

# CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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*Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator*

BY FAX AND BY MAIL: 212-571-9836 (7 pages)

August 26, 2002

Ira Stoll, Managing Editor  
The New York Sun  
105 Chambers Street  
New York, New York 10007

RE: REQUEST FOR SUPERVISORY OVERSIGHT:  
CJA's July 8, 2002 story proposal, "Scooping" the  
Competition: Exposing the *Real* Attorney General  
Spitzer – *not* the P.R. version

Dear Mr. Stoll:

Enclosed is a copy of CJA's July 8, 2002 story proposal addressed to you, which you directed to The Sun's Albany correspondent, Bill Hammond.

Mr. Hammond's handling of this powerful, electorally-significant story proposal does NOT befit any kind of professional journalist – and certainly not a journalist working for a "start-up" newspaper, requiring aggressive "scoop" reporting. I, therefore, request a meeting with you and Seth Lipsky to assist you in making your own evaluation.

Please be advised that on August 1<sup>st</sup>, AFTER Mr. Hammond had taken a week's vacation, I traveled to Albany to meet with him and detail the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal. The following week Mr. Hammond was taking another week's vacation. When I called him on Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, it appeared he had NOT reviewed the sample of substantiating documents I had given him twelve days earlier, *all meticulously organized in indexed file folders*, and he essentially admitted as much. Indeed, last Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, he refused to answer my specific question as to which documents he had read.

That Mr. Hammond has not pursued the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal in any competent, professional way may be seen from the fact that in my August 12<sup>th</sup> and August 23<sup>rd</sup> phone conversations with him – my only conversations with him since our August 1<sup>st</sup> Albany meeting – he (1) did NOT ask me a single question about ANY of the sample of substantiating documents I had given him – nor comment upon same; (2) did NOT ask me a single question about the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal or otherwise initiate discussion about it; and (3) REJECTED my offers of assistance, including, specifically, my offer to assist him in scripting interview questions for Attorney General Spitzer based on the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal.

Despite the fact that the sample documents I gave Mr. Hammond establish that I am a completely credible source of extraordinary information – *all independently and readily-verifiable* -- he has inexplicably shut me out from a story of which I have direct, first-hand experience and of which I am integrally part. Mr. Hammond's express statement to me on August 12<sup>th</sup> was that I could read his article when it appears. He warned me, however, that the article would not necessarily reflect the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal because, in his view, the story proposal is not all I "think" it is. This, without elaborating the basis for such view, including identifying what aspect of the proposal was not substantiated by the sample documents I had provided him or by the further documents I had proffered.

Most shockingly, Mr. Hammond has been perfectly willing to have The Sun lose the politically-explosive "scoop" which CJA's documented July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal represents. He explicitly told me that I should feel free to pursue it with journalists at other publications. This, I have refused to do, telling him that I will first give his superiors – you and Mr. Lipsky – the opportunity to decide whether the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal does not offer the kind of media-suppressed, public-interest/policy journalism for which The Sun was reborn – and upon which its viability rests.

On Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, I asked Mr. Hammond to mail you the documents I had given him on August 1<sup>st</sup> in substantiation of the story proposal. He refused, saying that he would do so only upon request from you or Mr. Lipsky. I, therefore, ask that you so-request. That way, you and Mr. Lipsky can be convinced as to the political "powder keg" that Mr. Hammond has been "sitting on" since you gave him the story in mid-July.

As time is of the essence, please advise, as soon as possible, as to a convenient date and time for me to come to your office for a meeting about the July 8<sup>th</sup> story proposal and Mr. Hammond's dilatory and incompetent handling thereof. I would be pleased if Mr. Hammond would join us - and I so stated to him last Friday.

Thank you.

Yours for a quality judiciary  
And electorally-meaningful reporting,



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

Enclosure

cc: Bill Hammond  
[By Fax: 518-465-9619]

TRANSMISSION VERIFICATION REPORT

*8/26/02*  
TIME : ~~01/10/1995~~ 23:38  
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