

30 December 1972

HW:

Thanks for sending the Post version of the Alsop columns on China. You are correct: both the Chronicle and the States-Item sometimes cut him. I share your mystification about his seeming turn-around, and can only suggest that he may be the type of conservative who sees China as a lesser communist evil compared with Russia. Just why this should be is something he will have to explain, not I; since it seems to me that what such people really fear is any change toward genuine social democracy, meaning change toward a government for the benefit of more than a few ruling class types. If that's true, then Joe really has been charmed, since the Chinese are and always have been fundamentally more democratic than the Russians, both in practice and theory. It is in Russia that a new ruling class has gained power, and in China where one has been struck down in the cultural revolution. I suppose one must remember that Joe also was exposed to Kuomintang China at its very worst, and the shock to a puritan at finding rigidly honest Chinese must be traumatic, to say the least.

jdw 

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I've known Austin Scott for several years. He started out with the AP here about 10 years ago, moved to New York, then to Washington and then resigned to go with the Post about a year ago, saying he was dissatisfied with the way AP was not developing more black staff members. He has been back here many times on special stories before he left the AP. I believe he's the son of a wealthy father. Attended Stanford, and married a white Stanford girl. They have two children of their own and two black adopted kids, all apparently very happy.

He writes somewhat deceptively along establishment lines, working in his challenging material rather subtly instead of rubbing people's noses in it. He's no revolutionary, but usually very well informed and on top of developments. Whether he reports them probably depends on whether he thinks he can get away with it. Don't underestimate him. I always have found him honest. He was the second black AP hired. The first was Hollie West, who also started out here, moved to New York and then moved to the Post where he's now their jazz critic. Hollie seems to have dropped mostly out of active reporting. Austin probably would be more alert for your purposes. If you need to contact him, don't hesitate to use my name. I'd say he won't go along unless he thinks something will work.

jdw 