

I support an open and intellectually free internet on public airwaves.

Any pro business ruling in this instance is not only anti American but anti western civilization.

My story:

Stern Fairness?

In the early days of my television career, a fatuous and lazy public TV Program Director, now deceased, violated Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1937, more popularly known as the Equal Time provisions, during the local political season by unknowingly scheduling and airing a repeat program that featured a local candidate.

It was the first time I ever saw a television executive manufacture flop sweat and actually shake in fear.

It came to be a rather common occurrence.

Like today in Cali-fornia, this local race, back when, had way too many candidates (20 plus) vying for the office and, after the mistaken repeat, 30 uninterrupted minutes of individual access to the local TV audience.

Had this been a commercial TV station the executive would have certainly soon resigned to spend more time with his family.

As it was, in the safe little nepotistic world of glamour-job-land, this most unwholesome of individuals lumbered on in error filled unproductivity as the entire little station was consumed in fulfilling the Equal Time requirements demanded by his mistake.

Actually, an entire operation covering for an errant executive, also, came to be a rather common occurrence but these memories, dear reader, are stories for another time.

Aside from being a hardship on the station's staff, the little Equal Time shows really fleshed out the issues of that local race.

I remember many positive viewer calls.

Callers did not seem to realize this local programming was only due to the violation of a Federal regulatory rule and 30 uneventful years later likely have no memory of a similar set of events.

The Communications Act of 1937 created the FCC, which enforced and interpreted the communications law.

In 1949 the FCC established a policy that became known as the Fairness Doctrine.

Prior to 1949 broadcasting stations were prohibited from taking editorial positions.

In '49 the FCC moderated the editorial ban by describing stations as "public trustees" having "an obligation to afford reasonable opportunity for discussion of contrasting points of view on controversial issues of public importance."

In 1968 the Fairness Doctrine was reinforced by the Supreme Court's decision in *Red Lion Broadcasting Co., Inc. v. FCC*.

In 1971, the Commission ruled that stations were obligated to actively seek out and broadcast issues of importance to their community.

The Fairness Doctrine ran in parallel with the Equal Time provisions until 1985 when Reagan's FCC

chairman Mark Fowler “killed” or eliminated the fairness requirement that stations “afford reasonable opportunity for discussion of contrasting points of view”.

Prior to 1985, news programs, interviews and documentaries were exempt from the Section 315 Equal Time provisions but still had to obey the Fairness requirements.

In 1984 the FCC exempted Donahue from the Equal Time provisions.

In the years following the death of fairness, Sally Jesse Raphael, Jerry Springer and Politically Incorrect have been exempted from what remains of the Equal Time rules.

The theft of information from the American public arena continues with yesterday’s exemption of the Howard Stern Show and the specific short term intent of furthering a certain muscle bound Austrian’s one sided and illusory discourse.

Will uptight prigs George Will and Tim Russert soon opine as nude Senator’s Jell-O wrestle?

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<http://planetsean.blogspot.com/2003/09/stern-fairness-in-early-days-of-my.html>