beavis and Rebut-Head Show -- and (I guess) you do it with a straight face.

So, what penetrating new insight do I have to offer? My experience tells me that it isn't worth bothering to offer an idea, so I won't. (I'm sure you don't like crank letters any more than the other Mud-Wrestling networks.)

No answer expected — but Love, nonetheless



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P.S. I've heard Mr. Lamb express his Theory of Balance: "We get about the same number of responses from viewers who accuse us of being Republicans as we do from those who accuse us of being Democrats." (Not an exact quotation.) So, what about us of the Know-Nothing Party?

I'll bet you don't get many responses from people accusing you of objectivity (or at

least trying to be objective). Your hearts are in the right place and your brains are in the Brinkley-Will-Donaldson and Kinsley-Sununu Creative Media Hair-Pulling Workshop.

P.S. No. 2: Mr. Lamb and some of the other interviewers carry on a Compulsive Search For Excellence. Whenever a caller is on the line, you always seem to believe they are no good, and that the next caller will, without a doubt, be much better. So you always dump the present caller in favor of the greener grass. You explain this as "giving everybody a chance". Your logic is pretty good vintage Fearless Fosdick: In order to be sure that everyone gets a chance, you give nobody a chance. (There are exceptions. So what? The Compulsive Search For Excellence is bound to succeed once in a while.)

P.S. No. 3: Is the comparison to Mr. Limbaugh a low blow? No, because Mr. Limbaugh maintains that he is right, whereas you (apparently?) wish you could be impartial. If your objective, like his, is just to pander to the ~~people who are motivated~~ to call, to wait on hold forever (at least that's what I hear your callers saying), then you are justified in using his selection criteria. And by the way, in re P.S. No. 2, isn't a caller who has been trying to get in for a year, and who has been on hold for () minutes/hours, entitled to something more than a curt brush-off?

I wouldn't call in for less than \$10 a minute for time on hold. Yours is another Big System That is Broken.

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