

11/1/69

Mr. George Healy, Jr.
Executive Editor
The States-Item
New Orleans, La.

Dear Mr. Healy,

If it is the right of the press to endorse and oppose candidates and to take sides on important issues, it is also the obligation, especially when there is monopoly in ownership, to be fair. I have read the New Orleans reporting of the coming election with some care and believe it to be a model of partisanship and unfairness.

A case in point is your story of the 29th headed "Garrison Refuses Television Debate". It relates to a WYES "panel" show well advertised in your paper March 3. I was so outraged that a publicly-supported, allegedly "educational" TV station would so dishonestly pretend fair presentation of both sides with the presentation of three all enemies of Jim Garrison and all working against him in the trial - under the deceptive title "Press and Prejudice" - that I wrote the station asking for fairness-doctrine time for response. A copy of that letter is enclosed. I think you will find the promises I made for the presentation of evidence and not personalities a fair one and I think you know me and my work well enough to understand I would have done just that.

Now this was not a panel show of reporters vs district attorney. It was guised as a dispassionate appraisal and evaluation by untainted, dispassionate observers (not one of whom had made what can be called by the stretch of even a biased imagination any serious investigation of the facts of the assassination as they relate to New Orleans). It was false^y presented as the cool, detached observations of men not involved. They were, in fact, all working for one side. Therefore, what was missing was the other side of the same character - a writer not a lawyer or the victim. Decency and the charter and obligations of WYES-TV required this, as did simple honor.

It can no more be lost upon you than it was on WYES and those to whom it is in bail that with a perjury charge pending against Mr. Shaw, there was a severe limit imposed on the district attorney. He could not speak freely, even if it would have been reasonable and fair for him to represent the press (would you have him speak for you?).

WYES-TV refused me the opportunity of presenting factual evidence, violated regulations and its charter by presenting but the single side, and was so completely lacking in common decency that it never responded to my request for a transcript.

"Press and Prejudice" would be a good title for an analysis of the reporting of the current campaign.

cc: Jim Garrison, Wm. S. Hart

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg