

'Pat Buchanan's Media Papers'—Mr. Buchanan Replies

... the 34 documents made public by the Watergate Committee at the time of the testimony of White House speechwriter Pat Buchanan ... ought to be reproduced and distributed free by your carrier boy, because they show how it is possible to subvert the First Amendment."

—Tom Braden,
Washington Post, Nov. 24.

That allegation, tucked neatly under the headline, "Pat Buchanan's Media Papers," is the gravamen of Saturday's indictment. (Apparently to impress upon less discerning subscribers the seriousness of the matter, the make-up editor thoughtfully juxtaposed the two-column photograph of Buchanan's shining countenance with a two-column photograph of an empty electric chair.)

What are the particulars? Essentially, Mr. Braden's case rests on four alleged "excerpts" from the "Buchanan papers." Two are memoranda from Mr. Colson to Mr. Haldeman, the remaining were from Mr. Magruder to Mr. Haldeman and his deputy.

And what are the facts? A) Not one of the four documents was either drafted or addressed to Buchanan. B) Not one of the four documents came out of Buchanan's file, since not one of them had ever been in Buchanan's file. C) Not one of the four was among the 34 made public by the Ervin Committee, in celebration of the occasion of my arrival on Capitol Hill. D) All of them, if I am not mistaken, were released weeks after I testified in separate and independent action by Senator Lowell Weicker.



PATRICK J. BUCHANAN.

Which leaves Mr. Braden's case of First Amendment subversion hanging on ten "sample letters" of protest drafted to be sent to executives of the communications cartels whose employees had behaved with particular boorishness at the President's December, 1970, press conference.

Contrary to Mr. Braden's unsubstantiated charge, however, they were not ghosted for "fake signatures," but for individuals who shared the sentiments expressed. Indeed, these same telegrams were discussed in some detail in my televised testimony before the Ervin Committee, following which testimony, Mr. Braden himself publicly lauded me as "one who appreciates the fine distinction between what is funny in politics and what is gross."

And, as one who appreciates that

"fine distinction," I consider Mr. Braden's column to be "gross."

Subverting the First Amendment is a charge which the Left flips about with the same abandon as did the Old Right the label of Fellow Traveler. That is an unexceptional observation. But what is inexplicable is why The Washington Post—with that pack of mastiffs hanging around its City Desk ready to take a chunk out of any of The Post's critics on command—should turn the assignment over to one of Katharine Graham's lap dogs.

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Mr. Braden replies:

Though the documents from which I quoted were in the possession of the Ervin Committee, Mr. Buchanan is correct in pointing out that these particular papers were actually released by Sen. Weicker under circumstances unrelated to Mr. Buchanan's appearance before the Committee. In that sense, it may have been misleading to lump them among the "Pat Buchanan Papers", even though the activities they describe are entirely consistent with, and representative of, the anti-media campaign revealed in the 34 documents which the Ervin Committee made public at the time of Mr. Buchanan's appearance as a witness—and in which Mr. Buchanan figures prominently.

I accept Mr. Buchanan's assertion that the letters he wrote in condemn-



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nation of reporters were intended to be signed by real people.

None of this has much to do, however, with the central point of the column in question, to which Mr. Buchanan does not address himself. The point is that whether we call these documents Buchanan papers or White House papers, or whether we end—as Mr. Buchanan ends—merely by calling names, the documents themselves plainly demonstrate that Mr. Buchanan and his associates on the public payroll spent a good portion of their time in the White House planning and executing a massive campaign of deceit and intimidation against the news media.

(See "Memos on the Media," opposite page.)