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BY FAX: 212-727-7668 (16 pages)

January 21, 2000

Seth Ackerman, Media Analyst
FAIR
130 West 25th Street
New York, New York 10001

RE: AN EXPOSE OF BRILL'S CONTENT
Follow-up to "Sweet on Sugar" (*Extra!*, Nov/Dec. 1999)

Dear Mr. Ackerman:

As discussed, arriving together in today's mail was the current issue of *Extra!* AND a letter from *Brill's Content* brushing off -- and impliedly rejecting -- an important story proposal that our non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization had submitted to it a year and a half ago -- and which it had "sat on" all this time.

From the story proposal -- and *Content's* much delayed and dishonest response -- can be inferred that -- notwithstanding its boastful claims -- some stories go too close to the jugular of media power for this for-profit, media watchdog.

So that FAIR might take the opportunity to expose the truth about *Content* -- as well as to pursue the powerful story proposal that *Content* has rejected -- I enclose our exchange of correspondence:

- (1) CJA's hand-delivered July 8, 1998 letter to Michael Kramer, Editorial Director, presenting our story proposal that *Brill's Content* examine "the media's failure to embrace the valuable [news] ombudsman concept by focusing on its rejection by *The [New York] Times*". *The Times'* failure to establish *any* alternative mechanism for addressing legitimate complaints against it was demonstrated with *primary source materials*: our EIGHT-YEAR correspondence with *The Times*, including *four* documented complaints to its publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. -- copies of which we transmitted to *Brill's Content* in a box, fully organized and inventoried.

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- (2) Michael Kramer's August 10, 1998 letter: "We'll take a look when we have time";
- (3) CJA's faxed January 5, 1999 letter to Mr. Kramer's assistant, Amy DiTullio, reiterating the continued relevance of CJA's July 8, 1998 story proposal and offering further substantiating correspondence with the *Times*;
- (4) CJA's hand-delivered July 19, 1999 letter to Eric Effron, Editor, drawing to his attention that more than a year had elapsed since our July 8, 1998 story proposal, without any decision from *Brill's Content* about it;
- (5) Eric Effron's July 23, 1999 letter: "Because of limited editorial resources, we are not able to pursue the story at this time. We'll keep your material on hand for future consideration.";
- (6) CJA's faxed January 6, 2000 letter to Mr. Effron's assistant, Gernell Welecher, containing the aforesaid itemization and pointing out that we had received no further response to our story proposal – while meanwhile *The Times*, operating without a news ombudsman or other complaint mechanism, was continuing to be as unaccountable as it was before *Brill's Content*'s promise to "bring the media's free ride to a screeching halt";
- (7) Eric Effron's January 18, 2000 letter, claiming, *without* specificity, that *Brill's Content* had written about "the role of ombudsmen and the *New York Times* lack of one" – as if that was the story proposal we had proposed. No mention was made as to whether *Brill's Content* would return our materials, which Mr. Effron – before wishing us "best of luck with it in the future" -- stated the magazine was "not planning to use".

Thank you for your consideration of this story proposal. I look forward to your enthusiastic response once you have reviewed the enclosed.

Yours for a quality judiciary,
And responsible journalism,



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

Enclosures