

1-25-98

Brian Lamb C-Span 400 N. Capitol Street Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I have been watching Booknotes for a long time, I think, since it first came on. With the addition of some new cable services, from Bresnan Communications, we now have C-span 2, since late last year. I've been waiting for C-span 2 ever since the special C-span 2 program, showed on C-span, which featured the Strand, I think, bookstore in New York. I watch both programs, mostly the book and publishing programs when possible, and when the interest is there. Can't say I watch every Booknotes, nor every All About Books.

I think William Bennett is a bad joke, and can't stand Rush (in limbo) Limbaugh. I am more on the side of Jon Katz, and agree with his book, VIRTUOUS REALITY, a book I came across by watching Booknotes. I ordered and have since read your book, BOOKNOTES, when I first heard about it, I think, when I saw it listed in Publisher's Weekly. This letter has been a long time coming. I thought about writing to you since I was given a copy of American Bookseller, the June 1997 issue, by the owner of a local independent bookstore, Snowbound Books, of Marquette. That issue featured a cover with your photo on it, "About Books: The Medium Has A Message."

At this time of year Booknotes, All About Books, and others have to compete with NHL Hockey. I am a Detroit Red Wing fan, through thick and thin, and, also, now pick-up CBC from Canada, which means Saturday Night in Canada Hockey, which features two-games a night. Some times it is tough, but since your programming is repeated I can pick it up at another time. NHL Hockey and books are my two favorite things to do.

I like your style of interviewing. I find it very relaxing and easy to watch. One of your more recent programs featured Jim Hightower and his new book, THERE'S NOTHING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD BUT YELLOW STRIPES AND DEAD ARMADILLOS. I came across this book, in an interview Hightower did for the magazine In These Times. I have only heard a few minutes of Hightower, on the radio, and was pleased to see him on Booknotes. I don't know if this is typical or reflects on my character, but, some of my favorite people to listen to and to read, what they write, are Hightower, Molly Ivins and Christopher Hitchens. Saw one of your All About Books programs, a panel, that featured Stanley Karnow, and Hitchens, and I think David Halberstam, that you hosted. Can't remember where. All through that program I kept seeing a book, slightly out of focus, near Hitchens, and late, I was able to make it out, HOSTAGE TO HISTORY, Cyprus-From The Ottomans To Kissinger. That book now awaits my reading.

I often make notes of books I come across in various publications, programs, and from other sources that I seek out. I used to pick up the Spring and Fall issues of Publisher's Weekly, but the local B. Dalton does not carry it, and it is too expensive to subscribe to. So, I find some books in The Nation, In These Times, Mother Jones, The Consortium and -Z- Magazine, among other sources. The local B. Dalton and Bookworld are not for the more discerning reader. They seem to be more interested in the mass market paperbacks, bestsellers, self-help types, advise and such other type books. When I walk through these stores I seem to see the same old stuff, time and again.

I wonder about the American public, and others, reading habits and interests. They might just as well buy their books at the local Kmart, Wal-Mart, and drugstores. There does not seem to be much difference. Some time I think the publishing industry wants it that way. Keep the people

J. BK

ignorant and uninformed. The education system, in this country, seems to support this thinking. People don't seem to be encourage to seek out and think for oneself, to really look into issues, and lack a sense of responsibility. It must be that lack of corporate responsibility for their products that filter down to the American people. Anyway, that is slightly off the beaten track, and I can, at times, when writing to friends, go off on a binge of thoughts. Sorry.

I usually have more than one book in progress. At the moment three are up front. They are: GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL-The Fates of Human Societies, by Jared Diamond; The NEW DOUBLESPEAK-Why No One Knows What Anyone's Saying Anymore, by William Lutz (trade paperback copy), and, yesterday I started reading BELOW THE CONVERGENCE: Voyages Toward Antarctica 1699-1839, by Alan Gurney (trade paper copy). Forgive me, but, I must mention a few others, one of which I saw on Booknotes, a few years ago. That one is Alexis De Tocqueville's DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, the edition with an introduction by Alan Ryan. I did not realize that there was more to DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, other than a small paperback edition, until I received this book. Still reading it, a little at a time.

Others, from reviews or browsing in store, are: WALL STREET, by Doug Henwood (a review in In These Times); SLAPPS-Getting Sued For Speaking Out, by George W. Pring and Penelope Canan, from Temple University Press. Slapp stands for "Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation" in government. Two more books are: RIDDLE OF THE ICE-A Scientific Adventure Into The Arctic, by Myron Arms, and SECRETS-The CIA's War At Home, by the late Angus Mackenzie, with foreword by David Weir (saw this in The Consortium, a newsletter put out by Robert Parry).

By the way, have you ever heard of MAI? See enclosed material. Seen almost no mention of it, in the United States, other than Public Citizen, but several articles and letters to editor in Winnipeg, Canada papers. News censorship or news lack of interest, by design? Will continue to watch Booknotes and All About Books with interest and enjoyment.

Take care,

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