



George Freeman
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December 2, 2005

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Elena Ruth Sassower
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.
P.O. Box 69, Gedney Station
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Re: Times' procedures re corrections

Dear Ms. Sassower,

I write in response to your letter of November 30, 2005. Your letter asks what procedures The Times has with respect to correction requests; in particular, it asks why I was unaware of your July 29, 2005 letter seeking a correction of a November 7, 2004 column in the Westchester section by Marek Fuchs and your "nearly 15-year correspondence with The Times that preceded the column."

At the outset, I would reiterate, as I told you at the reception after the NYU law program, that I was unaware of the Fuchs column or of the letter you wrote complaining about it. Letters seeking corrections are not routinely forwarded to the Legal Department. Our lawyers only need get involved if the letter raises a specific legal issue. More often than not correction demands, no matter how vociferous, do not need legal department review: the letter does not point to any specific falsity in the article; the complaint is not about defamatory material; the letter is complaining more about the general coverage than anything else; and so on.

I have now quickly reviewed some of the voluminous body of materials you submitted to various Times editors and executives in the summer of 2005. Based on the Fuchs column and your communication, it is likely that whoever ultimately received your correspondence did not ask for legal review for any or all of those above reasons. (It would not be appropriate for Mr. Sulzberger and Mr. Keller, for example, to respond to you, but rather, your letter was probably forwarded to an editor who worked on the piece.) Indeed, your statements at NYU – both in guise of a question at the large program and to me afterwards – as well as your 7/29/05 correspondence indicate that your basic problem with the column was with its substantive coverage and themes. Your emphasis was on what you would have wished the column covered, not on specific false

and defamatory statements of fact. Given that, it seems perfectly appropriate that your communication did not reach the legal department.

As you may know, our system – which includes annual legal seminars given by the legal department to the newsroom – has clearly been successful over time. The Times has not paid a dollar in damages in libel cases (or settled any libel cases for money) since well before libel law was constitutionalized in the New York Times v. Sullivan case (which was the focus of our discussion at NYU) in 1964.

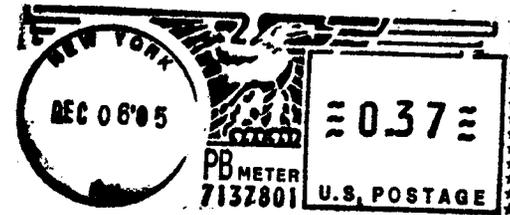
Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Freeman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

George Freeman

The New York Times
Company

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