

April 25, 1995

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

Dear Mr. Lamb,

I'm a regular viewer of C-SPAN and Booknotes. It's the best stuff on TV. I watched your recent 2-hour interview of Robert McNamara, which has finally brought me to the point of writing to you. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that, in your interviews, you not only represent yourself and your own views, but you also represent the millions of people out here who would *like* to interview a Robert McNamara but lack the opportunity. You speak for *us*.

You have a very gentle way of interviewing. I've observed that, unlike some others, you have a way of asking a tough question once, allowing the interviewee to respond in any way he or she chooses -- including a non-response or an obfuscatory response -- and then moving on to another topic. You rarely (never?) bore in.

Sam Donaldson, on the other hand, almost always bores in. Every time he says "But, Senator, you haven't answered my question! Let me repeat it, and I ask you for a direct answer, sir.", I want to cheer. One of the reasons, I feel, that Americans' trust in their government is at or near an all-time low is that our elected representatives (or former Secretaries of Defense) don't give us direct answers. They waffle, evade, hem and haw, change the subject, stonewall, or even lie. And it drives us average citizens crazy.

Part of the price a man like Sam Donaldson pays is that people avoid his interviews. So be it.

I'm not asking you to become a Sam Donaldson. But I also ask you to remember that you speak for us, and we want answers. Or, if the interviewee simply refuses to answer, they should pay some price for their non-answer.

I thought that you handled Mr. McNamara well when you read him a strong letter from one of his detractors, when you replayed that phone call from the sister of a dead Vietnam soldier, and with your own questions. But, like most Americans, I wanted McNamara to feel some remorse, to not smile so much during your interview, and, frankly, to simply apologize to the

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American people, and ask for their forgiveness. His plea that another Vietnam never happen didn't do any "healing" for me. And I found his repeatedly saying that he simply didn't have enough time to answer your questions fully one more self-serving lie.

Having said all that, I want to offer my deep appreciation for your work. In your own way, keep working to bring us the truth.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

