

Neil Young v. Joe Rogan: The Remedy to be Applied

“They can have Neil Young or [Joe] Rogan. Not Both.” Thus the ultimatum from legendary musician Young, over his concerns with what he deems “misinformation” on the subject of COVID-19 vaccines, to streaming service Spotify.

Spotify, unsurprisingly, chose Rogan. It invested an estimated \$100 million in bringing the *Joe Rogan Experience* podcast exclusively to its platform, and that investment is likely paying off in a big way. His talk show is currently more popular, by far, than Neil Young’s music (although the latter is probably enjoying a bump on other platforms and in other formats, and songs have a much longer shelf life than talk shows focusing on current events).

Still, it’s sad that this kind of thing is happening.

Other artists are joining Young’s exodus from Spotify. Fewer choices for listeners is bad for artists and bad for platforms.

It seems to me that we have a much better answer for situations like this than “they can have me or they can have him, not both.”

“If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education,” Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote in 1927, “the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.”

Rogan is implementing the “more speech” prescription by promising “balance” between dissident and establishment views on the podcast.

Rogan and his guests — many of whom who seem well-qualified to discuss COVID-19 and vaccines even if (maybe because!) their opinions run counter to, say, Anthony Fauci’s — are already voices in the wilderness compared to the might of an establishment narrative that runs 24/7 in official government statements and on most news media.

Given that the toll of government policies largely based on that establishment narrative comes to nearly 900,000 COVID-19-related deaths in the United States so far, it’s hard to argue that Rogan owes “balance” to those working to silence, rather than refute, skeptics. But still, good on him for channeling Brandeis.

There’s a way for Rogan and Young to both be “the better man” here. Rogan should invite Young to appear on the podcast, and Young should accept. Not to have it out over COVID-19. Just to make nice, shoot the breeze about everything, and maybe smoke some cannabis together. Good times.

Right now, Rogan is “the better man.” I wish Neil Young hadn’t taken that particular route, but this southern man still needs him around, anyhow.