

Subj: **Structural Mechanisms for Media Accountability**
Date: 1/21/00 8:18:49 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Judgewatch
To: JNaureckas@FAIR.org

Dear Mr. Naureckas:

Thank you for your response. However, you must be both a very fast reader and typer if, by 4:56 p.m., you were able to already e-mail your response to a 16-page fax, which had only arrived 10 minutes earlier. Indeed, the fax itself took 8 minutes to send: from 4:38 to 4:56 p.m.

With all respect, I think you have been a bit hasty – and did not fully read the six-page July 8, 1998 proposal. Do you really not find it surprising – indeed inexplicable – that *Brill's Content* should not be eager to examine the efficacy of structural mechanisms which are supposed to achieve journalistic accountability, such as news ombudsmen, news councils, etc., that it should not present any story about how they have evolved and been adapted by the various media across the country and, perhaps, around the world, and not want to explore whether *The New York Times* own practices have detrimentally influenced the use of such mechanisms? Certainly, if you, as editor of *Extra!*, believe that news ombudsmen "are more a problem than a solution" – that is an important point of view, which should be aired – including in *Brill's Content* – along with the alternative that you not only see as superior, but can prove to be so.

If you have read the July 8, 1998 story proposal, you know that *The NY Times* has NO alternative mechanism to a news ombudsman. I find it hard to believe that you think that subscribers to *Brill's Content* and *Extra!* would not be fascinated in having Mr. Sulzberger or Mr. Lelyveld explain, in an interview, why *The Times* – unlike, for example, *The Washington Post* – has no news ombudsman – and that they would not be delighted to see Mr. Sulzberger and Mr. Lelyveld squirm as they try to justify *The Times'* alternative: ignoring, without response, legitimate complaints against it – of which CJA long ago alerted them. This, in addition to their tolerating an editor's depraved and abusive tirade when, after 7 years of such treatment, we filed the comprehensive complaint which doubled as our submission to Project Censored. Surely, you do NOT believe that there can be no legitimate complaints against *The Times*?

Perhaps you would be open-minded enough to agree to examine the 4 complaints, described in CJA's July 8, 1998 proposal as having been provided to Mr. Sulzberger. Since FAIR, which sponsors *Extra!*, describes itself as "scrutiniz(ing) media practices that marginalize public interest...and dissenting viewpoints" I would have imagined that you would be interested in the "paper trail" we have accumulated over the past decade, establishing a pattern and practice by *The Times* of wilfully suppressing "time-sensitive and electorally-significant stories of official misconduct by government leaders and those occupying positions of power and influence", as well as its blackballing of our non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization.

I would greatly appreciate if you would call me, at your convenience, next week. At very least, I think Ben Bagdikian, who serves on *Extra!'*s advisory board, should see the July 8, 1998 story proposal – which neither you nor *Brill's Content* considered to be of any particular interest.

Yours for a media integrity – and accountability,

ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator
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