

Stehelm WA 98852  
3/15/99

Brian Lamb  
C-SPAN  
Washington DC

8. W)

Dear Mr Lamb:

I am writing you to voice my objections to your network's supposedly 'even-handed' practice of alternating your callers under the rubrics 'liberal', 'conservative' + 'moderate.' This has the inadvertent effect of seeming to define truth as somehow balanced between the linearly defined poles - + distorting what might otherwise be a reasonable cross-section of C-SPAN viewers. (Of course for that eventuality, you'd have to use 800 numbers, because poorer viewers ~~of course~~ won't risk calling you for fear of a too-fearsome phone bill.)


Don't get me wrong: I do admire your true attempt at absence of bias + editorial impartiality. The interesting result of this is that C-SPAN is one of the few places on television where one can actually hear non-mainstream opinion, particularly on the left. But it is hardly the case that it is necessary to micromanage 'balance': this too contains an implicit message about where truth lies. I like to hear extremists of the same general type arguing among themselves - + I don't need a label



29 for everyone before I hear what they have to say.  
30 So mix it up a little.  
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32 As for your talk show guests, let me say that  
33 the most interesting ones are the really opinionated  
34 or knowledgeable ones who aren't regularly seen on  
35 TV; usually very bright young staffers who  
36 aren't seasoned PR types, people from alternative  
37 magazines, & folks who really have an agenda. It  
38 isn't necessary to always pit people with <sup>conspicuously</sup> ~~opp~~ opposing  
39 perspectives against each other, à la Crossfire. That's  
40 a format that usually results in its own characteristic  
41 shallowness.  
42

43 Anyway, I hope you think about all this -  
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45  
46 Sincerely,  
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