

Subject: Fwd: "Verified Facts to Hold the Powerful Accountable" -- Including in Journalism

Date: 7/6/2006, 3:40 PM

From: Elena Ruth Sassower <judgewatchers@aol.com>

To: jr3@nyu.edu, jeffjarvis@gmail.com, densmore@newshare.com,
sims@journ.umass.edu, rww@journ.umass.edu, gary@news-council.org,
Newton@knightfdn.org, Kebbel@knightfdn.org, tomrosen@journalism.org

cc: Ellen Hume <ellen.hume@umb.edu>

Organization: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.

Until a short time ago, I did not realize that Professor Hume had e-mailed her response to my memo not only to me, but to the memo's other indicated recipients -- and to Tom Rosenstiel.

Herewith is my reply -- to which I have invited her response -- as I now invite yours.

Elena Sassower

----- Original Message -----

Subject: "Verified Facts to Hold the Powerful Accountable" -- Including in Journalism

Date: 7/6/2006, 2:05 PM

From: Elena Ruth Sassower <judgewatchers@aol.com>

To: Ellen Hume <ellen.hume@umb.edu>

Organization: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.

Dear Professor Hume:

I am at a loss to understand your e-mail response.

What I am "trying to accomplish" is to promote "necessary scholarship and reporting on the role of the press in our democracy" -- an objective which I clearly stated in my five-sentence memo of today's date, transmitting to you and other indicated recipients my yesterday's letter to Tom Rosenstiel.

Do you deny or dispute "The Far-Reaching Evidentiary Significance of CJA's Public Interest Lawsuit vs. The New York Times -- including as a Case Study for Establishing News Councils"? The relevant facts are summarized by my straightforward 2-1/2 page letter to Mr. Rosenstiel, which is a perfectly understandable letter, not at all "a legal brief". Likewise the accompanying enclosures: the two press releases about the lawsuit and my e-mail correspondence to Jay Rosen and Jeff Jarvis. What about these short, separate documents do you not understand?

You are an intelligent, educated person -- a journalist and academic -- who holds and has held important, leadership positions in journalism. Do you really not know what my "beef" is? -- a word choice suggesting that you read The Times column which is the basis for the lawsuit's libel and libel *per se* causes of action. And do you really not know what "[I] think anyone should do"? Isn't what I think journalists and scholars should do explicit from what you concede are "meticulously presented material" -- and isn't what I think should be done not only reasonable, but professionally and ethically-mandated?

Finally, on what basis do you "take issue with how [I] characterized [your] participation in the Media Giraffe conference"? My footnote reference to your participation (at p. 3 of my letter to Mr. Rosenstiel) does not interpret what you said during the June 28th panel discussion -- just the fact that you said it or some paraphrase of it, which you do not deny or dispute.

I await your response to the foregoing -- first and foremost to whether you deny or dispute "The Far-Reaching Evidentiary Significance of CJA's Public Interest Lawsuit vs. The New York Times". Is it

your contention that the lawsuit does not present -- by *readily-verifiable* primary source documents (accessible via CJA's website) -- "verified facts to hold the powerful accountable?", and was this not your emphatic definition of what journalism must be about?

It is ironic that among the important questions you put forward in your June 28th presentation -- after "who will pay for investigative journalism? and "who will hold government accountable?" -- was "if someone does hold journalism accountable with real journalism, how will we know to believe it?"

Let us work together to find this "real journalism" to hold "journalism accountable" -- as we have laid before you overwhelming evidentiary proof of journalistic betrayal, imperiling our democracy.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower

Ellen Hume wrote on 7/6/2006, 10:59 AM:

Dear Ms. Sassower, I don't know what you are trying to accomplish, but I do take issue with **how you** have characterized my participation in the Media Giraffe conference. I think you misunderstood the gist of my comments when I said something like "journalism does not need reinvention." I was picking up a theme proposed by a previous speaker, and was specifically and at some length expressing my view that the basic values of journalism do not need reinventing, i.e., presenting verified facts, transparently maintaining independence and impartiality instead of representing some hidden agenda. It was really about focusing on the content of what we do rather than the pipeline that content goes into. Instead of the meticulously presented material that you have sent to us, which read like a legal brief, perhaps you could express in some short narrative what your beef is and **what you think anyone** should do about it.

-----Original Message-----

From: Elena Ruth Sassower [mailto:judgewatchers@aol.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 06, 2006 9:17 AM

To: jr3@nyu.edu; jeffjarvis@gmail.com; densmore@newshare.com; sims@journ.umass.edu; rww@journ.umass.edu; gary@news-council.org; Newton@knightfdn.org;

Kebbel@knightfdn.org; Ellen Hume; ellenhume@ellenhume.com

Cc: tomrosen@journalism.org

Subject: Evidentiary Significance of CJA's Public Interest Lawsuit vs NYT -- Including as a Case Study for Establishing News Councils

TO: Jay Rosen, Jeff Jarvis, Bill Densmore, Norman Sims, Ralph Whitehead, Jr., Gary Gilson, Eric Newton, Gary Kebbell, Ellen Hume

Attached is my memo to you of today's date, enclosing my yesterday's letter to Tom Rosenstiel, to which you are indicated recipients.

I look forward to your response.

Thank you.