

March 1, 1999

[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, CA 90025
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Mr. Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 N. Capital Street NW #650
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I have started this letter a number of times, but each time it has been delayed. Maybe that was a good thing, because the letter might have sounded too angry. With the delay, I have reflected on my own thoughts and feelings on the matter, and they have come out somewhat more mellow.

The odds are that the last thing you want to hear or read is that you are biased or not evenhanded in any part of the network, and especially in Washington Journal. When some caller would say that you are having far more guests from the right or left, your face would first show annoyance and then touches of anger. But your reply would be that you had Mr. or Ms. X yesterday, and that should balance the score. Mostly you would say that the caller has to watch the total scheduling, and that would prove the balance. The trouble is that it does not.

I used to think that while you are personally somewhat to the right, you make every effort to give all sides an even play. I no longer think that. I still believe that you try, and that you think you have succeeded. But you can't succeed as long as you have guests all the way from the middle to the extreme right and exclude the extreme left. From time to time you will have someone like David Corn, Alexander Cockburn, and Christopher Hitchens, all writing for The Nation; you even used to have that pretty young woman from The Progressive on occasion, but not in a year or more. However these are all mainstream liberals--nothing to compare to the really way out right wing conservatives you play host to. Just as an example, I think having Ollie North on Washington Journal is a disgrace to the network, and dirties the eyes and ears of your

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viewers and listeners. The reason I say you are not evenhanded is because you do not appear recognize the range you allow on the right side, and the limitations you place on the left side, whether by accident or by design.

So far we have measured by quality. But I think you also violate your own standards on a quantitative scale. By actual count I have found that you book no better than two center left guests to three guests of the complete range on the right. And I am convinced you are not aware of this.

Finally, I come back to an old pet peeve of mine, young Steve Scully. Once or twice in the last few months I began to think you might have spoken to him, because he was not so fiercely right wing, and even made reference to an article or two that might have spoken favorably of President Clinton or the Democrats in general. But no, I must have been mistaken, because he went through a number of appearances without finding one kind thing to read or say favorable to Democrats. But then you added insult to injury, when you had young Steve serve as host three out of four nights (the week you had two nights of viewer call-ins with no guests.) Then, as if to make your point even more firmly to prove you don't care what viewers say, you had young Steve as host three times again within the last week. Then you proved me wrong again, because Master Steve hosted Monday's show, making it four times within one week. And his first guest was that reporter from the Wall Street Journal (Rosenstein or whatever, I disremember) who wrote about the alleged Broadrick rape, assuming it to be true. So much for fairness.

The last time I saw you get a little hot under the collar over the subject of viewer perceived unfairness, you invited viewers to write to you with specific instances. I don't know whether the foregoing is specific enough for you, or whether you want the date and time of broadcast as well. The truth is I don't think you read these letters in the first place, and at least with respect to Master Steve Scully, you either do not monitor his performances or you don't care what you find.

Why do I bother to write these letters? Because I think Washington Journal is a national treasure, and I want it to be as good as it can be. I do this out of caring, and not because I believe you and the program are not worth the effort.

Sincerely,

