

cc: B. Lamb ✓

September 9, 1991

Dear Mr. Lamb,

00:13:57 SET 1691

Observers might question my sanity as I sit before a snowed television screen awaiting the return of C-Span. But I visualize C-Span viewers all over America doing the same thing, hoping to see the Monday morning journalist program, even though "Book Notes" was lost to us. I spoke Friday morning with peer warm and helpful employees Susan, Melvire, and Nancy. What a mess TCI made! Friday's roundtable was one of peer best, and suddenly, about 7:27, the sound went out, and soon thereafter, the picture. I can imagine how frustrated you at C-Span must have been. I was plenty frustrated and upset. Hearing from the Bloomington T.C.I. representative that C-Span was chosen to air movie channel promotions was especially maddening. They thought, she told me, that because Congress was away, viewership would be way down. Regular viewers know, of course, that when Congress is away C-Span really shines with its creative, informative programming.

Furthermore, the C-Span audience is the wrong audience for Disney, Showtime, and HBO promotions. I felt angry and deprived. Had I been a movie channel subscriber I would have dropped it in protest.

Is there a council of cable systems representatives? If so, I think this tactic of T.C.I. should be brought before the council. When a cable system

decides, as T.C.I. did on Friday, that it can suddenly, without the consent and knowledge of that channel, usurp a channel for selling purposes, something is wrong. Though a cable system is not a government, T.C.I.'s behavior was certainly autocratic.

We cable viewers pay each month for a large menu from which to choose. But those choices can apparently be arbitrarily cut off. Hard unjust! The ease with which T.C.I. took over C-Span's channel for three days demonstrates a serious flaw in the cable TV system. I hope that you and your colleagues can come up with a way to prevent any future such takeovers.

I am ever grateful for C-Span. You, Mr. Lamb, are unsurpassed as a responsive interviewer. The Ben Bradlee interview was especially delightful. I watched it twice. On the technical side, thank you, thank you for adding the titles of your guests to their on-screen ID's. That information is very helpful in evaluating what they say.

Hooray! Wes Pruden, Chris Matthews and you are on the air here at last! C-Span was away from us for over 92 hours. Please do what you can to prevent that from ever happening again.

Sincerely yours,

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