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Homer Bigart, perhaps the Times' most respected reporter, tried to make an important point in the story he filed from Fort Benning March 29 on the conviction of First Lieut William L. Calley, Jr. Some editor ruled him out of line, however. On the left below are the two paragraphs in question as Bigart wrote them and as they appeared in the version of his story sent out by the Times news service. On the right is the passage as edited for the Times:

"Although he had just been found guilty of 22 murders, Calley was treated far more gently than was Army doctor Captain Howard B. Levy four years ago after receiving a sentence for refusing to give medical training to Green Berets on the grounds that the training would be used unlawfully in Vietnam.

"Unlike Levy, Calley was not handcuffed and left the court unfettered. An officer explained: "His conduct has been exemplary throughout and he'll continue to be treated as an officer."

"Lieutenant Calley was not handcuffed when driven to the stockade."

Bigart, who is 63 years old and retires next year after 17 years on the Times and 45 years as a journalist (during which he twice won the Pulitzer Prize), accepts the editing with the resignation of a man who has been mangled many times before. "I never read my stories in the paper any more," he says. "It's a safe way to avoid ulcers. You can't win. You finally come to the point where you either have to take it or quit. People have tried to fight back, but they got nowhere. You can't beat a newspaper bureaucracy any more than you can beat any other kind of bureaucracy."