

December 9, 1997

[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, CA 90025
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Ms. Marge Amy
C-SPAN
400 N. Capital Street NW #650
Washington, DC 20001

O.B.K.
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Re: Booknotes

Dear Ms. Amy:

Two of my favorite people, Brian Lamb and Tim Russert were on Booknotes yesterday. It moved and passed much too fast, and I enjoyed it no end.

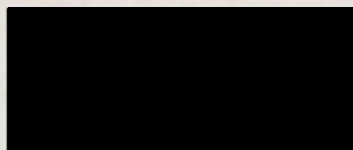
But being a nit picker, I must question why Brian didn't ask Tim, "What do you do when a guest won't answer a quest you ask, but instead evades and answers something not asked?" That is an endemic problem that applies to all interview programs (including C-SPAN's). You can keep asking the question until you get an answer (you probably won't); you can state that the question wasn't answered. You can refuse to book those guests who don't answer the questions asked of them, but of course you will be out of business, because all politicians, spin doctors, business men and others do not answer questions-at least the tough ones. So why don't you interviewers get together and agree that you will not book those guests until they do answer the questions put to them. Some may refuse to buckle under, but most want the exposure and will come around. But it will take the cooperation of interviewers and their producers. Above all it will take the initiative of someone to get the ball rolling; let it be you.

Nit pickers have more than one nit to pick. This one also applies to your interviewers or hosts, but especially to the Boss himself. There are times when guests from (extremist) think tanks, legal foundations and the like are asked, "Where do you get your funding?" The answer generally (except from liberals, who don't know better than to answer such questions directly) is, "From various sources," and the matter is dropped there. That is another evasive answer, because we haven't learned any more than before the question was asked. Should the host not say, "Name the top five for me, or at least the top three"? The

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real evil in asking where the funding comes from, and getting the "various sources" answer is that it appears that the tough question has been asked and answered, but it has not. It is as if a shill asked the question, and then accepted the non-answer. C-SPAN and Brian Lamb and the other hosts (who do not really ask the question that often) can do better, and I hope they will.

Sincerely,



P.S. You needn't send me the stock letter saying that you are unable to respond to correspondence, although I certainly wouldn't object if you were to respond. And also please don't send me your brochure. I have a pile of them.

P.P.S. I promise to refrain from writing for a while.