

July 30, 1995

WJD
BRIAN LAMB,

I watched C-SPAN on July 24, 1995 when a caller complained about other callers treating some of your guests rudely (journalists, reporters, experts, commentators, pundits, columnists, spin doctors, vortex nurses, liars, press secretaries and others in the news-like and news-nosy business). You, too, complained about stink-talk.

No surprise to me that callers behave in that way; not at all hard to figure out (maybe you should tune around more, Brian; weekends especially). People interested in news-like programs have many wonderful examples and role models in the news-like tribe to emulate. (Why, dissing almost qualifies as a national sport, certainly as a national obsession these days...drive on any freeway in the country and see the national bird displayed frequently, I speak of digitus impudicus of course...observe bumper stickers and T-shirts where basic English now consists of four-letter words the most popular twin being of only two syllables, the epidemic ubiquitous "fuck you").

A few group examples: the rabid roster of the McLaughlin "show"; the boyz and girlz in the 'hood from the Capitol Gang;* the unfriendly Gatling fire exchanges on Crossfire. Some individual names: Al Hunt, Juan Williams, Molly Ivins, John Sununu, Eleanor Clift, Bob Beckel, and Mark Shields...these chain-saw toxic mouths dripping with verbal bacterial infections all inspire news junkies (who, much like cocaine junkies are always in need of another "fix"), to follow their lead and example.

I have a theory (based on a recent scientific finding that bed-wetting is hereditary: see the Los Angeles Times, 7-1-95, A-30) that many of the people named above were bed wetters in childhood and in their teens, and have simply carried over this infantile behavior into adulthood under the psychological phenomenon known as transference thus perpetuating their infuriating urinating over the airways and on the printed page (and screen) instead of on the mattress.

I've not come to a positive conclusion for a remedy although I like the idea of involuntary sterilization for anyone entering journalism (and politics); but I suppose we'll have to wait for civilization as a whole to reach a higher level of maturity for that to come about. Until then, as in the case of drive-by shooters, substance abusers, wife-beaters, and other anti-social half-asses we've got to depend on education, and attempt to get a better quality of parenting (and, as a corollary, less-to-no parenting by the fertile but disinterested, unqualified, and irresponsible).

*No proven affiliation with the Bloods and the Crips.

A temporary remedy would be a law. Americans love to pass laws to ease their guilt about being unable otherwise to cope with problems, social and several. Let's pass a law!

I propose a law outlawing the use of political and journalistic assault mouths (and somehow we got to work in cartoonists, too...very rude people). I know, we have libel laws and slander laws but they don't do the job, do they? This law would not be different in principle from the recently passed law that prohibits assault weapons...we already have ample laws against the use of guns illegally, and there are thousands of legal assault weapons in society at the moment in the hands of law-abiding citizens which are not used in the contemplation or commission of crimes; and the number of crimes committed using assault weapons is minuscule compared to the total number of such weapons out there. Still, we have our assault weapons law. We feel better for having it; it doesn't do much but it makes us feel good. See? We need a law to ban assault mouths (don't forget the cartoonists!) pending the advance of civilization to the point where the politicians can put everyone in jail that needs to be there...that's most of us, of course, but the day is a long ways off and I'm not worried at the moment for me or for you, Brian; I'm o.k., and I think you're o.k.

This is a digression but it's near enough to be worth pondering. I've never been able to understand why politicians (and their camp followers, i.e., journalists...don't forget cartoonists!) get the attention that much of the public gives them. Yes, I know they are necessary (but would you want your sister to marry one?): human beings are rambunctious, contentious, and generally quite uncaring about the rights of others -- we need politicians to ameliorate differences, find compromises, hold the middle ground, and so on and on (and we also need baseball umpires and boxing referees...but who follows them around detailing their every action and decision?). And we need their camp followers to service them in their several needs and to (we hope) report on their often grimy, often gritty concomitant activities including sexual romps. But Heavens! We also need in this strange and roiling world things like blow flies, cockroaches, termites, vultures, jackals, rats, maggots, worms, and fungi imperfecti to clean up the detritus and debris of seasonal life on earth...and up the tree of life, human society needs janitors, garbage collectors, grave diggers, coroners, morticians, lawyers, and embalmer assistants just as much as we need politicians (and their camp followers, i.e., journalists...don't forget cartoonists!) to perform disagreeable work that most of us don't want to do and aren't qualified to do.

I know you're following me...why are we so, then, generally, fixated on politicians (some would say "asphyxiated by")?

Do we erect statues of coroners? will Dr. Golden be so remembered by a grateful Los Angeles? has any government issued a stamp honoring garbage collectors? (o.k., o.k.,...we do have a stamp for Elvis...touché). is there a hall of fame for embalmers? is there a Janitorial Memorial in D.C.? does David Brinkley and Face the Nation do morticians?

Is there any point to this letter? to the caller's complaint? Will not rudeness live, continue, prosper?

I hope so. I'm trying to carry on.

[REDACTED]

P.S. I'm a semi C-SPANner...I watch from 5:30a.m. to 6:00 a.m. usually...BOOKNOTES always (superb!); and as I know that you are dedicated to voicing all possible opinions of your devoted audience, I wouldn't want this letter to throw a wrench into the works for you and your excellent staff; so, therefore, recognizing my habitual tendency to acerbity I can't imagine that you would want to air all this stink...yet, such is my mental myopia that, for instance, I couldn't imagine J. Danforth Quayle as being presidential timber for the first GHWB go-around even though he was known to be the personal and first choice of our now beloved (but then putative) 41st President, George Herbert Walker Bush (immortal phrase-maker who gave us the now common euphemism for excrement, "deep doo-doo" so slit-trenched in the common speech of today, as well as the less known "vision thing"); and, on the second go-around as well, my myopia continued, uncorrected, my bushed sight a muddled blur (the nation's, too, it seems - TIMBER!) and in the country's united confusion we got a 42nd President (and co-president) which then sent many of us on a frantic search for a radial keratotomy procedure that might leave us somewhat better off in '96. This brings me to my, perhaps now blunted, point: if you do use my letter, please do not use my address beyond identifying me as a West Coast despondent respondent of La-La Land ass I already get enough mail from indigent relatives who have located me, wanting money, and hate mail from completely unknown fellow citizens is not what I need in my short remaining days...I am 72 years old, one foot searching for a grave site while I look for a mortician who can plant me in a rest camp at a reasonable price thus leaving my wife with an adequate inheritance which will sustain her until she leaves this vale of smears.

Have a nice future!

[REDACTED]

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