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Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414

9 November 1990

Ted Koppel Productions  
% ABC News  
1717 De Sale Street  
Washington DC., 20036

Dear Mr. Koppel,

I wish to make a strong complaint regarding your approach to the Senator Elect Paul Wellstone interview on 8 November.

For starters, I am partisan on this. I've known Paul for nearly 15 years, and worked with him on any number of organizational and DFL party matters in these years, and for the past nine months I have worked daily as a volunteer on his campaign. I served as Credentials Chair of the State DFL convention that endorsed him last June. I called all his opponent's delegates in the 6th district to see how and when they might be movable to Wellstone at the convention if we looked good on the first and second ballot. All this involvement does not make me a dispassionate observer of Nightline interviews.

What should all you Washington commentators know about Wellstone and Minnesota Politics?

First: I am waiting for someone to ask whether Boschwitz was perhaps an accidental Senator, and really represented Minnesota? You know in 84 and 88 Minnesota voted for Democrats in the Presidential Election -- and while Boschwitz has been Senator, the state legislature has been in DFL (In Minnesota the Democratic Party is called the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party -- because we are a merger of a successful third party and the Democratic Party) control throughout Boschwitz's 12 year term except for one house by one vote for one term. Similarly, 8 of these years the Governor has been a liberal DFL'er. Boschwitz was elected in 78 when the Party was not together. Humphrey had died, and Mondale had resigned to be VP. Internal power struggles within the DFL laid the ground open to both Boschwitz and Durenberger. So first question ought to be about Boschwitz -- his voting record -- and how well it represented Minnesota opinion.

Second: You all seem to think Wellstone came out of nowhere. Well he didn't. Anyone around DFL politics for the past 15 years knew Paul Wellstone. If you supported the Freeze campaign, you knew Paul as one of the organizers. If you were in a labor union, you knew Paul as a supporter, and a consultant on labor strategy and tactics at the bargaining table or on the picket line. If you were an academic, you met him at conferences, where he frequently delivered well researched papers. If you were a family farmer, you knew him as an organizer of farmers being sold out in the fiscal agricultural crunch of the early 80's. You would know him as a political economist who knew his stuff as to what is a sustainable economy in rural Minnesota. With his friend Barry Casper, Professor of Physics at Carleton, he wrote one of the first books about the genetic problems of living in an environment dominated by an electromagnetic field -- a serious problem around which the EPA is a year late with studies and proposed regulation. (Book published by MIT Press). The

Powerline dispute is a classic protest movement of the early environmental movement -- one solidly founded in good science. Paul was the organizer and political specialist -- Barry supplied and organized the science. And of course Paul has represented Minnesota on the Democratic National Committee for the past 6 years. (And in Minnesota you get elected to that job.) There is a great deal more in his resume -- but any research would have given you this and you would hardly have mistaken him for a constructed "blow-dried" candidate such as Robert Redford depicted.

Third: Paul's campaign is a lesson about how someone with ideas runs against seven million dollars. \$7,000,000.00 can buy a great deal, but there is no way it could buy the network of people who worked for nothing or next to nothing to overcome that seven million bucks. Paul's campaign was about a commitment to a different kind of politics and very different political values. You need to ask questions about how many people with years of paid political experience volunteered to work on this campaign for nothing? So the ads were cute and original -- they were made by some of his former students who wanted to do catchy public service advertisements, but found that in the Reagan environment that the only way this could be done was to go commercial, make some money, and do the work of the heart on the profits. This is really the story -- how a whole network of talented and bright people put this act together and beat seven million bucks.

One of the great assets of the Wellstone campaign was no money. Because we denied ourselves Washington PAC gold, no one insisted that we bring in one of the "standard brand" consultants to "design" the campaign. We didn't buy it, we used our own assets, and made it up as we went along. It was a Minnesota Campaign designed and made in Minnesota. (Having worked in Joan Grove's effort against Boschwitz in 84 -- and come to understand how the handing over of thousands in a Georgetown townhouse fundraiser influences how you do advertising, design of campaigns, etc., this was my first "warning" to Wellstone last spring -- Keep Control here in Minnesota.)

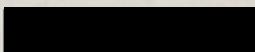
Fourth: there is a source of interest for Wellstone's Philosophy. I would suggest that you find and watch Bill Moyers 2 hour interview with Myles Horton which was broadcast on PBS perhaps 5 years ago. Highlander Research and Education Center -- formerly Highlander Folk School in Tennessee is where Rosa Parks got trained in Non Violence theory, where Martin Luther King met with the folk who became his network, where SNICC organizational meetings were held in 1959. Paul Wellstone was also trained there. Horton died about a year ago at the age of 84. From 1933 to the late 80's Horton was about finding and developing talented organizers. Take a look at the Moyers tape.

Fifth: My criticism of your interview is how you trivialized now Senator Paul Wellstone. And this was not a trivial election. When you do this to him, and to our hand-made, home-made winning campaign, you also trivialize us. You essentially say that when citizens put it together, they are not worthy of your respect. You say all we are worth is "Wonderbread" and not the home-made, yeasty full of wheat germ and bulgar wheat type that is both good for you and tastes better.

Finally -- why don't you do your research, and offer the American People something other than a re-hash of an old Hollywood film? But if you keep watching C-Span II, you will find we elected something different. Paul is the best stump speaker of any in the Senate -- and as someone who read the Clay-

Calhoun debates for an undergraduate thesis on how moral abolitionism got converted into political abolitionism -- believe me, we are in for a treat. We finally have a Senator as apt with the American language as Churchill was with the English -- and at least 6 years to enjoy.

Sincerely,



Copies to America Tonight -- your competition, and to Brian Lamb at C-Span.