

# THE MINORITY OF ONE

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May 23, 1966

Mr. David Welsh  
Ramparts  
301 Broadway  
San Francisco, Calif. 94133

Dear Mr. Welsh:

It is never fair to preempt one's criticism with a statement such as "let this be the last of it." Suppose, I had suggested this in my first letter and thus attempted to present my misgiving as beyond challenge; you would not think that fair, would you?

Actually, your letter is at least as much of a polemic with yourself as with me. For when you now contend that you have done nothing improper, you contradict your own admission of an impropriety, an admission you made during our telephone conversation. If you will only try to be objective rather than self-serving, you will easily appreciate that this lends support to the possibility I raised in my first letter, namely that your apology was merely "a new attempt to obtain that which you had not obtained by the method for which you were now apologizing."

To be specific, and to help you even now recapture the reasons which might have caused you to admit an improper practice, let me say that I never claimed any "pre-publication patent on a piece of news." But I definitely consider it unethical when the editors of one publication try to induce, with monetary inducements among others, a contributor to another publication to breach

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his commitment and to let them have otherwise committed material. When such efforts last for many days and involve ever more people, cross-country telephone calls, etc., there cannot even be given the benefit of the doubt such as might be warranted in case of a spontaneous, thoughtless mistake. Moreover, your own awareness of the impropriety of what you were doing was shown not only subsequently in our telephone conversation but also in the fact that despite the urgings by others you were rather long in contacting me directly and obviously preferred to make arrangements behind my back.

It is not at all correct that during our telephone conversation you were "openly eliciting information...about a story..." You did nothing of the sort. You were merely inquiring under what conditions I would be willing to share with you the information I possessed. The difference is not only great but quite strongly suggests that I was right in imputing to you "concealed but shrewd" efforts at getting information ad meritum even while appearing merely to negotiate the terms of its release. This episode does not lend itself for a different interpretation simply because you called me after several days of encountering refusals in your efforts to elicit information. If those who kept the information for me refused to give it to you, was I not even less likely to offer it unconditionally? So you were anything but open in eliciting information and to the precise degree to which you were eliciting it, your efforts were "concealed but shrewd."

It is correct that I did not call you the Tuesday following our telephone conversation, as I was supposed to. Obviously, the need for my calling you disappeared when there was no longer a possibility for any joint publication and while I was aware that you were aware of this. But precisely because the story turned out not to be a story, there was room for you to manifest that your expressed regrets were sincere. Now, you have given me additional reason to think so. For it turns out that that which I speculatively and fearfully imputed to you was right, namely that as soon as I no longer was someone from whom something desirable could be extracted, previously expressed regrets disappeared and now are openly denied. It is only logical to speculate that had your regrets been sincere in the first place, instead of now denying them you would be unhesitatingly restating them.

I must disabuse you of the impression that Ramparts played any role whatever in preventing the appearance of a refutable report. Since I was a direct witness of the very birth of the disenchantment, I can assure you that this claim is totally deprived of merit.

I should hope that anyone would read anything with "careful scrutiny" and it therefore surprises me that you seem to keep "careful scrutiny" in reserve as some kind of a retaliatory weapon. I am no less surprised that, as a long-time reader of TMO, you only now learned of the importance I attach to human motivation; that you seem to find a contradiction between an analysis of motivation and the "materialist approach"; and that you impute to me the "materialist approach." If I may total up a few implications, does it not stand to reason that your aversion to what you call the "Motives Game," your failure to understand why I "felt compelled to write" you (even though no practical end of mine could be discerned) and your reneging on once expressed regrets display a rather consistent ethical insensitivity.

Last but by no means least, when you so properly call on us to dedicate ourselves to "the big task ahead of us," how are we even to discern that task without an ethics superior to that of those we think to be in the wrong? What, if not ethics, causes you and me to be on this side of the fence?

I can only express the hope that in reading this letter you will truly try to understand rather than automatically react with all the unfairness of the psychology of belligerents.

Sincerely,

M. S. Arnoni

MSA:mw