

Mr. Stephen Rosenfeld
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

2/20/85

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld,

News, it appears, is like beauty - only so many more beholders!

So, from many fine things on the ed and oped pages in this morning's paper, is editorial comment.

The ultraright assault on the media via CBS is worthy of the space and attention given it. But I suggest that the Post might well give thought to some of its own words in other contexts. With the partly-recalled past in mind.

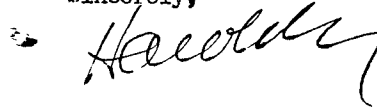
"News organizations have to find it in themselves to be fair and professional ...when reasonable questions arise..." (editorial) "...if the press lets up, I'm afraid the public will never know what it has lost.' That would be the ultimate tragedy for a democracy that is vitally dependent on a free flow of information, the multitude of voices that James Madison envisioned 200 years ago." (Fred Friendly)

Then there is Meg Greenfield's fine Vietnam lessons unlearned piece. It manages to avoid the failures of the press then, a lesson I still hope may be learned.

Because I do have a news background, beginning more than 50 years ago, and because I do care about the country and its major institutions, my recent experiences have given me thought and it happens I got out an old copy of The Federalist Papers and have been rereading it. With all I've lived through, all I've observed, all that has happened to our world, it means more and now I can see those three and their pioneering associates as more than the great political thinkers the world had known, which I've always thought. They can be read as prophets, the wisest of them. A little bit of practise going along with the convenient quotation would be good, I think, for the country, the soul and the media. Especially the targets of the extremists.

Of course I then encountered shibboleths. But I never dreamed that, even with those experiences, I would see the day when corruption of and by the judicial system would not be news, not be worthy of any editorial comment. This is not a brave new world, not wondrous people in it, not a dream, Shakespearean or Federalist, but perhaps the beginning of the nightmare of which Huxley wrote.

Sincerely,



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