

Mr. Brian Lamb
President C - S P A N
400 N. Capitol St., NW
WASHINGTON - DC 20001

May 26, 1992

Dear Mr. Lamb:

As a C-SPAN addict, I can only congratulate you and your station on the excellent job done in covering the tortuous evolution of 1992 Electoral Campaign. For viewers starved for real news, instead of hallowed commentaries or hollow sound-bites, yours is the program to watch.

This said, I was practically speechless listening to your interview with Ross Perot (I know that he doesn't like the H.) on Sunday, May 17th "ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE" program; you virtually allowed him to run away with the show! Did your strong sense of courtesy keep you from hammering, more persistently, at his devious stance, used to avoid answering a number of pertinent questions, all raised by bona fide journalists, about his diverse, and (as he is so fond of describing them) always strictly *"saving actions"* he was *"called"* to undertake, often against his better judgement...? And his untenable adage (no direct quotes): *Now then, do all this people really know me? ... Did they ever sit down to talk to me? ... Well then ... I guess that journalists are entitled to their opinions, although it so happens that, in most cases, their conclusions have nothing do to with my actions, and their speculations nothing to do whatsoever with my "real character"!*... remained unchallenged. Thus one of his primary aims was easily achieved: painting the press as a bunch of oversized egos (which is rather the rule), ready only to pounce, indiscriminately (which is rather the exception) on its hapless prey!

And when the moment came for him to explain to you his so-called mission of saving a Wall Street firm from collapse, you again avoided challenging his answer about having been too *"unexperienced and green"* to understand the impossibility of his loosing crusade. When has Perot ever been *"unexperienced"*, especially since most Wall Street insiders viewed his action as the first step in trying to gain a foothold in the trading center of the nation? Would President Nixon ever have asked him to *"save"* that institution had he detected any whiff of inexperience in a still young Perot? You also omitted to further ask him about his subsequent effort at a late-night, campaign

contributions greased-persuasion of a House Ways-and-Means Committee to grant him a special \$15 million tax break for his lost investment.

By the way, where did all this politically-based acumen come from, one has the right to ask, if Perot claims to be nothing but a white suit successful businessman? Who is able to believe in his ridiculous claim that as a successful businessman he is but a *plain, and clean, driven, do-person*, just the opposite of a successful run of the mill politician, who is your usual *dirty strike-a-deal-person*. Every thinking person knows by now that politics and business are but longtime bed-fellows, the aim of both practitioners residing in the ability to ultimately strike a successful deal! Franklin D. Roosevelt even had the courage to make this nowadays "dirty" word part of famous program.

As for Perot's political "vision": to empower the forgotten masses, whose *trustworthy servant* he aims to become, it too remained unquestioned by you, even when his answer to your question about how his "electronic town meetings" would work (given the great diversity and divergence of opinions of the American electorate) revealed his utter duplicity. Not only weren't you shocked by it, but nobody else yet has ridiculed his **unbelievable statement** that, after the voters would vote, along congressional districts, on "the best" proposal offered by an enlightened TV discussion, their respective Congressmen would, in the end, **be free to vote their own conscience, deciding what would be best for the country, which is exactly what the law empowered them to do, from the very beginning!**

"What would be best for the country", I assume, would then simply be Perot's choice, or God forbid, the Congressmen's, which means that chances for a quick consensus are as slim as they are to-day. By the way, whose allegiance Ross Perot is going to claim when looking for action on Capitol Hill? The Republicans'? The Democrats'? The vox populi's clamoring for deeds without the power to make its **conscience count** except for not re-electing their representatives, a right also guaranteed by the Constitution.

So much then for the servant of the people in the gridlock as usual, Washington personal politics! It is therefore not very hard to see that this much touted "**electronic town hall cum general communion empowering message**" is nothing more than another brilliant PR ploy, copied by Ross Perot from Richard Nixon's tactics (as stressed by Daniel Shore in this Sunday commentary on NPR's Weekend Edition)! Now

then, wasn't Perot Nixon's most trusted private ally when it came to sensitive assignments?

Let's face it folks, the Perot "Rescue Fantasy", as Joe Klein calls it, is nothing short of sham! Nevertheless, Mr. Perot still basks in the media's free-time, unorthodox "servant for the people's good" coverage, even when, in the words of one of his advisers, he had been laying the groundwork for this assertion on the Lary King show by commissioning an **expensive and exhaustive state-by-state poll**, among other things, which showed that an independent candidate could win the nomination, this year. (Perot's Patriot Games - NEWSWEEK, May 25th)

Why wonder then that his polls are soaring if, even after being recently asked in Frankfurt, KY what kind of programs he would offer to allay the growing rate of unemployment in the eastern (or western?) part of the state, his answer, again without any challenge from you people, went something like that: *Now then, you all know, I told you that before, after being elected I wouldn't spent much time in the White House, but would come out here to make sure that things will work alright!* Now then, who in his right mind would want to wait till after November to see how he will straighten things up? Thus it is still up to the media to ask this guy, who for the time being has made fools of you all, not only the **right questions** but, especially the **pertinent follow-up questions**, if the American people are to hear the firebell in time.

What a number of people, Gov. Clinton among them, are pointing to, is that the unhappiness with politics-as-gridlock in Washington, is also due to the lack of strong convictions among an alienated electorate (shamelessly manipulated by pollsters, spin-masters, media consultants, etc.,) which for years has split its vote, sending democrats to Congress and Republicans to the White House. I know that each nation deserves the government it chooses but, right now, more then ever perhaps, the media is part and parcel of the process, too. If you give so much free air-time to businessman Ross Perot, as a new phenomenon in American politics, and to President Bush, because after all he is the incumbent, what about offering the same amount of coverage to Gov. Clinton!

Although Bill Clinton is the only candidate who for the last 11 years, as Governor, was forced to grapple with most of the problems facing our country, and as a member of the Democratic Leadership Council, has both debated and taken new positions on a host of mat-

ters, he still cannot be heard from, right now, after the so called "scandalettes" are behind him. Do you really believe that was the only interesting thing about him? No wonder the electorate, in general, seems to still be somewhat unfamiliar with Gov. Clinton's positions and, on the whole, rather ambivalent about his candidacy. Your panelist spent an inordinate amount of time, last month, discussing the trust issue, without even bothering to detail either his record or his positions.

Would the country have been better served if we would have had the same doubts about nominating FDR or JFK, had their known infidelities become a stumbling block in their quest for the presidency? How come that not a single other country in the world could care less about the sexual lives of their public officials, as long as they are able to outline an appealing vision for the future of their countries? We know by now pretty well that Pres. Bush is lacking the "vision thing", but instead, offers grand "values". And righteous Ross Perot, when not totally embracing a golden silence about this "thing", offers a jumble of sibylline and rather devious utterances about being an unwilling "servant of the people"! As far as Gov. Clinton's positions, none of his recent, interesting speeches: on health care, education, race relations, etc., delivered as the campaign unfolded westward, were ever properly aired by the press at large, or even discussed by sundry panelists on your programs. By now he even is faulted for having too many detailed plans! Can it get sillier then that? Maybe, for out of a sudden, Murphy Brown is upon us: a week-long, soul-searching, real-life political episode!

The sad trivialization syndrome the press is prey to could no find a better image! This inappropriate simile, Vice President Quayle has used to castigate the lack of values of the Entertainment business instead of focusing on the totally different problems of inner city uneducated and unwed, teenage-mothers, became a hit Q & A topic among correspondents of all persuasions! What this snowballing effect actually reflects is nothing less then what is wrong with the so-called serious media: it really has become the silliest of messages!

It even does not seem to matter anymore if whatever Vice President Quayle had tried to address in his California speech had been analyzed in detail, about 27 years ago, by Dem. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (when in the midst of the Great Society debate he raised the specter of the perils brewing amidst an inner city underclass in turmoil, raised in broken homes, with no skills or incentives to

better their lives). I, for one, am therefore ready to bet that this issue will go down in the annals of American journalism as the Murphy Brown syndrome.

By the way, did Mr. Perot ever try his hand (or money?) at solving this type of problems, besides being a good and caring boss for his own, able and well-trained employees? I know that he often boast of his successful school reform in Texas, where needy children are given the love and care they need to flourish. When asked, on one of his many TV appearances, how the system works, he just answered, nimbly as usual: *well then, come and see, it really works, it's great!* How many of us are supposed to come and see **who** are the people involved in dispensing this much needed love and care, and especially **how, when, or at what** cost? Is he ready to foot the bill for all the transportation and overnight expenses involved, or are we supposed to pay for becoming informed citizens?

I hope that sometimes, after the din of the primaries subsides, and before the circus of the fall campaign starts, you will have the ability to correct the varied misconceptions most of the public still harbors about the three candidates . Broadcasting all the speeches they have made, during this spring, as well as listing:

- a.- the national positions taken, though not always kept, by President Bush, in his four years in office, as well as
- b.- candidate Clinton's achievements and failures as Governor of Arkansas, not to speak of
- c.- Ross Perot's mythical, though sometimes contradictory statements and/or subsequent positions.

All will go a long way in educating the electorate about the actual issues facing the country; their intrinsic social values are as important as the implied, grand "VALUES" some of the candidates seem always ready to substitute for them. What is more, the way each candidate has come to terms with both, the national issues and their values, without waiting to experiment during the first years, the way Ross Perot seems to favor, will hopefully help people choose a President, dedicated to the economic and moral restoration of our country.

Sincerely yours,

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