

**Subject: Re: The End of Our Correspondence**

**Date:** 8/26/2005, 1:23 PM

**From:** Seth Mnookin <smnookin@gmail.com>

**To:** Elena Ruth Sassower <judgewatchers@aol.com>

Elena,

Oh dear. You really are losing it.

Fortunately, I tape recorded and transcribed my "talk." I usually do this to help me better prepare for the future. Let's see if this stirs your memory at all.

You asked a long, multi-part, rambling question demanding to know "on what empirical basis, evidentiary, not heresay, not what top management and editors say about themselves or the environment of journalism, which is very incestuous, let me say, uh, but what is your empirical basis that the journalism of the New York Times meets some high quality standard of objectivity."

I tried to answer you. You shouted me down, saying, "Excuse me! Excuse me! What is your empirical basis for expressing your view that Dan Okrent did a great job, what is the empirical basis, what evidence do you have."

At this point, there was laughter in the crowd and the moderator was forced, for the first time all afternoon, to stand up and move to the front of the room. I told you "we're operating on such different planets I don't know how to address you." You then began waving around a packet of papers, exclaiming, "I documented it! I documented it! Here's a letter for you!"

The moderator intercepted you and, before you could say anything else, said, "Ok. Does anyone have a question that's not antagonistic?"

Does any of this ring a bell?

After the talk, you parked yourself in front of where I was sitting and began another rant about Dan Okrent that I found difficult to make sense of. When the moderator walked over once again, you began demanding that she "turn over the evidence. That's for him; I want him to have the evidence. Please give it to him." Frankly, I was concerned about what else you might do, so I did my best to put a playful inscription in your book. This, too, backfired: after initially walking away, you came back, walked in front of an elderly woman, and began telling me that this was "truly something special. This is not just a normal inscription." After you finally left, another guest apologized, and asked if I had to deal with people like you often.

Fortunately, the answer to that question is no.

As for your "two-fold" question, you must be right: I clearly haven't answered anything to your satisfaction -- although I did talk at some length about Okrent and his performance as public editor. So let me say once again: we're operating on such different planets I don't know how to address you.

Re: The End of Our Correspondence

Cheers,

Seth