

7/4/71

Dear Lou,

In writing you in haste about what, with the state of my ignorance and the limited knowledge I have, seems to be an immediately important aspect yesterday, and not having had time to really think it through and organize my thoughts, I overlooked a minor point that may, in time, seem to a lawyer like a major one, hence this note while everyone else is still asleep.

A fair press is not measured alone in terms of nasty cracks and superficial objectivity of reporting. The press can report what one side, in this case the government, says exactly as it is said, without nasty cracks, with what it considers "objectivity", and yet be grossly unfair in terms of the legal rights of the accused. The point I overlooked is that in reporting faithfully and without added editorial comment what the government did say, the NYTimes and the Washington Post, I am pretty certain, did not, even pro forma, report Jim's denial of the charges or his countercharge that he had been framed, as TV did. Thus it becomes an unfair press, whose reporting is prejudicial to Jim's rights.

I have working company from New York City. I discussed what I raised in my yesterday's letter with him, and it is his recollection that the late editions of the Times, the copy he gets on his way to work, was like the early edition that (sometimes) gets here in not giving Jim's side. When he awakens I'll ask him to keep careful track of the three New York papers on this story for me, sending me copies of whatever appears as it does. To the degree I can, I'll watch them also, seeing the early editions that leave NYW. I'm started and will keep a separate file on this. Thus if the points I raised, which I realize may be in your minds down there without my knowing it or may not be appealing to the lawyers if it has not suggested itself, later turns out to be of interest, I'll have as good a file as I can. And I've already written another friend in NYC asking for a careful covering of the papers he gets as a double check. The edition of the NYTimes that gets to B.O. is the same one that comes here. In connection with this point, I have accumulated several different letters in which "editing" of prejudicial nature is "explained" by the Times, in connection with the change in an originally favorable review of Jim's book, with Jim Lesar and I jointly worked out, and one by a friend of mine in connection with a real axe job (probably deadly when the publisher addition is added) on mine, for which the Times actually got an official apologist on political assassinations whose dispassion was further compromised by his contemporaneous writing of official government propaganda for the USIA!

I hope my hasty writing is not unclear, but I am pressed for time. I've gotten up early this a.m., after less than four hours sleep, to try and catch up on important mail while others are still asleep.

Sincerely,