

[REDACTED]  
Edmonds, WA. 98026  
[REDACTED]

September 24, 1993

Brian Lamb  
C-Span

Dear Mr. Lamb,

On your Journalists' Roundtable this morning, a caller, from Alabama I think, suggested a show with a table of "ordinary" people. I've been meaning to suggest a variation of that—just folks with top journalists—ever since Sally Quinn invited a critical caller from Pittsburgh to a dinner party at their house, in the same spirit as the decadent French aristocrats of the 18th century invited "noble savages" from the New World to their Paris Salon.

You've noticed the growing disenchantment with journalists; they don't seem to have noticed it themselves. When you asked your guests today how they were different from ordinary people, two of the three pointed out that they were educated. Journalists will, no doubt, be the last to know that there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country as educated and talented as they who choose not to be groupies of the power centers of our society and economy.

What separates these journalists from ordinary people is their insularity and the blinders and narcissism that come with it. It isn't their fault. They don't know what they don't know, so they assume they know it all. They are as cloistered in New York and Washington as monks in a monastery, but unlike monks, they have no sense of their isolation from life as it is lived by most people in this part of the planet in this time.

To many of us, your top flight journalists seem like cocky high school seniors who know the subjects in their classrooms and the choreography of social life in the halls, and are sure they know it all. You've perhaps noticed that when there are flashes of genuine insight and wisdom in your interview shows, they tend to come from the callers, not the journalists.

A show with a few of those wise callers at the table with a group of journalists who condescend to them would be nothing short of therapeutic for your audience. The just-folks could range from those who see journalists with the amused tolerance one has with high school grads to the angry folks who see them as part of the plot of the privileged and would be asking them which stocks they hold and other vested interests they have in the people and institutions they cover.

This interaction on a level playing field won't likely produce an epiphany among the journalists, but it would be a warm and wonderful thing to do for your viewers and might ease the frustration that makes callers erupt in rudeness and rage when they finally get a call in.

You could select your just-folks from among callers (and you certainly have the most articulate of all shows on television) or by telephone screening the authors of Letters to the Editor that catch your eye in papers across the country.

Thanks for your indulgence in entertaining the notion.

Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]



EVERETT, WA \*98203\* 09-24-93

Edmonds, WA 98026

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



20001-1535 12

