

[REDACTED]
Houston, Texas 77024
November 28, 1993

Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 No. Capitol Street NW, #650
Washington, D. C. 20001

Dear Brian,

I am a regular viewer of C-SPAN and particularly enjoy your Booknotes program interviews. Your questions are always well prepared and it is almost always a pleasure to listen to your guests as well. But this letter is not about Booknotes. I saw yesterday your rebroadcast of last Friday's Journalists' Round Table program and I write to urge you not to invite Eleanor Clift who was a guest on that program to return to C-SPAN.

There are several reasons for my antipathy toward her. First, she is an extraordinarily rude person. I did not see the entire program but during the part I did see, in many (perhaps half) of the cases in which you referred a caller's question to Eric Felton of the Washington Times (I believe that was the name of one of your other guests), she interrupted his response to the caller without invitation either from you or Mr. Felton. Luckily, your other two guests were a good deal more civil or the program would have resembled Crossfire. Neither Mr. Felton nor Mr. Holman, the distinguished gentleman from the McNeil - Lehrer program, so rudely interrupted the other guests including Ms. Clift. Such rude behavior as Ms. Clift again and again displayed should not be encouraged by providing her further access to air time. We will benefit from serious civil debate of issues, not from half-made points rudely interrupted and air-time hogging tactics employed by Ms. Clift and so many politicians who appear on news programs.

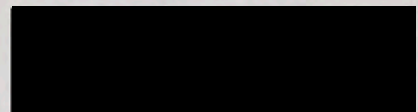
Then there was Ms. Clift's quote of the day referring to news reporting, "Objectivity is a myth." This is a very convenient position for her given her unabashed partisanship. It frees her of the responsibility of trying to at least appear objective, rational and impartial when she knows and every listener can plainly see she supports every Democratic Party argument always and everywhere without exception. Brian, please do not contribute to the moulding of news reporting and analysis in the image of the law given us by lawyers who believe that an adversarial system sanctions foolishness, extremism and even dishonesty on their part as legitimate means to their ends. The American people are appalled by their ethics. They demand more responsible behavior and adherence to higher ethical standards by lawyers and will also of news reporters and analysts. Ms. Clift can not contribute meaningfully to a more intellectual and incisive news analysis in this country because she lacks the will to subject herself to any standard of objectivity.

Finally, she objected to "name-calling" on the part of the callers; specifically, as I remember, she did not believe she should be called a "liar" although I do not believe any caller actually used that word

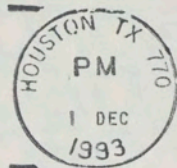
to refer to her (I may be in error on this, you can check the tape of your program if you so desire). In any case, it was clear to her that a caller had indicated she was not telling the truth. As I recollect, her quote provoking this response was something close to, "There was no middle class tax hike. That's a message that hasn't gotten out." Paying no attention to the incredibly poor phrasing used by an ostensibly professional wordsmith here, these are the words of a political propagandist in the grand tradition of Josef Goebbels! That message was spread loud, long and widely by the President with his incredible access to the news media during the debate leading up to a vote on the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. It has "gotten out." It just has not been accepted by the public because it is not the truth. We do have higher gasoline taxes already being collected and these most certainly are being directly paid by middle class as well as upper class people. And the price increases in various goods resulting from higher transportation costs will also be paid largely by the middle class. There were also quite considerably increased taxes on the elderly who collect social security payments now and will have to pay income taxes on 85% of these payments now instead of 50% of them as before if their income exceeds something like \$40,000 a year. Now, everyone will agree that the vast majority of these people, surely in the neighborhood of 90% of them, are in the middle class by anyone's definition of that term. By the way, I am not one of them. These are facts not "messages." People out in the country are well-informed thanks to the likes of C-SPAN. Simply repeating something over and over as if it were the truth will not suffice to convince people that it is. That is one of the great lessons of the twentieth century we have learned from the Nazi and especially the Communist experiences and George Orwell learned it a half century ago and helped teach the rest of us in 1984. So perhaps Ms. Clift objected to the caller's comments and herself used the word "liar" to characterize her own comments because she knew that on that particular score, at least, she was indeed a liar; that is, she intentionally attempted to deceive the listening audience into believing there were no tax increases on the middle class when she knew very well that there were.

For all these reasons, I urge you to avoid inviting Ms. Clift to appear again on C-SPAN. She already has a television audience on another regularly scheduled program. Surely, there are more competent, less partisan and more objective reporters or news analysts you might invite instead of her. You do not serve the public interest well when you invite such clearly partisan and dissembling individuals to discuss issues on national television and you too have a responsibility which I know you take very seriously to constructively inform the public. I would welcome your comments and response and I invite you to share this letter with Ms. Clift.

Sincerely yours,



[REDACTED]
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024



JOURNALISTS ROUND TABLE

C-SPAN

400 No. CAPITOL STREET NW #650

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

ATTENTION: BRIAN LAMB

