

CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator

BY HAND

July 19, 1999

Eric Effron, Editor
Brill's Content
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10175

RE: Story Proposal: News Ombudsmen
Turning the Spotlight on *The New York Times*

Dear Mr. Effron:

At the suggestion of Amy DiTullio, with whom I spoke on Friday, enclosed is a copy of a story proposal, contained in my July 8, 1998 letter to your predecessor, Michael Kramer. The proposal suggested that *Brill's Content* "...explore the media's failure to embrace the valuable ombudsman concept by focusing on its rejection by *The [New York] Times*."

Somewhere in your office is a box containing an EIGHT-YEAR correspondence between our non-partisan citizens' organization and *Times* reporters and editors, consolidated in our four fully-documented complaints against *The Times* -- each received by *Times* Publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. These primary source materials, which I hand-delivered to your office with the story proposal, not only establish the demonstrably dishonest and despicable manner in which *The Times* handles legitimate complaints against it, in the absence of a news ombudsman, but Mr. Sulzberger's shameless refusal to confront the necessity of an ombudsman, evidentially presented to him. I have asked Ms. DiTullio to locate that box and provide it to you.

Also enclosed is Mr. Kramer's August 10, 1998 response: "we'll take a look [at the July 8, 1998 letter and accompanying documents] when we have time" -- as well as my follow-up fax six months later to Ms. DiTullio, dated January 5, 1999.

Since more than a full year has now elapsed without any decision from *Brill's Content* on this important story proposal, I would appreciate your personal attention to it. Indeed, in view of your fine article in the May issue "*Free Speech, If You Can Afford It*" about the *Times*' Op-Ed ads, I expect you will be particularly interested in our second and third complaints to Mr. Sulzberger, detailing the extraordinary story of how our unfunded and non-profit organization was forced to incur the \$16,770 expense of such an ad on October 26, 1994 because of *The Times*' wilful and continuous suppression of electorally-significant "news fit to print". A copy of the ad, "*Where Do You Go When Judges Break the Law?*", is enclosed for your convenience.

I will call you in two weeks -- at which time I hope you will have had an opportunity to preliminarily review the documented story proposal.

Thank you.

Yours for a quality judiciary,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elena Ruth Sassower". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

Enclosures

cc: Amy DiTullio