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**Open Letter to
NY1 Noticias' Juan Manuel Benitez
on El Diario-La Prensa and the
Arrogance of Latino Foreign Elites**

Note: My [posting on Wednesday](#) criticizing El Diario-La Prensa newspaper for their poor coverage of the Puerto Rican Parade scandal that made reference to the increasing disconnection of its new owners and management from the Latino community generated a flurry of criticisms from an unexpected source, [Juan Manuel Benitez](#) of the competing Time Warner Cable News NY1 Noticias. After savaging me with criticisms on Twitter and Facebook (and you know how sensitive I am), Benitez wrote a half apologetic email asking that now, all of a sudden, we keep the conversation private, ¡no jodas!. So, of course, below please find my response in an open letter to him.

---Angelo Falcón

February 7, 2014

Mr. Juan Manuel Benitez
Host, Pura Política
Reporter, NY1 Noticias
75 Ninth Avenue, 6th floor
New York, NY10011

Dear Juan Manuel,

Hi. I tried to call you this morning to talk about our recent exchange about El Diario-La Prensa's poor coverage of the National Puerto Day Rican Parade investigation by NYS Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, but since I haven't heard back I thought I would respond to you in writing. Also, in your email to me today, you asked that I keep this last correspondence just between the both of us, but this is after you have attacked me publicly and repeatedly on Twitter and Facebook. I don't know how they do these things overseas, but here in New York it doesn't work that way.

First of all, since my public criticisms were directed specifically at El Diario's leadership, I was hoping to hear from them and not you. The fact that you have thrown yourself into the middle of this public debate really gives the impression that you are advocating for the management of El Diario in the hopes of getting a job or column there. I'm not saying that this is, in fact, the case, just that it gives that impression because, quite frankly, you have your own show on Time Warner Cable News NY1 Noticias, so why else intervene in this way for a competitor. Makes no sense.

I am especially disappointed in you taking such a position in light of our strong and unqualified support for you at NY1 Noticias. I along with a large group, mainly of Puerto Ricans, as you well know, advocated on your behalf for greater support from NY1 management, including getting you more exposure on the English side of the station. For example, even when they held their Hispanic Mayoral debate at NY1 News hosted by the Latino Leadership Institute, when some sectors in the Hispanic community objected to your participation on the panel because you are a Spaniard and they wanted a Puerto Rican, Dominican or Mexican to moderate, it was a group of mainly Puerto Ricans and Dominicans who supported your participation in his historic debate. And as we arranged to meet with the management at NY1 News two years ago to discuss Latino community concerns about the station, I went out of my way to meet with you personally about our plans to get your input before we even sat down with them. I review all of this not to throw it in your face, but to let you know why I am so disappointed in your public stance against me.

Now my issue is not with Spaniards or Argentinians in general, as you should already have known, but with Spanish or Argentinian elites who come to New York with no or very little knowledge of the Latino experience here and exhibit the arrogance of determining, in this case, what is news and how a Latino-focused Spanish-language news organization should function, especially without seeking to engage that community and educating themselves about its needs. I have over the years raised the same issue about elites from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and other Latin American countries who have tried to do the same thing. You, on the other hand, have been here for over 12 years and have taken the time and made the effort to understand the politics and needs of Latinos in New York and the United States. I have participated on your show frequently and provide you with feedback privately from time to time because I feel you have earned my respect in this regard.

Now we clearly disagree about what is happening at El Diario-La Prensa. As you know, more than a year ago I wrote a column that turned out to be controversial, [The End of El Diario-La Prensa?](#), in which I raised my concerns about the new ownership of the paper and their parent corporation, impreMedia. I have interacted with many Diario reporters and editors over time for more than 30 years and have a very good sense of its operations and culture (as I have as well with staff at La Opinion and other impreMedia properties in Los Angeles and elsewhere). The consistent feedback I currently get of the new ownership and management is troubling, the general feeling being that they are totally disconnected from the Latino community in New York and the rest of United States.

The recent horrible coverage of the investigation of the Puerto Rican Parade was just the latest example of El Diario's increasing disconnection from the community it is supposed to serve. It was so late on a story it should have been way ahead of, and what they wrote was piss poor and totally derivative of other people's previous work on the issue. I have reached out to one of El Diario's senior columnists, Gerson Borrero (who was once the paper's editor), to find out what happened to his column this week, which he had told me earlier was on the Puerto Rican Parade controversy with a focus on Attorney General Schneiderman, and he is being vague about what happened to it. I am assuming that he was censored for some reason, which is why he had to publish his story on the Parade scandal in another newspaper in English, The New York Post. But I really don't know.

My objective, which I hope you already know, is to see El Diario successfully become an effective voice on Latino community issues and, in the process, commercially successful as well. I am always pushing you privately, for example, to connect the stories you cover in your cable TV program, Pura Politica, to their implications for the Latino community because I think what you do is valuable. You have not been completely successful in doing so, but I am glad to see that you have been making progress in this regard.

I was sorry to hear that you have encountered employment discrimination because of your Spanish heritage. But, to be brutally honest, all I can say is: Welcome to the club! When at NiLP we advocate for Latino rights, we include everybody in our community. NY1 Noticias is clearly a result of Latino community pressure and growing market power and, lo and behold, the guy running their top program, Pura Politica, is, believe it or not, a Spaniard (that's you)! And I don't know if you know this, but one of the founders of the Puerto Rican Parade was also a Spaniard, Jesus Galindez, so, yes, I am familiar with our history in New York. In fact, the founder of La Prensa back in 1913 was a Puerto Rican, Rafael Viera, before it merged with El Diario years later. And, as far I am concerned, their greatest editor was a Cuban, Manuel De Dios Unanue (and not, by the way, Gerson Borrero). [Click here](#) for an article on this early history that you might find helpful.

I do hope that you have learned enough about the Latino community in New York to understand that as you may feel about Spaniards and Argentinians being singled out publicly, which overgeneralizes what I was saying, that Puerto Ricans as a group are feeling increasingly isolated and marginalized by the greater Latino community, despite still being the largest Latino group in New York City. ([click here](#) another article on this that I thought you might find useful as well). What you may be seeing as a result is a growing Boricua defensiveness, but instead of addressing it with your own defensiveness, the idea should be to try to figure constructive ways to assure that all Latino groups are treated fairly and authentically. In terms of my criticism, it is not about Argentinians and Spaniards but about foreign elites who come here and have the arrogance to assume they know our experience without even having the decency to make efforts to learn from this very community from whose association with they benefit. That was my point.

We may not agree, but I took the time to write this long response because I do hold you in high regard and respect the terrific work you are doing. I am not particularly interested in "winning" any argument with you, but am happy to generate some useful discussion. If that occurs, then we will have done our respective jobs well.

Un abrazo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angelo', enclosed within a faint circular outline.

Angelo Falcón

