

public, adding that that role would be compromised if they were forced to be "informers."

They spoke to the FBI agents and repeatedly declined to discuss such things as the personal habits of a local underground editor, that editor's news judgment or his friends. Hougan and Wagner felt that the FBI action was harassment and could tend to raise doubts in their superiors' minds about them.

That underground editor served 4½ months in jail for refusing to tell a grand jury investigating the bombing about the sources of a news story related to the bombing. He spent that time in jail for refusing to tell how he received a message from the so-called "New Year's Day Gang" which took credit for the bombing. That imprisonment came despite the fact that a federal grand jury had returned indictments against four young men for the bombing.

However, law enforcement officials are not the only ones working against the public's right to know and freedom of the press. Political figures and publishers work their own kind of "magic" in this area.

One of our reporters stumbled across a meeting between Gov. Patrick Lucey and members of the state's boards of regents. The reporter was asked by the governor's executive secretary to stay away from the meeting. Supported by his city editor, the reporter declined the request. Then the political aide asked the publisher to intervene and the reporter was ordered to stay away from the meeting.

As Guild president I registered a strong objection to the governor's aide. I told him that similar actions helped America sink into the Vietnam morass. He replied that he would do it again if he ever had the chance.

Later I was removed from coverage of the same issue—merger of the state's two collegiate systems—allegedly because of news stories which hurt the governor's position. The Guild is studying action in this case.

My greatest concern is not my situation but rather than of society. The Madison situation has shown that a publisher has unlimited power to determine what appears as news. He has the ultimate authority to determine even which "letters to the editors" get into the newspaper.

"Freedom of the press" is his alone. Congress can make no laws abridging this absolute freedom. Nor should it. The working men and women of the press, I believe, can do something about it. The journalism reviews which have sprouted are small ways to brake an uncontrolled engine riding the press freedom rails.

The Madison Guild is seeking another switch on this important road. In current negotiations we are seeking the right for any staff member to have an 800-word column printed *UNCHANGED* on the editorial page. We are willing to have it reviewed for libel and postal regulations. And we are willing to provide 72 hours notice for production problems.

What we are not ready to give up is the concept that the whim of a publisher can kill an idea because it is unpleasant to him.

Collective bargaining is perhaps the only way to achieve a brake on this whim. As you can imagine the publisher is having fits over the suggestion that he share freedom of the press with anyone.

Freedom of the press, after all, is the freedom to express varying ideas. Publishers privately and publicly brag that they are not frightened by Presidents or Senators. We think that they should not be afraid of ideas either.

MATTHEW A. POMMER,
President.
(For the Guild).

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, D.C., September 21, 1971.

Hon. SAM J. ERVIN, Jr.,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In response to your letter of September 16, 1971 requesting me to appear before your Subcommittee on September 29, 1971, I wish to advise you that, as a member of the immediate staff of the President, I must respectfully decline the invitation to testify.

Sincerely,

HERBERT G. KLEIN,
Director of Communications for the Executive Branch.