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CIA 4.0 Drug Traffic
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P-McCoy, A. Freed

600-4012 Harper Row

N - Politics of

July 28, 1972 Heroin in SE Asia

Mr. Reuven Frank
President
NBC News
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N. Y.

Orig under
Drug Traff

Dear Mr. Frank:

Accuracy in Media wishes to call to your attention a few apparently erroneous statements in the Chronolog program of July 28 on the narcotics traffic in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Utley, the narrator, made the following statement.

"CIA went to the publishing house of Harper & Row to get and to read the manuscript of McCoy's book before its publication date. And surprisingly Harper and Row acquiesced. It surrendered to the threat of prior censorship."

A story on this matter was published in The New York Times on July 22. According to this story, CIA asked to have an opportunity to review the book because it believed that it contained statements concerning the agency that were totally false and without foundation. The CIA letter to Harper and Row stated: "It is our belief that no reputable publishing house would wish to publish such allegations without being assured that the supporting evidence was valid."

B. Brooks Thomas, vice president and general counsel of Harper and Row, said: "We're not submitting to censorship or anything like that. We're taking a responsible middle position. I just believe that the CIA should have the chance to review it."

I am sure that it is known at NBC that manuscripts being considered by reputable publishers are always submitted to experts for review prior to publication. One of the big mistakes McGraw-Hill made with the Irving book on Howard Hughes was that it did not take the precaution of having the book read by people who were sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject of the book. Of course, a publisher is free to accept or reject the suggestions made by the reviewers. We think it would be irresponsible for a publisher to ignore warnings that a manuscript contained serious inaccuracies and to refuse to permit those able to point out the inaccuracies to have an opportunity to do so prior to publication. By taking every precaution to insure accuracy, the publisher helps establish his own credibility, the credibility of the book, and he avoids increasing the amount of misinformation that circulates in public channels. We do not think this has any connection with censorship, which connotes legal compulsion to prevent statements from being published. Since CIA has no legal power to prevent Harper and Row from publishing anything, Mr. Utley's charge that the publisher had submitted to prior censorship seems to be clearly false.

A second statement that was made on this program that probably conveyed information to the viewer was the following: