

# Letters

Various Authors

1968

## To the Editors:

In the July 18 edition of the *Detroit American*, Anthony J. Wierzbicki, the paper's president and publisher, wrote an editorial in response to the barrage of criticism directed at the paper's use of uncomplimentary terminology when referring to law-breakers, precisely black law-breakers.

This editorial appearing boldly and conspicuously on the front page pointed out that "We (the *Detroit American*) have used the same terms in describing white thugs as we do Negro thugs. We do our best to describe the perpetrators of these crimes so that law-abiding citizens can turn over to police or give police a clue to a suspect"

A couple of paragraphs later he levels off his apology stating that, "We firmly believe that it is the duty of a newspaper to advise its readers of the truth—the entire truth. Then, and then only, can the public make proper decisions and demand proper civic action."

Well, Mr. Wierzbicki, with this as suggestion, and realizing that I risk the possibility of dignifying your position, here is a personal piece of civic action and some decisions to boot:

Now, in what manner does it assist a law-abiding citizen, on the look-out for law-breakers, to know that such violators are "street barbarians" or "jackals"? If this form of descriptive reporting can be viewed as clue-giving then perhaps the search should start at the Detroit Zoo. Even less derogative terms as "brats" and "jerks" are equally hard put in offering clues as to whom (or what) is actually sought.

Thus, you can see, it is not so much the reportage that alarms but the style and manner in which it is done. All the snide and animal connotations at your disposal fall far short of meaningful description and, in the end, merely serve as a device in which to reveal the nature of one's attitudes.

The *Detroit American* is an interim newspaper (should we offer thanks?) and has very blatantly put forth some insipidities that the "major" presses, at times, only subtly allude to; Perhaps the Kerner Report warrants another reading. Even Mr. Wierzbicki's remarks aren't free of this paper's editorial' slant (should they be?); for directly on the back of his article is the "Police Blotter" that continues the unnecessary denigration that gives rise to this response.

Mr. Wierzbicki, the criticism your paper deserves cannot be registered here and the results may be of even less significance. Then, again, maybe it's not altogether your fault—perhaps, in accord with rumor, your paper is compiled in Polish and merely suffers through translation, right? Maybe the *Detroit American* is just another big Polish joke and best shrugged off to be relegated to toilet floors and garbage wrapping.

To improve your desperate situation I suggest you burn your reference book (the *Bestiary*?) and maybe even a few of those who swear by it. Also, when referring to Afro-Americans (and it might earn you some kudos) use *ozarny* (black) instead of *murzyn* (Negro).

Finally, don't give up. Remember the *Free Press* gathered some Pultizers last year.

Herb Boyd

## Dear Sirs:

I have decided one way that us persecuted Long-haired American individuals can strike back at the establishment. Those of us who have lotsa hair are usually cut by straight businessmen with lotsa fat, atrocious -tummies. So why not start a campaign against the straight, fat American??

After all, there are 75,000,000 fat, overweight short-haired elephants rumbling thru our streets every day and night, so it's about time the long-haired establishment got back at the fatsos who threaten the youthful, American image.

For a start, we could counter the "BEAUTIFY AMERICA...GET A HAIRCUT" billboard with "BEAUTIFY AMERICA...LOSE SOME WEIGHT."

Thinnnnnly yours,

K.E.

Dearborn

## Not dear Fifth Estate,

This is a letter criticizing all that concerns the *Fifth Estate*. I am almost positive you won't print it.

Mostly, it has to do with the June 19 July 1 issue, page 18 at the top. Is A. Saperstein such an idiot that he developed the picture backwards, or did you print it that way purposely?

Who says it's a waste? It can be used to put out fires, bring crooks out of hiding, etc., etc., etc. And people (rioters especially) have been known to attack trucks. The Highland Park Police are not so inhumane that they would shoot flames, water, or teargas at people.

I'm proud of my country, and it sure doesn't seem that those at The Fifth Estate are.

Phyllis DeBol

Highland Park

## Dear Phyllis:

First, you did not have to use the cheap trick of "bet you won't print this." We didn't take your dare. We printed your letter because we want our Letters column to be an open forum and we welcome criticism of our articles and our political positions.

You think the H.P. Pig Department is going to put out fires with an armored car? Very interesting. Why don't you call them and suggest it to them for we are sure this is not what they had in mind for its use.

Also, when have you ever heard of a "rioter" attacking an armored car?

If the pigs don't plan on using all their riot equipment why the hell did they buy it? Napoleon said, "The only thing you cannot do with bayonets is sit on them." And you better believe that tank is made for using.

# fifth Estate

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