

[REDACTED]
Sweet Briar, VA 24595
January 17, 1994

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
450 Capitol Street, N. W., #650
Washington, D. C. 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Who would have thought that an error in reporting one word, "truth" rather than "trip," by one of the media corps with President Clinton in Moscow, could reveal so much about some of the media's attitudes about our President.

Thank you for settling the issue of whether President Clinton responded to a news interview which included a question about the White Water Affair by saying, "I had hoped you would be interested in the trip (truth?)" You were wise to play the clip which settled that he had said "trip."

To me the error in the *Wall Street Journal* and other newspapers is by no means a minor one. For one thing the change in the one word alters the whole meaning of Clinton's response, making it a mild rebuke for introducing extraneous matters at a summit where he was trying to focus on international affairs and less an egocentric and petulant response than the word "truth" in that context implied. I was also interested that your guests on the show preferred to interpret the President as being irritated and petty in the interview, rather than acknowledging the media's serious error in using the wrong word and so creating a wrong impression, in other words, interfering with the truth.

The *Wall Street Journal* staff members whom you and other C-Span hosts interviewed for a whole week, made much of what

they called the "separation of church and state" between their editorial writers and reporters. Yet the error of "truth" instead of "trip" revealed a bias in just those members of the media who claim to be objective. Of course they give lip service to human subjective bias, but when challenged they sound aggrieved that their objectivity should be questioned and seem uninterested in trying to make amends for their inadvertent bias.

Because such bias inevitably reveals itself, I think that C-SPAN's policy of trying to get spokespeople on all sides of an issue to be a wise one. Perhaps time will tell whether you stick to that policy with regard to a balance of liberal spokespersons for a week to counteract the heavily weighted conservative bias of the *Wall Street Journal*, obvious in its reporters as well as its editorial writers. To really achieve a balance, you would need to secure the services of a publication like *Mother Jones*. In this country it is hard to find a liberal publication as far to the left as the *Wall Street Journal* is to the right; one must go to Britain for that. (By the way, why don't you have Christopher Hitchens on more often?)

One more comment and a request. I question, if not the right, certainly the civility of the media's insisting on introducing questions about the President's personal affairs at an international summit where he is trying to focus on international problems. Media representatives seem to me to become more and more petty and arrogant.

Please put your C-SPAN address more frequently on your programs. I don't care to phone in, and with a rotary phone I could never get in anyway. I have had a hard time getting your address for this letter.

Yours very truly,

