

[REDACTED]

27 November 1996

Brian Lamb  
400 North Capitol Street, NW  
Suite 650  
Washington, DC 20001

Brian (if I may be so familiar),

I'm a longtime avid watcher of Washington Journal - more than ten years, a junkie if you will. I've never called, never been inclined to call. Reason: Washington Journal necessarily allows one or two minutes of air time to each caller, and although I'm abundantly opinionated, none of my opinions worth expressing can be expressed in a minute or two of air time on C-Span. Further, even if my opinion could be expressed in a minute or two, I'm unwilling to subject myself to the trials of competition with innumerable simultaneous callers vying for access. There are more than enough willing competitors in the calling contest to assure that all of my two-minute opinions will be recognized by callers who are, in effect, my proxies. For me, the decision not to call is one of economics. Why spend money, effort, time and emotion for air time to say (or ask) what is certain to be said by someone else? Why indeed? Given my assessment, the best decision is to lay back (oftentimes literally, as I arouse from a sound sleep), watch, listen and enjoy. Whenever I have the time, I watch the entirety of Washington Journal.

Obviously, there are many C-Span viewers who value their two-minute opinions far more than I value mine. More exactly, they value on-air expression of their two-minute opinions more than do I. The ever-increasing daily horde of callers seeking two minutes on C-Span's air has created frustration and anger for many of them. Your recent policy of "balance" in selecting calls permitted access has heightened that anger and frustration. Many callers view their opinions, as expressed to C-Span, much as they view their votes in the polling booths at general elections. They believe that their opinions should be anonymous, without any requirement or qualification for "balance" or civility and that the only impartial screen to access is that applied by the telcoms via their circuits and switches. You (and whoever else sets policy for Washington Journal) places primary priority on "balance". (I interpret "balance" to mean approximately equal numbers of callers who are Democrats and Republicans intermixed with a smattering of "others".) Secondly, you seek civility and to bar invective and vituperation. Callers inclined toward vile discourse interpret a requirement for civility as a thin veil for censorship. You are right in that you have the right to set the policy. Disaffected callers are right in their interpretation of that policy. The increasing popularity of Washington Journal can only intensify the conflict.

Rarely, a caller achieves more than two minutes on air. Your discussion on Monday, 25 November, with a veteran repeat caller, a woman, during an open-phones segment was delightfully enlightening. You permitted her full expression of her dissatisfaction with "balance." You explained well your and Washington Journal's guests' concern for civility. She was articulate and quite civil in offering her opinion that the current policy cannot achieve balance. She received far more air time, and you engaged in much more exchange with her than has any moderator with any caller in my memory of watching Washington Journal. You managed the conversation with your usual aplomb. She was precise and informative. That exchange is among the best of Washington Journal. Its likes cannot be achieved with any frequency. Nevertheless, its promise is sufficient reason to continue watching.

[REDACTED] • Mobile, AL 36695-9139  
Voice: [REDACTED]  
email: [REDACTED]

o. wj



[REDACTED]

Brian Lamb  
27 November 1996

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Now to what has motivated me to write: On Saturday, 9 November 1996, I was watching Washington Journal, as is my habit, listening to moderator J. J.'s invitation to call, fax or email questions and comments. (I don't know J. J.'s last name. I don't recall its ever having been displayed as an on-screen graphic.) As he spoke, the usual display of the three phone numbers appeared at the bottom of the screen. He spoke an invitation to viewers to fax and email, but no graphic was displayed then, and I observed none during the entire two-hour broadcast. There were multiple displays of the three phone numbers.

As J. J. spoke inviting email, I was struck by his erroneous identification of the address as "c-spanguest@aol.com". (The correct address is cspanguest@aol.) That provoked thoughts of the frequency of email to Washington Journal. I was unable to recall any ever having been read. I wondered whether or not any had been received. I decided to send an email question on 11 and 12 November. None was read on air on those dates. I was still in doubt and ruminated over it for the next few days. I concluded that Washington Journal moderators give lip service to email but give no indication that they either receive or read any.

I decided that I needed documentation for my conclusion before bringing it to your attention. I resolved to watch every minute of Washington Journal during the week of 16-22 November, two hours of programming on each of 16 and 17 November (Saturday and Sunday) and three hours on each of 18-22 November (Monday through Friday), a total of 19 hours. I logged every aired phone call, every read fax and every graphic invitation for calls, faxes and email. There was no email read on air, confirming my earlier recollection.

The log of all those calls and faxes and the tally of invitations to call, fax and email is a part of "One Week with the Washington Journal" (enclosed, q. v.). Having taken time and trouble to compile the log, I decided that the data was worthy of analysis. That analysis is the essence of the piece. I assume that C-Span makes or has made similar, even more extensive compilations and analyses, but I am unaware that any have been disclosed to viewers. I invite you to peruse the study. There is nothing startling there, but I think that it is worth a few minutes attention. It gives additional perspective to "balance".

Here, I offer opinions and suggestions for email to Washington Journal:

- It appears unlikely that moderators are able to receive email in a timely fashion. They invite it but don't read any on air. The invitation to viewers is to address email to cspanguest@aol. It would be more efficient, effective and cheaper (to most emailers and to C-Span) to provide an address within C-Span's Internet domain, i. e. to washingtonjournal@c-span.org.
- If you don't read email on air, it is disingenuous to invite it.
- Provide automated replies to each emailer to Washington Journal to inform them that email has been received and that it may or may not be read on air.

[REDACTED] • Mobile, AL 36695-9139  
Voice: [REDACTED]  
email: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Brian Lamb  
27 November 1996  
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Suggestion for calls to Washington Journal:

- Consider using telephonic software to answer and record voice messages of callers whose purpose is to express two-minute opinions, some of which could be aired at the end of Washington Journal. Such software could also be used to poll callers on specific questions and to identify callers' phone numbers. Abusive callers could be more readily identified. It might be possible to efficiently compile statistical data of interest to C-Span and its viewers.

Suggestions for C-Span Online:

- Consider offering email conferences on current topics on C-Span Online.
- Post links to Internet pages of articles cited on Washington Journal as they are cited. This may represent a problem for articles residing at subscription sites such as *The Wall Street Journal*. However, *The Journal* may be willing to grant C-Span permission, without charge, to post cited articles on [www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org). Doing so would likely attract new subscribers, an incentive for *The Journal* to cooperate with C-Span.

Links and postings of the type described should be timely, preferably contemporaneous with or prior to the discussion on air.

Brian, I've used up my off-air two minutes several times over. If you've read this far, thank you for indulging me, and thanks a lot for C-Span, the greatest contribution to political discourse since Gutenberg.

[REDACTED]  
enclosure: One Week with The Washington Journal

[REDACTED] • Mobile, AL 36695-9139  
Voice: [REDACTED]  
email: [REDACTED]



# **One Week with Washington Journal**

27 November 1996

# One Week with C-Span's Washington Journal

27 November 1997

## Summary

**Background** C-Span's Washington Journal (WJ) invites viewers to phone, fax and email questions and comments contemporaneous with its broadcasts. Despite frequent and intense viewing for more than ten years, I was unable to recall any instance of a WJ moderator reading email on air. Watching for one week with the specific objective to note the reading of email reinforced my impression that past WJ broadcasts had not included the reading of email on air.

The invitation to WJ viewers to send email and the absence of any reading of email on air provoked the question of whether or not WJ received any email. Therefore, I sent email to WJ on 11 and 12 November 1996. None was read on air on those dates, leaving the question unanswered. I resolved to bring the discrepancy between WJ's invitation to viewers to email and the absence of any reading on air to the attention of Brian Lamb of C-Span. This study is to that purpose. Having compiled a log of all voice and fax calls and email to WJ for a one-week period, the data have been analyzed to additional purpose, a categorization of calls and faxes by state, region and gender, for my own edification and that of anyone interested at C-Span.

**Methods** During the week of 16 through 22 November 1996, seven consecutive days (Saturday through Friday), I watched all of each WJ broadcast, a total of 19 hours, and compiled a log of every voice call and fax read on air. No email was read on air during that period. Each voice call and fax was logged as to the time at which it was aired and the gender and state of residence of the caller. Gender was determined by my interpretation of the caller's voice or by the moderators' identification of faxers. State of residence was identified by the moderators in their introductions of calls. Neither I nor the moderators made any identification of the political affiliation, age or race of callers.

Graphic invitations (on-screen displays of phone and fax numbers and C-Span's email address) were counted by the number of displays of the two types by each day's broadcast. Duration of the displays was not timed. (The duration of a display is a better indicator of its emphasis than is a count of the number of times the invitation is displayed but would best be done by timing duration from recorded broadcasts. I did not record broadcasts.)

Data from the log was entered into a spreadsheet (ClarisWorks 4.0, Mac OS) along with population data from the 1990 U. S. Census. Population-based calculations were made using the spreadsheet. No statistical tests were made. The number of calls and faxes (246) was too small for meaningful tests. To perform them requires data from a larger number of calls, software not in my possession and, possibly, the assistance of a statistician.

**Results** During the one-week period of the study, 230 voice calls were aired and 16 faxes were read on air. No email was read on air. Two faxes came from foreign countries (one from Costa Rica and one from "South America"). Moderators did not identify the origin of nine faxes.

There were 219 invitations to viewers to phone and 35 to fax and/or email. A ratio of 6.3 to one in favor of voice calls. 230 voice calls were aired. 16 faxes were read on air. No email was read on air. The ratio of voice calls to faxes was 14.4.

Combining voice calls and faxes, 155 were from men, 79 were from women and the moderator identified senders of one fax to be a husband/wife pair. Gender was not identified for



one voice call and ten faxes. Excluding the husband/wife pair and the caller and the faxers whose gender was not identified, the ratio of men to women was 2.0.

There were 208 calls and faxes, 85.2% of the total, from the eastern and central time zones and 36 (14.8%) from the mountain and pacific zones. On a regional basis most calls and faxes came from the South (40.2% of the total, a frequency of 1.25 per million population). 23.6% came from the Northeast (frequency 1.02 per million), 17.5% from the Midwest (frequency 0.87 per million) and 14.2% from the rest of the United States (frequency 0.55 per million). No voice calls and two faxes were from foreigners (one from Costa Rica, one from "South America"). The origin was not identified for 3.2%.

**Conclusions** Voice calls with conversation were by far the favored mode of communication from viewers to WJ. Faxes received scant air time. Email received no exposure at all. Men were represented two to one over women. Calls from the eastern and central time zones were 5.8 times more frequent than from the mountain and pacific zones. Foreign calls were rare and only by fax. Calls from the South were more frequent than from any other region.

**W**ashington Journal has enjoyed a long run on C-Span, "the nation's public affairs network of record." It is a television talk show featuring journalists, politicians and educators as guests and calls from viewers as grist for conversation. Currently, it broadcasts daily, from 7:00 AM to 10:00 AM Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM on Saturday and Sunday, a total of 19 hours per week. Conversation among or between the moderator and guests is usually focused on articles from the day's newspapers. Current magazine articles are often discussed, especially if written by one of the guests. Books are sometimes discussed with the author as guest. Viewers are invited to ask questions or to comment by voice call, by fax or by email. Voice callers are instructed to dial numbers which disclose their party affiliation (Democrat, Republican or "other"). Communiques from viewers are often contentious and highly partisan, sometimes laden with invective. Discourse is usually civil.

Having been a longtime avid watcher of Washington Journal, it became evident to me that email is rarely, if ever, read on air. I was unable to recall any such reading. To document and substantiate my recollection, I watched all of each broadcast during the week 16-22 November 1996. I logged every aired communication from viewers, noting time of airing, mode of each communique (voice, fax or email), the state or country from which the communique came and the gender of the communicator. Moderators did not identify the party affiliations of callers and faxers. Gender was identified by interpretation of callers voices or from names in the moderator's introduction of faxes. Sometimes moderators did not identify the name or location of faxers. I also tallied each graphic-display invitation to viewers to place voice calls and send faxes and email with comments and questions, usually with the instruction to convey headlines and quotations from viewer's newspapers. Viewers usually honored this instruction early in each broadcast. It was often honored in the breach late in the program. Invitations grossly favored voice calls. Air time for voice calls was of the order of one to two minutes. About 13 calls and/or faxes per hour were aired over the week of observation.

## Questions

What is the reason for the great discrepancy between WJ's invitation to viewers to ask questions and to comment by email and the complete absence of airing of email? Are moderators able to receive email in a timely fashion during broadcast? Do they have a machine at hand for the purpose?

Why does WJ use cspanguest@aol as its email address as opposed to maintaining an address within its own Internet domain? Does C-Span maintain its own server for its Web and email service, or does it rent from an Internet Service Provider?

Does C-Span log viewer calls, faxes and email, including those not aired? If so, what data are maintained? What analyses are made? Is it prepared to share data and analyses with viewers?

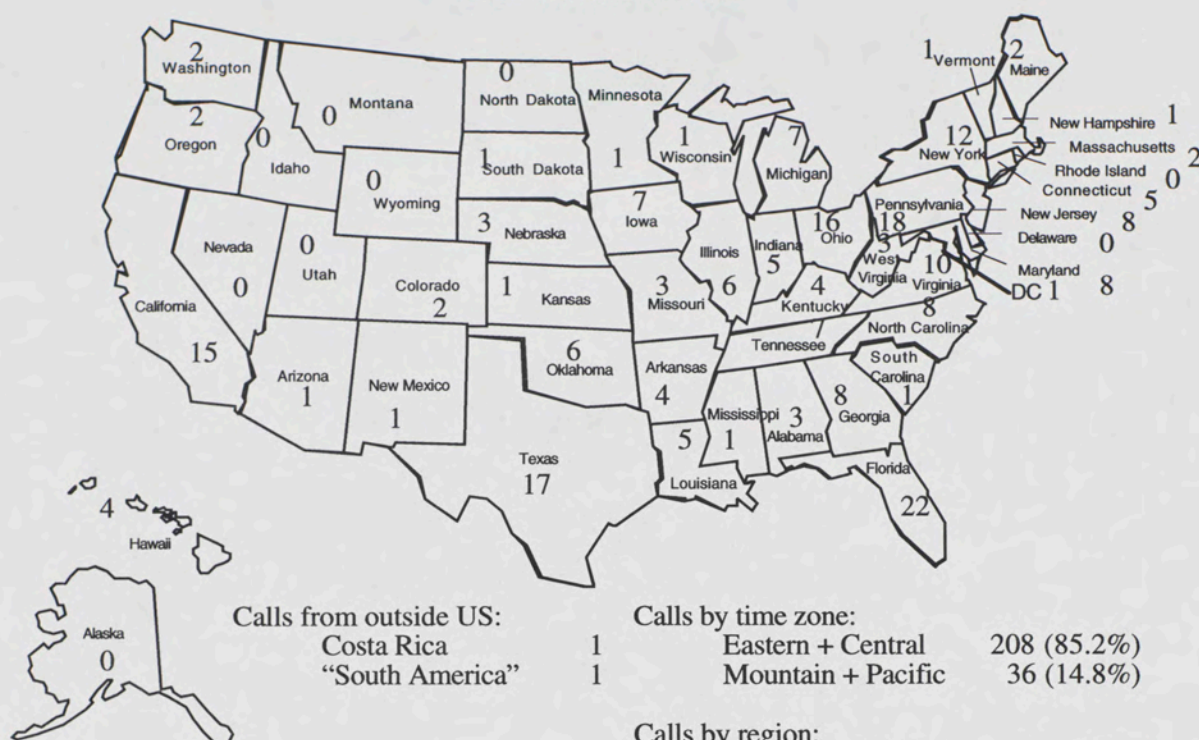
What is the relationship between the geographic distribution of C-Span's affiliate broadcasters and the origins of viewer communiques? What are the implications of that to the political orientations, attitudes and motivations of viewers who phone, fax and email to WJ?

Is there value in increased use of faxes, email and recorded voice calls and decreased use of live voice calls to reduce the intensity of vile confrontation and political invective and increase civil discourse?



# Calls to Washington Journal

15-22 November 1996



<sup>1</sup>ME, NH, VT, MA, NY, PA, NJ, DE, MD, DC

<sup>2</sup>OH, IN, IL, MI, WI, IA, MN

<sup>3</sup>VA, WV, KY, TN, AR, OK, TX, LA, MS, AL, FL, GA, SC, NC



	A	B	C	D	E
	State	Calls	Population (millions) 1990	Calls Per Million (B/C)	Notes
1					
2	AK	0	0.55	0.00	
3	AL	3	4.04	0.74	
4	AR	4	2.35	1.70	
5	AZ	1	3.67	0.27	
6	CA	15	29.76	0.50	
7	CO	2	3.29	0.61	
8	CT	5	3.29	1.52	
9	DE	0	0.67	0.00	
10	FL	22	12.94	1.70	
11	GA	8	6.48	1.23	
12	HI	4	1.11	3.60	
13	IA	7	2.78	2.52	
14	ID	0	1.01	0.00	
15	IL	6	11.43	0.52	
16	IN	5	5.54	0.90	
17	KS	1	2.48	0.40	
18	KY	4	3.69	1.08	
19	LA	5	4.22	1.18	
20	MA	2	6.02	0.33	
21	MD	8	4.78	1.67	
22	ME	2	1.23	1.63	
23	MI	7	9.30	0.75	
24	MN	1	4.38	0.23	
25	MO	3	5.12	0.59	
26	MS	1	2.57	0.39	
27	MT	0	0.80	0.00	
28	NC	8	6.63	1.21	
29	ND	0	0.64	0.00	
30	NE	3	1.58	1.90	
31	NH	1	1.11	0.90	
32	NJ	8	7.73	1.03	
33	NM	1	1.52	0.66	
34	NV	0	1.20	0.00	
35	NY	12	17.99	0.67	
36	OH	16	10.85	1.47	
37	OK	6	3.15	1.90	
38	OR	2	2.84	0.70	
39	PA	18	11.88	1.52	
40	RI	0	1.00	0.00	
41	SC	1	3.49	0.29	
42	SD	1	0.70	1.43	
43	TN	7	4.88	1.43	
44	TX	17	16.99	1.00	
45	UT	0	1.72	0.00	
46	VA	10	6.19	1.62	
47	VT	1	0.56	1.79	
48	WA	2	4.87	0.41	

	A	B	C	D	E
49	WI	1	4.89	0.20	
50	WV	3	1.79	1.68	
51	WY	0	0.45	0.00	
52	DC	1	0.61	1.64	
53	CR	1			
54	SA	1			
55	?	9			
56					
57					
58					
59					
60		246	248.76		



# Log of Calls to Washington Journal

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Day	Date	Time (EST)	Mode (phone, fax, email)	Gender	State	Notes
1							
2	Sa	11/16/96	8:11	p	m	?	John Sununu, Jr. (R, VT)
3			8:13	p	f	FL	
4			8:16	p	m	KY	
5			8:18	p	m	NC	
6			8:20	p	f	TX	
7			8:23	p	m	NH	
8			8:32	p	f	TX	Harold Ford, Jr. (D, TN)
9			8:35	p	m	OK	
10			8:35	p	m	CA	
11			8:39	p	f	MO	
12			8:54	p	f	CA	Open Phones
13			8:56	p	m	NE	
14			8:57	p	m	FL	
15			8:59	p	m	IA	
16			9:16	p	m	CT	Ms. Flood (office Souder, R, IN)/Michael Brown (son, Ron Brown)
17			9:19	f	?	?	
18			9:20	f	?	?	Fax re. "token black" moderator
19			9:23	p	f	TX	
20			9:28	p	m	OH	
21			9:32	p	m	CA	
22			9:35	f	?	VA	
23			9:36	f	?	?	
24			9:39	p	m	NJ	
25			9:44	p	f	TN	
26			9:48	p	m	NY	Graphic Invitations: Phones 10, Fax/email 3
27	Su	11/17/96	8:12	p	f	CT	Lippman
28			8:15	p	f	CA	
29			8:19	p	m	PA	
30			8:22	p	f	AL	
31			8:26	p	m	CA	
32			8:47	p	m	FL	Jeanne Kirkpatrick, William Pickering
33			8:53	p	m	CA	
34			8:54	p	f	OK	
35			9:00	f	?	NM	
36			9:03	p	m	NC	
37			9:06	p	m	LA	
38			9:14	p	m	VA	
39			9:19	p	m	NJ	
40			9:21	f	?	SA	fax, "South America"
41			9:22	p	m	GA	
42			9:23	p	m	WA	
43			9:25	f	m/f	FL	husband/wife senders
44			9:27	p	m	FL	
45			9:28	p	m	CA	



# Log of Calls to Washington Journal

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
46			9:40	p	m	?	Lt. Gen. George Muellner, AF, re. Joint Strike Fighter
47			9:41	p	m	TX	
48			9:43	p	m	MN	
49			9:54	p	m	WV	James Blackwell (Lockheed-Martin), Randy Harrison (by phone, Boeing)
50			9:55	p	m	MD	
51			9:58	p	m	NE	
52			9:59	p	m	TX	Graphic Invitations: Phones 20, Fax/email 3
53	Mo	11/18/96	7:12	p	m	IL	Carl Leubsdorf (Dallas Morning News)
54			7:15	p	f	FL	
55			7:17	p	m	FL	
56			7:20	p	f	AR	
57			7:25	p	f	IA	
58			7:27	p	m	HI	
59			7:29	p	m	FL	
60			7:35	p	f	OH	
61			7:36	p	f	LA	
62			7:40	p	f	FL	
63			8:20	p	m	IA	Scott Faulkner (U. S. House Admin. Off.), Michael Tomasky (N. Y. Magazine), Terry Eastland (Forbes Media Critic)
64			8:23	p	m	OH	
65			8:25	p	m	PA	
66			8:27	p	f	IN	
67			8:34	p	m	PA	
68			8:42	p	m	NY	
69			8:48	p	m	VT	
70			8:50	p	m	VA	
71			8:53	p	m	NJ	
72			8:54	p	m	?	
73			8:58	p	f	IA	
74			9:01	p	m	CR	Costa Rica
75			9:17	p	m	IN	James Pfiffner (Geo. Mason U., re. presidency), Open Phones
76			9:18	p	f	TX	
77			9:20	p	m	CT	
78			9:22	p	m	VA	
79			9:25	p	m	AL	
80			9:26	p	m	AR	
81			9:27	p	f	NE	
82			9:28	p	f	OH	
83			9:36	p	m	LA	Chuck Hager (Sen. Elect, R, NE)
84			9:40	p	m	NY	
85			9:42	f	f	TX	
86			9:43	p	f	OH	
87			9:48	p	m	VA	
88			9:50	p	f	SD	
89			9:53	p	m	NY	
90			9:58	p	m	FL	



# Log of Calls to Washington Journal

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
91			9:59	p	f	IA	Graphic Invitations: Phones 33, Fax/email 4
92	Tu	11/19/96	7:17	p	m	NY	Cissy Baker (Tribune Broadcasting)
93			7:20	p	m	NY	
94			7:22	p	m	MI	
95			7:23	p	f	TX	
96			7:27	p	m	FL	
97			7:30	p	m	CO	
98			7:34	p	m	PA	
99			7:37	p	f	FL	
100			7:40	p	m	WI	
101			7:57	p	m	NC	John Sellers (Lib. Cong., re. Gettysburg Address 133rd ann.)
102			7:59	p	m	OH	
103			8:00	p	m	PA	
104			8:22	p	f	PA	Tom Allen (ME, D), Kenny Hulshof (MO, R)
105			8:30	p	m	ME	
106			8:32	p	m	MI	
107			8:37	p	m	MD	
108			8:42	p	f	MO	
109			8:51	p	m	GA	
110			8:55	p	m	HI	
111			9:00	p	m	TN	
112			9:17	p	m	VA	James Pfiffner (Geo. Mason U., re. presidency)
113			9:19	p	f	OK	
114			9:20	p	m	CO	
115			9:22	p	m	MD	
116			9:24	p	f	CA	
117			9:25	p	m	VA	
118			9:27	p	f	CA	
119			9:29	p	m	IN	
120			9:46	p	f	CA	James Richardson (Willie Brown, biography)
121			9:50	f	?	?	
122			9:52	p	m	KY	
123			9:54	p	m	HI	
124			9:57	p	m	FL	Graphic Invitations: Phones 24, Fax/email 3
125	We	11/20/96	7:05	p	m	OH	Jim Mann (L. A. Times Foreign Affairs, Woodrow Wilson Int. Center)
126			7:07	p	m	TX	
127			7:11	p	f	PA	
128			7:13	p	f	PA	
129			7:16	p	f	OH	
130			7:18	p	f	OH	
131			7:29	p	m	FL	
132			7:31	p	m	OH	
133			7:35	f	m	TN	
134			7:37	p	m	IL	
135			7:40	p	m	MD	



## Log of Calls to Washington Journal

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
							Mike Seccombe (Sydney Morning Herald), Michael Gleeson (Australian Broadcasting Corp.), John Shimkus (HR, R, IL), Jim Turner (HR, D, TX)
136			8:19	p	m	PA	
137			8:27	p	m	TX	
138			8:30	p	m	NY	
139			8:37	p	f	TX	
140			8:41	p	m	VA	
141			8:43	p	m	OH	
142			8:52	p	f	TN	
143			8:54	p	f	IN	
144			9:00	p	m	FL	
145			9:11	p	f	OH	Open Phones
146			9:12	p	f	KY	
147			9:13	p	m	CA	
148			9:15	p	m	OR	
149			9:16	p	f	IL	
150			9:18	p	f	KY	
151			9:20	p	m	PA	
152			9:22	p	f	WV	
153			9:23	p	m	TN	
154			9:25	p	m	MO	
155			9:27	p	m	TN	
							Cities' Schools, Paul Helmke (Mayor, R, Ft. Wayne), Thomas Menino (Mayor, D, Boston)
156			9:42	p	f	NJ	
157			9:44	p	f	FL	
158			9:48	p	f	IN	
159			9:51	p	f	OH	
160			9:53	p	f	FL	
161			9:54	p	f	MA	
162			9:57	p	f	OK	
163			9:59	p	f	IA	
164			10:02	p	m	CA	
165			10:05	p	f	PA	Graphic Invitations: Phones 44, Fax/email 8
166	Th	11/21/96	7:14	p	m	HI	Juliet Eilperin (by phone, Roll Call)
167			7:15	p	m	WA	Open Phones
168			7:19	p	m	IL	
169			7:22	p	m	NC	
170			7:23	p	f	PA	
171			7:26	p	m	FL	
172			7:28	p	f	GA	
173			7:30	p	m	NC	
174			7:32	p	f	WV	
175			7:35	p	m	OH	
176			7:47	p	m	LA	Donald Lopez (Nat. Air and Space Museum)
177			7:50	p	m	AR	
178			7:52	p	m	GA	
179			7:53	p	m	AL	
180			7:55	p	m	MI	