

December 06, 1996

Bryan Lamb

C-Span

400 North Capitol Street N. W. #650.

Washington D. C., 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb,

My wife and I started watching your show in 1989 on cable in Memphis while I was on a three year contract there. In 92 when we returned home we had a dish installed (cable is not available in our remote area) partially because of your very fine show.

As it has ended up we were both hooked on The Washington Journal and being retired (since last March) have watched just about every day using your show as our prime source for news until the last couple of weeks.

We are starting to loose interest and patience just like with all the other networks when it is apparent that you are not going to keep your word and go back to un-screened calls. You did say it on the air or maybe we don't understand English *so good?*

We are writing this letter because it is impossible for us to get in to the show. Before you started screening calls during the campaigns because of 'Clinton bashing' (your words) the odds of getting in were maybe once in five years. Now with conservatives only one in three calls when it use to be five of six the odds are more like 12 times what they were then or about once in 60 years if all factors are considered. There are about three people that seem to get in every week or sometimes sooner. Several regular monthly i. e. Joe McCutchen. Its beyond us how this happens?

What we are observing from this exercise is perhaps unintended (or perhaps not?) consequences. Rather than broadening the debate what has really happened is people are lying about their affiliation until they get on (both sides) with most calls ending up being rhetoric spouted along party lines and very little discussion of the days events. When the single line was open to everyone what you had was a spirited airing of the news of the day with mostly conservative callers and a usually liberal journalist which made a balance that we just loved. Also (whether you like it or not) we always thought that the 'scorecard' of calls was a good barometer of how the country felt about the issues.

O.W.J

The second problem we see that hasn't been discussed much is that in the first segment there are too many news people as guests and never any people from other professions. It would be interesting to see how folks outside the media would view the days events; not just as reporters, pundits, or editors see it.

The third thing is that there are less and less calls taken. One day last week it was 38 past the hour before the first call was taken. The commentators are now cutting people off and always saying hurry up we are about out of time (just like the networks). A year ago this just did not happen!! We don't care if one call takes up the whole program as long as the person has something to say.

Finally; (and this has happened just since the election) the round table has been conducted with a liberal elected official across from someone from PAC's or special interest groups. The round table is outstanding when **both** guests are elected officials and is by far the best service (in our opinion) that you perform.

Bottom Line: Regardless of your intentions you are slowly loosing us to indifference (as we feel to other networks). The discourse is becoming boring and uninteresting. Regardless of your intentions what is at stake here is your reputation as the totally unbiased show that we all admire - or at least did.

[REDACTED]
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Ph [REDACTED]

P. S.: 12/27/96 We had decided not to send this letter but this morning's show changed our minds big time. The segment about loosing watchers just fits now. If you regain your reputation we (as satellite dish watchers) would be glad to pay a premium for your channel as we do several other pay channels..