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HUMAN EVENTS
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Will the 'Village Voice' Lose Its Pulitzer?

When it was discovered that an eight-year-old heroin addict by the name of "Jimmy" didn't exist, the *Washington Post* returned its Pulitzer Prize and reporter Janet Cooke resigned from the newspaper. The prize was then awarded to Teresa Carpenter, who wrote a series of articles for the leftist weekly New York newspaper, *Village Voice*, about some bizarre murders.

Now, however, one of Teresa Carpenter's stories has come under serious scrutiny. The so-called "Pulitzergate" scandal may not be over.

James A. Wechsler, a columnist for the *New York Post*, has filed a complaint with the National News Council, a media watchdog group, about one of Carpenter's stories that concerned the murder of former Congressman Allard Lowenstein by a one-time associate, Dennis Sweeney. Lowenstein's brother Larry has also filed a complaint with the news council about the same article.

In essence, the complaints charge that the article was deceptive, too heavily based on anonymous sources, and insensitive, since it made serious allegations against a dead man.

For instance, Wechsler notes that one of the passages in the article dealt with reports that Lowenstein once tried to seduce Sweeney. The passage read as follows: "Now, from his cell at Rikers Island, Sweeney denies that they ever had a relationship. Once, while he and Lowenstein were traveling through Mississippi together, they checked into a motel. According to Sweeney, Lowenstein made a pass and Sweeney rebuffed it."

Wechsler says reading that paragraph might lead you to infer that Carpenter had interviewed Sweeney. In fact, as Carpenter now admits, there was no such interview.

The *New York Post* columnist also criticizes Carpenter for reporting unsubstantiated allegations that Lowenstein was once connected with the CIA. Carpenter said in the article that such allegations were just "rumored," but she reported them anyway.

The allegations were mostly based on Lowenstein's former role as president of the National Student Association, which in 1967 was revealed to have been a recipient of CIA support. But as Wechsler points out, the Carpenter piece itself noted that the revelation was that "the CIA had been setting the international agenda of the National Student Association since 1952, one year after Lowenstein stepped down as president" (emphasis added).

Wechsler says that the Carpenter piece was later "reproduced verbatim in, of all places, the *Washington Post*."

"Shortly thereafter, 15 of Lowenstein's former congressional colleagues published a letter in that newspaper declaring, 'The piece purports to be a serious and objective examination of how Dennis Sweeney came to kill Al. But measured against even the loosest journalistic standards, it is grossly deficient. It is devoid of any attributable quotes. . . . Instead, it is rife with unsubstantiated assertions and gratuitous innuendo.'"

Teresa Carpenter and *Village Voice* Editor David Schneiderman have said they stand by the article, and the *Voice* has reprinted the Sweeney-Lowenstein story, with the statement, "Let the Reader Judge." But the important judgment will come from the National News Council, which may find the *Voice* guilty of the charges Wechsler has made, thus giving the Pulitzer Board yet another black eye.

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• At least one other reporter for the *Voice*, far-left columnist Alexander Cockburn, has not been noted for upholding the highest standards of the journalistic profession. Cockburn writes a column, "Press Clips," that purports to be a watchdog of the news media. But it appears that Cockburn needs some watching.

In a recent story he criticized HUMAN EVENTS for allegedly having "falsely charged that the U.S. Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) was initiated by the brother of the Salvadoran Communist party leader Shafik Handal in cooperation with members of the CPUSA."

In fact, if Cockburn had bothered to seriously read the piece (April 25), or if he had bothered to read it at all, he would have found that we did *not* charge that CISPES was initiated by Farid Handal, brother of Shafik Handal. We charged that many of the "solidarity committees" that merged to form CISPES were initiated by Farid Handal in cooperation with CPUSA members. This statement is based on a careful reading of Farid Handal's report on his visit to this country in February-March 1980.

Cockburn was concerned that the expose of Handal's U.S. trip by HUMAN EVENTS, which he described as "an influential paper in Reagan's circle," might prompt an investigation into CISPES by the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism. Cockburn said, "The transmission belt to subcommittee hearings is not a long one."

Apparently Cockburn is a journalist who jumps to quick conclusions. When Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois recently "disappeared" in El Salvador, some leftists assumed that he had been murdered by right-wing death squads. Cockburn reported that Bourgeois had been "kidnapped." In fact, as we now know, Father Bourgeois had voluntarily "disappeared," only to "reappear" a short time later to denounce the Salvadoran government and support the "armed struggle." Bourgeois said he had been with "the poor."

Cockburn's reporting, however, shouldn't be allowed to taint that of Teresa Carpenter, whose Sweeney-Lowenstein story will stand and fall by itself.



Former Congressman Allard Lowenstein, who was murdered last year, was linked to the CIA and homosexual activity in an article in the Village Voice that eventually won a Pulitzer Prize. But strong criticism of the piece may force the Voice to relinquish the prize.