

Lamb/Bus

[REDACTED]
Cranston, RI 02910
March 22, 1995

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-Span
400 North Capitol St.
Washington, D. C. 20001

Newer

Dear Mr. Lamb,

During the late hours of Monday, July 11, 1994, I turned to C-Span and found my favorite TV star, Brian Lamb, sitting in the School Bus, broadcasting from Newport, Rhode Island, only 30 miles away!! I had no idea you and the bus were coming into our area! You mentioned in a casual way that the bus would be there till Wednesday about noon or thereabouts. The details have become blurred with time.

My original plan for the next day, Tuesday, had been to visit a dear friend, recently widowed, who at that moment was with her daughter in Saunderstown, which is two bridges and an island away from Newport. (Saunderstown is a section of North Kingstown, RI, the home town of Gilbert Stuart--you may have been there also).

Now, suddenly, there had to be a whole new plan for the day. To begin with, I needed to get to my friend as early as possible and gently explain the new plan. Unfortunately, she was not much acquainted with C-Span, so as quickly as I could I described the network's doings, and Brian Lamb in particular, in order to create a fervor in her also to meet you. I told her I could not consider missing this unanticipated opportunity to meet you in person.

She warmed to the adventure, and off we went to the Double Tree Inn. As I expected, the parking lot appeared full, but I did find one lone space -- just for me. I saw this as an excellent omen for this wonderful day. I just knew there would be crowds for you and the bus. But they were not visible from the parking lot, so we dashed to the front desk to find out where to go. The young man on duty seemed not to know what I was talking about. I guess the key word for him was "bus" because he sent us to the hotel's travel desk. The woman there was puzzled. She thought she had heard of it, but had no idea where it was. Just then a man in a hotel uniform was walking by and said he had seen it earlier and knew that you had been asked to change your location and that you were at the rear of the building.

We hurried out to the suggested place, and there we found NOTHING -- no bus, no other vehicles, and no attendant to question. We headed back to the inside of the hotel to "call somebody." I had not yet figured out whom to call. On this return run, another employee crossed our path, and I stopped him and demanded to know where the C-Span School Bus was. His response: "It was here awhile ago. Is it gone?" I said that if it was anywhere around here, I can't find it. He knew you had to move because of cable considerations, but he too was surprised to hear that you had vanished.

Now I knew whom to call: the Fire Department. If you had to move that huge bus to a new parking spot among the narrow streets of Newport, certainly the Fire Department must have had a say in it. Right? Apparently not. The person who answered the phone never heard of the C-Span School Bus. I told him the circumstances of the moment and added that if it were still in the city "someone in your department must know about it." He turned me over to another who was equally non-informed. I asked this one, "Is there a fire marshal there?" He switched me to the Fire Marshal's office. Whoever answered seemed to have heard of the bus, but had no idea where it was. I insisted, "Are you a fire marshal?" He said he was an assistant. I said, "I want to speak with the Chief Marshal" and my persistence paid off.

The Chief Fire Marshal said that yes, you had been in town, and "we had to ask them to move the bus because of" something to do with cables. He said you were told you could remain there, but not exactly where you were originally parked and that such a place was suggested. He (or his representative) told you that you were welcome there, but someone in the bus said, "That's OK. We're getting ready to leave anyway."

END OF STORY. I was heartbroken. It's nearly nine months later and I am still grieving over my "loss." Since I've not heard another word about your Newport experience, perhaps it was in a class with mine. Maybe there were no crowds and you felt no need to remain. Whatever happened, I commiserate with you.

In any event I want you to know that I still love you, C-Span and all your staff more and more as time goes by. Regarding you, personally, I recognize you as the genius of television in our time. I am well aware of the fact that you are the originator of C-Span, its CEO and the originator of the reproduction of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, probably one of the most spectacular series of events ever to come through the TV screen. I also believe you are the best interviewer in America.

Mr. Brian Lamb

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in America. Congratulations on receiving a "Golden" Award. I do not usually watch award programs, but I'm so glad I saw the presentation to C-Span -- and you in the audience. May you receive many more. I was so happy for you and all of your excellent staff.

Most sincerely,

