

Praise
Harper's
Magazine

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Mr. Brian Lamb
C-Span
400 N. Capitol St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Thanks for broadcasting Lewis Lapham's (*Harper's*) symposium at the National Press Club by early this week on why Whitewater is not a legitimate news story.

It was a perfect example of why the public holds journalists in contempt. What a collection of empty suits, along with one empty dress from Columbia University, where the *Journalism Review* has long been a travesty and a disgrace.

I assumed that Gene Lyons worked for *Harper's*, but the library says he works mostly for *Entertainment Weekly* and did his Whitewater opus for *Washington Monthly*. He alibied that he had "majored in English," and he was personable as the Arkansas insider denying that he was a "Clinton whore" because the Clintons had never visited his house, although he had visited them at the governor's mansion. He had "read all the documents" (read, handouts of those unshredded). He was cute enough to go a long way in the new journalism.

I listened agape at the sheer idiocy of that arrogant, vacuous panel whimpering because *The New York Times* had seen fit to publish stories taking seriously the Whitewater scandal. Jeff Gerth, who broke the Whitewater story in 1992, was tarred, feathered and run out of town. The irony is delicious, considering that *The New York Times*, which has not endorsed a Republican candidate for president in living memory, was brain-dead from its effort of propping up the Soviet Union and preserving East Germany during the two decades of A.M. Rosenthal's leadership and Seymour Hersh's dubious scoops, when the panelists worshipped the paper as infallible.

Almost all of the original reporting on Whitewater and related Arkansas antics was done by a team from *The Washington Times* (especially Jerry Seper) and a team from *The American Spectator* that included David Brock, Daniel Wattenberg and James Ring Adams, plus some contribution from *The Los Angeles Times*. Why weren't they represented at the discussion of their story? Who were all these strange, morose people declaring that they couldn't find a story there, so there can't be one?

The only mention of *The Washington Times* I heard was from John Camp, who said he was CNN's "chief investigative reporter," denigrating its coverage as not a beacon of truth. As anyone who lives in Washington knows, almost all real news in the capital in the last decade was first reported by *The Washington Times*, especially during the last eight years under Arnaud de Borchgrave and Wesley Pruden. Ask Dan Rostenkowski, Webb Hubbell, et al.

Having been a newspaperman all my life, and a foreign correspondent for 20 years, I was spellbound by the panel, as self-indulgent and preening a congregation of boobs as I've ever seen, muttering endlessly about there *not* being a story in the Clintons. Everybody leaped on the lonesome polecat from *U.S. News* who shyly suggested that Whitewater might have been some kind of sweetheart deal, the kind he couldn't get himself. What would old-time newsmen have made of them -- real men like James P. O'Donnell of *Newsweek*, Bill Stoneman of the *Chicago Daily News*, Larry Rue of the *Chicago Tribune*, Russ Jones of UP, or Floyd Barger of the *New York Daily News*?

A dozen years ago I wrote one of the early books on the news media degeneration wrought during the Kennedy 1960s and the Nixon 1970s that resulted in a unanimous news media corrupting history. (*BAD News, the Foreign Policy of the New York Times*, Regnery Gateway, 1984).

Thanks to your airing the panel's blather, I'm dumfounded that things have gotten even worse. Aren't those people on the panel capable of embarrassment?

I hope you can keep helping to encourage some originality and diversity in our sick and conformist news media.

Sincerely

