

## The Buchanan Report

To the Editor:

I was saddened by Patrick J. Buchanan's response (Op-Ed Nov. 9) to my earlier criticism of his media reporting to the President. I am sad not because I was criticized—critics should, expect countercriticism. I am saddened by the slovenly and misleading reporting in Mr. Buchanan's reply.

Mr. Buchanan, to use his phrase, had "the singular effrontery" to make a flat statement about the sources of my research without ever going through that elementary reportorial discipline of asking me. He said:

"What other 'press critic' in America possesses the singular effrontery to fob off on The New York Times 900 words of critique and analysis about a publication he has never seen nor read? . . . Mr. Bagdikian managed to discourse learnedly upon the merits of this voluminous production from the unique perspective of never having read a single issue."

I weep at such reportage. I did read an original copy of Mr. Buchanan's media report to the President. I had it in front of me when I wrote the Times piece. I have it in front of me now. The portion from which I cited factual errors is headed "News Summary." Under that, one space to

the left is, "April 23, 1971." Under that, one space of the right, "Television Report." And under that, one more space to the right, "(Thursday newscast)." Right, Mr. Buchanan? Full copy sent on request except where forbidden by certain states of mind.

I also had in front of me, as I wrote, the verbatim transcripts of the three network newscasts that formed the basis of the faulty Buchanan report. These transcripts were made from tapes of good quality without background noise or missing segments.

In the ambitiousness of Mr. Buchanan's attack on me and my essay, it should not go unnoticed that in more than 1,600 words of impassioned rejoinder he did not mention a single item I cited nor denied that I was correct in showing that they were factually inaccurate.

I must confess that there is one Buchanan statement that I agree with. I must also confess that never before in my adult life did I think I would agree with such a radical thought. But I admit here and now, unashamedly and without inner reservation, that I concur with the concluding statement in Mr. Buchanan's attack upon me:

"Calvin Coolidge, thou shouldst be living at this hour."

BEN H. BAGDIKIAN  
Washington, Nov. 9, 1973