

August 2008 Comments

CPB

- Current make-up of the National Minority Consortia:
 - “Do Arab Americans or Muslims fit under the national minority consortial [sic] to receive production funding?”

Television

- PBS children’s programming:
 - “Your PBS Kids shows are fantastic. I try to watch them everyday on KOPB Portland Oregon and PBS Kids Sprout. I like your web site. Hope you're doing well.”

- *Sesame Street*:

- “On the August 14th episode, The Count was shown having a lottery. Obviously, if I am on the computer writing you minutes after seeing it, I am angry.

Gambling, while it is prevalent in our society, should not be showcased on children's programming. Early exposure to this addictive habit may lead to mindless acceptance later on. There are other ways to introduce numbers without also introducing an unnecessary evil.”

- Disappointed viewer can no longer receive PBS via his cable service:
 - “My life without The Nightly News, Front Line, Charlie Rose, Gwen Ifel [sic] and so many other PBS features which I am now denied has diminished my life. In this election year with all the issues facing our floundering country, I wonder why I even have a television set. Garbage is garbage even in high def.”

- *Frontline* episode *Fat*:

- “You have broadcast a very moving program on th Morbidly Obese. It featured a facility designed to treat such people. I have a son who weighs well over 600#. I need to contact an in care facility that can help him. I am finding all sorts of dead ends in my area, but I am surely willing to move him t a place that can help him. Ythank you for your help.” [sic]

- Anger stemming from confusion with the many digital channels offered by local PBS affiliates, which now present V-me and other Spanish language programming:
 - “I’ve been donating to KVIE/PBS/CPB for several years. I turned on your broadcast this morning and it was in SPANISH! I will never donate to you traitors again. F*** YOU!”

- *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*:
 - “I’m calling to complain about a terrible broadcast on Channel 13 [WNET in NYC]. It was a BBC program. It was during the *NewsHour* at 6:00, and BBC was reporting, and they attacked Israel for all the troubles in Gaza. They forgot that Hamas took over Gaza, and from the very start they started throwing rocks, and shelling Israel with rockets, and terrifying people down below, killing many Israelis. They took soldiers hostage: one young soldier is still hostage; they refuse to release him. And so Israel has closed their borders. They also said that they’re going to destroy Israel. How people, how the BBC can blame Israel for their troubles? Israel will have to defend itself! Of course they have to watch the borders! Of course they have to restrict arms flow into Gaza. Of course things will not be good for them. If the people in Gaza wanted peace, they would have it. Israel would be more than willing to grant it. And it’s terrible – BBC should be told if they are going to attack Israel unfairly, that you are not going to have them on PBS. It is a public-supported program, and I’m sure that most of the people who support you don’t realize that you are allowing anti-Israel propaganda and pro-Arab to be broadcast. Hamas does not want peace; they want to destroy Israel; they have said so over and over. And to complain about the conditions in Gaza when they brought it on themselves is a disgrace.”

 - “I specifically decided to watch KCET's Democratic Convention coverage every night this week to avoid the talking heads, partisan rhetoric and snide comments of "news" analysts, but tonight David Brooks finally showed his true colors that seemed to be simmering all week long.

David Brooks said after Al Gore's talk at the convention this evening that Al Gore, "Blew his chance." What B.S. (for lack of a more descriptive term). Mark Shields aptly immediately noted that Al Gore actually received MORE VOTES in 2000 than George Bush... For David Brooks to so boldly say that Al Gore "Blew his chance" was beyond out-of-line, it was disgusting and disrespectful of the MAJORITY of American voters in 2000 that voted solidly for Al Gore.

Mr. Brooks should feel at home covering the Republican convention, although he should not be given any further credible assignments on the

air until he apologizes to America for his outrageous assertion that Al Gore BLEW IT!

Shame on David Brooks... He just blew his impartiality!

I think I'll change the station now!"

Radio

- Renée Montagne's August 7, 2008 report, 'Bird's Nest' Ballads: Olympic National Anthems':
 - "It was a very nice, a very interesting piece. Just wondering whether the editors on that piece really thought about it beyond the whimsy in which it was presented. I'm glad that the music man presented the German national anthem. He did choose the Principality of Monaco, which clearly won't be heard, but why wasn't the Israeli national anthem played? It is also a beautiful piece, and has an interesting history. So again, I just want to complement NPR for putting on this interesting discussion of music, the Olympics, national anthems. I just regret that the choice was made not to play the Israeli national anthem – it is a beautiful piece of music, or more broadly speaking, how very interesting connections and musings can evolve from such a discussion."

- *The Diane Rehm Show*:
 - "I'm listening to the second hour of *The Diane Rehm Show* [August 7] – there's a gentleman who's raising a very difficult theological, psychological, psychodynamic issue about forgiveness [Philip Gourevitch, journalist and author of *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* and *Standard Operating Procedure* with Errol Morris]...the French neo-colonial power in Rwanda was there to support the perpetrators just as they perpetrated genocide in France against the Jews. Very difficult stuff here; I'm not suggesting that it's simple. I'll just simply say that Diane, who's Christian – very decent woman, does a wonderful job – her theology interferes to some extent that she's not even aware in her understanding of the historical flow, just as her guest is impacted by her theological understanding. With regard to the first hour, it took Diane until 10:54 to raise the issue of Dr. Ivins' motivation psychodynamically. ...I'm not suggesting the story shouldn't be kept open – it's a very interesting story – but the story is the internal ruminations, machinations of Dr. [Bruce] Ivins when we posit that he is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Contrary to what one of the guests said earlier in the program that he wasn't sure there was enough evidence beyond a reasonable doubt – if I'm sitting on that

jury judging Dr. Ivins, I bring back the verdict of guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. So if we want to explore possibilities, what motivates a man to perpetrate such heinous crimes, we need to posit that he's guilty and then work backwards. What was this man? What was his background? What were these psychopathological things that were going on in his life? Look how he got sidetracked with an attempt to discredit the social worker who had a drinking problem. And I was very pleased that Diane rebuked that caller who in her own egotism was suggesting that the listeners weren't aware that the mass media doesn't cover things. I give kudos to Diane for that rebuke of the listener, to say such a thing. But again, I'm rebuking Diane for not bringing up the idea that Dr. Ivins *is* guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and not exploring sufficiently *who* this person was that could perpetrate such a crime. It isn't simply a matter of money, it's about aspirations, human aspirations – some people more than others, not getting sufficient recognition. Dr. Ivins apparently thought that he was so brilliant, and apparently he wasn't getting enough recognition. And in the course of his life from early on, we see how that could spiral out of control.”

- “On the tail end [of the August 12 interview with Marie Brenner, author of the memoir *Apples and Oranges*], they finally got around to [her brother's] Christian conversion [from Judaism]. Again, this is very sensitive – Diane, [Marie] Brenner, myself, everybody – we're all created in the image of God, which is a difficult understanding, but that is a revealed from the Torah. I'm not for or against – we are all human beings and we are all imperfect. There's a lot of truth in Christianity and there a lot of truth in Islam, but we need to see the historical progression. With that said, I know that Diane is a faithful Christian, and she believes her faith to be the truth, as do many Christians around the world, just as Muslims believe *they* have the final truth. And, as a Jew, I believe that the Torah *is the* truth, whatever that means. And I'm not prepared to go into that now; I try to do so in some of my writing. But let me suggest this, and I hope there isn't offense taken, but to look carefully at what I'm saying. Christianity is Judaism for dummies. Again, Christianity is 'Judaism for dummies'. Here's a man, the brother of Brenner – yeah, these are secular, justice-minded Jews, but very alienated from Torah. So when this man gets his cancer, he's very susceptible for the comfort that Christianity provides. Understandable. But here Brenner on the one hand is writing a book exploring the psychodynamics of her relationship with her brother, and exploring the roots and the legacy that's passed down from the prior generation, which is very Jewish – it's consistent with what we all human beings have to do. But then the settling: in other words, on the flip side, the Christian view – let's just settle and say 'let's be in the present'. The Christians basically believe that history stopped 2,000 years ago, when Jesus emerged from death, which is baloney. Jews will never accept that, and Muslims don't accept that. So how does a Christian

reconcile the fact that Brenner and Diane Rehm – both brilliant theologians, right? – who suggested it’s the same God. It’s NOT the same God! We Jews rejected, reject now, and will ALWAYS reject Jesus’ God. And the Muslims came along to challenge the Christian idolatry, because Muslims were asserting in their revelation that this simplistic way of looking at life where there is no law except to just love and forgive, is false! It’s an idolatry! So again, this is very painful stuff because it seems as if I’m attacking Diane as a Christian, and this Brenner woman who’s coming off as an intellect, but she doesn’t know s--- about what it is to – I mean, she thinks she’s smart, and she is, and I think I’m smart, and I am! But the idea is that her inability to make deeper connections to understand and therefore she wants to stop and just say ‘well, me and my brother have to get along!’ ...I just couldn’t let go of the idea that we all believe in the same God. We do not believe in the same God. We do not. Islam and Christianity are derivative religions, but an iteration means that it’s a compliment, but it’s also a forgery.”

- “[August 14 broadcast, ‘State Initiatives Restricting Abortion Access’] Wanda Franz [president of the National Right to Life Committee] and people like her present a continuation of what Christian idolatry....People like her are ‘anti-choice’, as I would characterize them, not pro-life, because pro-choice *is* pro-life. Wanda Franz and Christians who are part of a culture of death – Christianity is a culture of death – they worship a dead, Jewish, white man. Again, that is idolatry. And because of an overcompensation for what Christianity has done through the ages, with regard to the oppression of women, with regard to the murder of Jews, they have come to overcompensate by suggesting that life begins at conception. That’s false, even according to Orthodox Jews it is false. There’s a 40-day window in which abortion is permitted. So again, Christians are attempting to impose their ontological, theological point of view to the rest of the population by making laws barring abortion, which would then force women to go about it in illegal and unsafe ways. Again, Wanda Franz is representative of a group of idolaters who are very sincere – I know Wanda Franz and people like her are very sincere in their belief that they have to protect the lives of the unborn. It is false. It is an idolatry that extends from the worship of a dead, Jewish, white man who was born from a virgin mother. So you see how this is a very very complicated, interesting issue. It goes very deep to the heart of who we are as human beings. Again, I respect Wanda Franz and her ability to make a judgment and advocate her position. But she’s wrong.”
- August 7, 2008 interview with Ron Suskind, author of *The Way of the World: A Story of Truth and Hope in an Age of Extremism*, on *Fresh from WHYY*:
 - “This is an issue of form, rather than substance. So, like Sy Hirsch and magazine [sic] reporters like Woodward and Bernstein – these are very

capable people, but there's a touch of arrogance in Suskind's presentation, and I'm guilty of it myself. So again, people who have strong opinions and believe in their ability to discern the truth and articulate it perhaps can be accused, if you will, or challenged, because they *are* in some way arrogant. In any event, I want to make that point about Suskind's presentation...[And regarding Iraq,] better that we had public war than a private CIA takedown, as Suskind is suggesting perhaps the way to go. That's the way we operated in Guatemala, in Vietnam, in Iran itself – the CIA undermining government, secretly taking down leadership and installing dictators who support America in the Cold War. Better that it was a public war, and all this time, a clear demonstration by the American people that we are prepared to sacrifice precious blood and treasure to assist Arabs and Muslims in their efforts to reform what was a debased form of Islam. And *that's* what's going on in the Arab world today. The Internet traffic suggests that there are many Muslims now debating Islam and governance and democracy – it's exactly what we wanted to achieve, and we *have* achieved that, even at a great price. I'm not downplaying the fact that a terrible tragic loss – people, families, dead soldiers, the wounded – there no denying that. I'm not denying that. But for those who were against the war, who want to put that up as the reason why we shouldn't have gone to war, well, that's silly. Because that's playing into the hands of the fanatic jihad: Muslims who are prepared to kill *us* because they fundamentally believe that sharia and Allah is the answer, and that infidels must be put down. So again, Suskind is arrogant in his notion that the reason we went to war was because of weapons of mass destruction, and it's still to me clear enough that that was a reasonable pretense – not in a false way, but in a legitimate reason at the time to go to war against Saddam...Again, the decision was to go forward and create some chaos in the Arab world to shake it up a little bit because the Arabs had so utterly debased themselves in the way they govern themselves. When you look at Saudi Arabia, when you look at Iran, when you look at Iraq under Saddam, you understand that the entire thrust of Christians in Europe – who are 'post-Christian' – Christians in America – not Christian Zionists, but the Christians in America who are always very quick, and the Christianized Jews, Suskind among them, to blame America: that somehow America is always malicious and wrong in the execution of its foreign policy.”

- August 15, 2008 edition of *The Diane Rehm Show*:
 - “I sell short Hisham's [Melham, Washington bureau chief for Al-Arabiya TV and Washington correspondent for the Lebanese newspaper *An-Nahar*], idea that he looks at how America is weak – you know, vulnerable. And the idea that callers call in that America violated the territorial integrity of Kosovo, or Iraq, and now Russia...I just have to get the question to Hisham, and those who believe that America is weak

because of its invasion of Iraq, and all this other stuff. Question: Is Muslim/Islamic imperialism – whether in the form of Arab-Muslim nationalism, normally secular, or radical fundamentalist jihadi Islam, however you want to look at the prism through which you might see Islamic imperialism – does Islamic imperialism respect the territorial integrity of member states of the United Nations? Not that territorial integrity is the end-all and be-all; some of these states are relatively recent, including Israel, as well as Iraq, Jordan, Syria – you know, you get the idea....So again, Hisham: is Muslim/Islamic imperialism – I hope that you'll concede that there's an element in Islam that is imperialistic, just as in Christianity there's an element of imperialism – does that Islamic imperialism respect the territorial integrity of nations? I daresay Iran doesn't respect the territorial integrity of Israel or any state that it decides doesn't agree with its radical program for reforming the world. Syria doesn't respect the territorial integrity of Lebanon. What else do I have to say – we could jump all over the U.S. But someone has to be the arbiter, and as weak – in other words, as deficient or as imperfect we are as Americans, nevertheless America *is* the gold standard, and that is why the people around the world look to America as the arbiter of justice and truth. Now, America does fall short, for many reasons, but it is the powerful country in the world, the dollar *used to be* the gold standard, if you will, for good reasons; it's not because of the failure of the capitalist system that's really a cover for people to impose *their* will on other weak peoples around the world. But it gives the weak people around the world an opportunity to suggest that America somehow falls short of its position as an arbiter of truth and justice. But again, Hisham and those who want to denigrate America and suggest that we are weak – do Muslims, does Islam respect the territorial integrity of other nations around the world? I mean, Pakistan has difficulty with India. Curious, right, how nations can't resolve their differences because of things that are very deep that are never explored, and probably properly so, because we don't want shouting matches about your religion v. my religion. So, you know, it's appropriate not right now – in private discussions, maybe...I do sell short the ideas expressed by people like Hisham because he is anti-Zionist – as far as I know; I never heard him to be a great supporter of Israel. He probably believes Israel is an imperial aggressor state. So, interesting how ideas are bought and sold in the marketplace of ideas.”

- August 29, 2008 broadcast of a Linda Wertheimer piece entitled “Two Udalls Work To Expand Democrats' Senate Turf”:
 - “I heard a five-minute ‘commercial’ for two Democratic congressmen running for the Senate in Colorado and New Mexico, the Udall cousins, which managed to praise them to the sky and not even mention their opponents’ names...This is an example of blatant partisanship on NPR’s part, and in no way deserves to be supported by public funds.”

Programming ideas

Television

- Suggestion for a travel show using motorcycles:
 - “I have an idea about a travel show where viewers will mail in videos of their favorite places to travel to in their communities. In 10 minutes they would tell about local favorite meals to eat, places to see, tourist spots. It doesn't have to be a reality show It could be hosted by bikers that tour America on Motorcycles. Picking out the best location in each state. Viewers would be incuraged to write in about their communities to get a visit from the host.” [sic]
- Request for wider distribution of *Sit and Be Fit*, particularly in Scottsdale, Arizona:
 - “We don’t have it. And as you must know by now, there are plenty of seniors down here that would love to have that program. I’m originally from Illinois, and I miss that program something terrible! I hope this program can get on the air some way or somehow!”
- Request for a *NewsHour* or *Washington Week* interview with Jerome Corsi, author of *The Obama Nation*:
 - “There’s information that’s not getting to the public through the mainstream media that we need to know about [Senator Barack] Obama. It’s extremely important that we get this information before the election. Also, apparently Obama has not produced a valid birth certificate, and there’s information that he *was* born in Africa, and your news organization needs to investigate this! There’s a lot of information that we are not getting from the regular media, and it’s *your* job to get this information to us!”
- Request that PBS include the new BBC production of *Little Dorrit* in a future season of *Masterpiece*

Radio

- Request that NPR fully investigate the uninsured in America as the greatest threat currently facing the nation:

- “The situation is more dangerous and grave for the American public than any public enemy or terrorist that might be lurking in the bushes somewhere. The dangers of infections by people who do not have any healthcare is *much more dangerous* than anything this country ever faced! *Please, explain it to the public – it’s your duty.*”
- Request that Diane Rehm discuss “the issue of responsibility, indeed culpability, for economic meltdown” in the housing market:
 - “I know it’s difficult, because we have this myth about free market capitalism, that somehow, it’s just the market, supply and demand. But it is the case and it is not the case. And I wish that you would try to prompt your guests who discuss economics to try to pin down who is responsible? Now, one could say, if one is choosing to assert, or designate or assign responsibility, that the mass consumer – consumption by consumers and the behavior – individuals are free to choose whether they’re consumers, or whether they’re investors or producers, and that’s all well and good. That’s an aggregate approach. But you can decide when pinning culpability on the American public who consumes in excess, and they wanted to buy houses and they couldn’t afford it. But what about on the upper end – why not get a guest that is prepared to vigorously assign responsibility to the capitalist class that decides the transfers of the buying and selling and the various parties involved ... And most of the pain is suffered by the middle class – not the upper classes, who will, sure, lose value in their portfolios.”