

3/5/72

Dear Jerry,

Your letter of the first came today, with the welcome enclosures. I had wanted that Barth article it is is sold. I had heard of it only. I understand how things get mislaid but you were so long in returning my 10/23 carbon I no longer recall where I intended to file it. Thanks for the other things. Unless you want me to read your revision of your Times piece for your purposes, I will not, partly because I just don't want to fight for nothing, partly because I always have too much to do and partly because with the injury to my thumb I got farthur behind. Instead I'll address what referrence you make to it.

Your first graph refers to the Steve Roberts stuff and says nobody else made the same comment. This proves one point I think I made, that in criticizing the press your criticism must be in the context of the realities of the every-days workins of the press. I can understand that you could have forgotten my having said this earlier. I suggest that because I am certain I did try on more than one occasion to get this point across and because I am also certain that I was specific on Roberts, another question should suggest itself to you: are you the captive of any hangups or preconceptions? None of us are immune. I think I have detected some in you. I will not discuss them, especially not now, but I do think you should be engaging in some self-analysis.

Your second paragraph, on the Wolff matter. What you say is your affair. What you believe should be based upon fact and knowledge, not twisted interpretations. For example, although I do not recall any editing in it and am willing to believe that the footnote is as I wrote it (Harris never gave me a copy of his editing to keep although I asked for it), the rest just isn't factual. And I did tell you this. The departure from fact includes your evaluation of "subjective". My dated letter to Wolff ends any reasonable possibility of this interpretation. This also is the way newspapering works. It was inevitable and it did eventuate and Bradlee and Wolff both knew it. How else could Wolff have been told not to review that book alone? However, and this gets into your third paragraph, there was a rather large amount on the Washington Post in the original that Harris edited out. I had no objection to that editing, but it did change what the book said of the Post. Your paragraph begins with a misrepresentation of what happened "on the matter of my being a liar." I referred, when you phoned, to the exact wording of your piece, which I then recalled. I then asked you a question on whose decision it was to leave the footnote in and you said Harris. It was. The question did come up. I not only did not insist upon it but I told him I had no objection to his taking it out and did say I thought he would be better off if he did. You know these things before you wrote what you did. It is not in any sense my "rather bad habit of misinterpreting silence as an admission of something or other." This is not a case of your silence but a case of wording that to your knowledge was contrary to the reality. I don't "blame" the footnote "on Harris simply because he decided not to edit it out." I stand by the accuracy of that footnote today. The question, in the context of your original writing, was of the decision to leave it in or out and that was not mine but, as you freely acknowledge, for you knew, Harris'. I think you are now too close to this to be able to take a detached view, but I think if you wait a while and reread the original of what you wrote and compare that treatments with everything else in your piece you may see what you do not now see or conceive and may come to understand what is not in any way in your consciousness way. What you need here is understanding of yourself, not me. Nor of my reaction. But the fact is that you do not conceive what you do not want to believe and you will not conceive what ~~you~~ is beyond your personal experience.

That you had not received a reply from me is understandable. You should have had it by the time you wrote this. There are several reasons for this. One is that I am just going to have to curtail the amount of letter-writing I do. I took a lot of time on your piece, as I have done for others who mean less to me. I have been keeping you informed of many things, and I have many others and as I have reduced. I have to economize on everything, from time to stamps. So, when there is no urgency, I leave an envelope stay here until it is close to

the weight a stamp will carry. This also saves the small amount of time it takes to get an envelope and address it. These kinds of economies are beyond your experience, but they are to me the realities of my present life. I have to save on everything. And, as you have come to know, I am particularly resentful of any inference about my finances. Your gift of the carbon-paper followed closely on Cyril's crack that I was panhandling him, which is not the case. Rather is the contrary the reality. I have provided him things without cost to him and at cost to me, beginning with the honoring of his request that I get a copy of the GM-family contract. This is for your information only. I don't want it talked about. I have asked him for things, like xeroxes from standard texts. He has offered things, like copies of proceedings. But to date the total yield from him is zero. I have had need to go over that file lately and I know what I am talking about. I was also surprised, now, if I didn't acknowledge receiving the folders, I did. I do appreciate them, and I regret that the postage cost more than the folders. I had just had to buy a box a day or so earlier.

On the UPI photos: skip it. I have completed the draft of that writing and am half-way through the ~~writing~~ editing. When I'm again in New York I'll see Miller. This would not really have required much money. It would have taken time I realize you may not be able to spare with school in again. My purpose was to see if there were any pictures showing other than the clipping you sent and others I have obtained show (AP's, for example-I have it from a distant paper). Views of the press conference itself might have been informative, if they shot any. But I am past that point in my writing and I just can't keep going back. So, when you have money, don't go and buy them. If you go at all, go to see. Miller would lend me the pictures, I suppose, and let me pay for those I keep, but as I say, I'm now past that. I have addressed this in a different way and it is or will have to be adequate.

Your P.S. on the first page illustrates your blind refusal to think. You make up your mind and that is it. I told you precisely correctly, that it is factually inaccurate to say as you did and persist, "the exclusive was given to Fred Graham." You have jumped to a conclusion that is quite reasonable, but what is not reasonable is your persistence in an inaccuracy after it is called to your attention. You should be able to recognize the difference between "given" and "obtained". But if you do not, ask yourself why you persist in one formulation and refuse the other when it serves your point as well and eliminates what I have told you is inaccurate. I have also explained the urgent need we have for avoiding minor error that can be avoided. This is an illustration of it. When you personalize it and put it in the wrong context ("can get me in any kind of trouble") you are at once irresponsible and simultaneously, in another way, addressing a hangup I referred to above.

Your PPS is inconsistent with my own information but similar. It is factually erroneous, too, and more than once. I address one, "except that it was since Lattimer." It was before Lattimer saw anything and I knew of it before he saw anything. There are major differences between me and almost everyone else on this matter. There are also, sometimes unintended, breaches of my confidence. So, I'm keeping this to myself. In part this is also because I am the only one of whom I know in any meaningful way addressing this. I think I have aborted what you have gotten wind of. I simply haven't informed others and I do not intend to until the book is out or it is certain that it never will be. This is not a persuasive way of asking your source, but if it does not require that you breach confidence, it could be important for me to know. And if yours is a second-hand source, all steps. I have done much more than you know, and I think it has been effective, that is, results can be attributed to these efforts and to them only. The only thing correct in your formulation is ~~that~~ the Times and the seeing of the material, but that is in an erroneous context. It is close to a totally wrong representation. When you are here again you'll understand.

I knew that one of Malcolm's bodyguards, I think Roberts, surfaced as a fink. I'd appreciate a dub of the show, esp. on a cassette. My large machine is broken and I can't afford to get it fixed.

Your last handwritten P.S. says you expect and never resent honesty. I think you have resented what I think is honesty. You then say "What I resent is that you tend to jump to conclusions about people's motives and judgements..." I suppose we all tend to jump to conclusions. There is no doubt I resented some of what you wrote very much. If I could not put it precisely as "motives and judgements", I would not argue that ~~go~~ such thing is involved. It is, however formulated. But I do not ~~disagree~~ that I rushed to a judgment. This has been building as you do not realize because you were and probably still are unaware of the probably complex reasons and influences behind what I think is clear to me. In any even, by the time I had read all those pages and finished the long thing I wrote, whether I read and wrote in haste or not, "rush" would hardly seem to be, or "jump", an accurate formulation. It may be comforting, but it is imprecise. You can, of course, argue that I reached an instinctive opinion and then refused to change it or reconsider it, but with the time I spent the one word that seems to be unsuitable is "jump".

I know you believe this. What I am suggesting is that you think about it and see if you can conceive that perhaps it is not this way, or perhaps it is closer to the other way. You seem, for example, entirely unaware of your own about face on the precise point in dispute on the Wolff footnote. You are now saying opposite what you said, and on no new information, only the pride that Wolff wrote you. You have yet to recognize that he really told you nothing you did not know except Bradlee's name and that everything on which you can check is exactly what I told you and what my files show. There is nothing he told you that can be confirmed if it is not in my files, and there is no basis for believing anything he said contrary to what is in my files. On the other hand, there is support for everything I said, specifically and generally. No purpose was served by making false contemporaneous notes. And once the rest double-crossed me in what they did 5/31/66 the one thing you do know is that the word of anyone in anyway involved in that double-cross is suspect, that there is motive behind his statement by any one of them. The files leave it beyond question that we did have a deal, its nature, who I dealt with then, how it started, all of that. There is even my copy of the questions I prepared for them to ask questions, done in their office and on their special paper. If I have no purpose in lying and no motive to misrepresent, have you asked yourself and does your writing reflect whether Wolff did? and today still does? You haven't even come to understand the self-condemnation in what he did admit, in even his own formulation of it. So, cast the right note.

I do not want to leave any legitimate points you raise unanswered. But I also don't want to waste time this way. Believe as or not, it is you who are inflexible. You have the preconceptions and refuse to evaluate them. I think I can understand this to a degree. I will not discuss it. But the case of "give" and "obtain" ought to be enough for the beginning of some thinking. They are not the same. Whether it is within your comprehension or not, and if it is not it is only because of a refusal to think, the difference is considerable in what is irrelevant to your writing and there is no legitimate purpose in your writing that is not served by the change. If I do not carry this further, one reason I want you to understand clearly is that it is more than enough to have to fight the other side without having to fight at the same time those on ours who just don't know what is the situation today and have displayed no interest in learning. And in some cases can have certain motives attributed to them, whether or not they recognize them. It is past time for you to have learned at least one thing: that if there is such all of us do not know, there are few in a position to know less of this than you, for your work is first recent and then peripheral. I am not going further not because I won't take time but for other reasons having nothing to do with you. But about facts as about people you should be beginning to ask yourselves how much you know about what lied under everything. To avoid further misunderstanding, let me add that often I ignore what I might resent, that I think I try to avoid needless fights within the circifical community, that I never air them in public and actually go the other way, and that I am not now accusing you of deliberateness in anything. On this last point, you are very sensitive about your own feelings but oblivious of those of others.

Best,