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December 29, 1991

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-Span
400 N. Capitol St. N.W.
Suite 650
Washington DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I don't even know whether letters addressed to you actually get into your hands, or are merely reviewed and dealt with by staff members. In the past few years, I have written to Susan Swan, Kathy Murphy, and Patrick Watson. Ms. Swan responded a few years ago, but I was disappointed in her response. Letters to the others brought no responses.

My letters to them and to you concern the failure of the C-SPAN Update to notify viewers of most of the most interesting events to be broadcast, other than sessions of the House and Senate. I am a criminal defense lawyer and also a person very interested in politics and political science. I have often tuned to C-SPAN and C-SPAN-II fortuitously (while scanning cable stations for something to watch), and discovered something I was keenly interested in, such as speeches by United States Supreme Court justices or judges of the Courts of Appeal on legal topics I was interested in, conferences on political subjects from universities, etc.

A couple of years ago, I attended portions of a conference on the Reagan presidency at University of California at Davis, and was led to understand that it was being videotaped for later broadcast on C-SPAN. I would have loved to have later watched on C-SPAN the parts of the conference I missed, but if they were ever broadcast I never found out even though I was a subscriber to the Update. Items on C-SPAN-II are never listed. Items on C-SPAN are only occasionally listed. It's as though the programs are scheduled at the very last moment. I notice that often an item is broadcast on C-SPAN as scheduled in the Update, and then repeated on both C-SPAN and C-SPAN-II at other hours during the next day or two, but without any forewarning to viewers, except

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for your occasionally broadcast listings of what will be broadcast in the next 4 or 5 hours.

Another problem I have with the Update listings is that their time settings are often not exactly in tune with the broadcasts, so that videotaping a show means you may miss the first or last few minutes.

If your problem in listing more broadcast events in the Update is that you don't know until the last minute what you will be able to tape and broadcast, why can't you re-broadcast events a few weeks later so you can include them in the Update?

The way I get to see television programs I am interested in is to mark them down from schedules such as Update, TV Guide, the Cable Guide, etc., videotape them, and watch the programs later. That makes your broadcast listings of programs to be shown for the next few hours useless. In fact, they are only useful to people who don't work, and who sit in front of the TV all day long. Those broadcast listings are not even on at even times (i.e., on the hour or half hour), which would enable a person to preset a VCR to catch them.

When I previously corresponded with Susan Swan, she suggested calling 202-628-2205 for scheduling information. The furnishing of a Washington D.C. phone number is of no benefit to those of us who (1) live elsewhere and (2) aren't rich or endowed with a WATTS line. Furthermore, one needs at least a few days forewarning of what will be on, not just a few hours.

Ms. Swan said that the reason C-SPAN-II isn't covered in the Update is that the Senate does not issue a weekly schedule listing the times it will convene. I can understand how the Senate's failure to announce its schedule in advance would preclude Update from listing other programs during the hours the Senate might normally be expected to convene (generally on weekdays during normal working hours). I don't understand how that would prevent Update from listing at least tentative schedules for C-SPAN II for nights and weekends, subject to programs being bumped if the Senate is in session.

It is a big waste to broadcast all that great stuff and then have the viewers miss out because they have no way of knowing what is being shown. Now that my C-SPAN Update subscription is about to expire, I thought that before sticking the notification letter in the trash can, I'd try writing to you and see if you or

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C-SPAN have become any more responsive to viewers than I found
the organization to be in years past.

Very truly yours,



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