

## COMMENTARY

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I was a reporter at the *Daily News* when the term “Turn ‘em Loose, Bruce” was hung on Bruce Wright.<sup>1</sup> The *Daily News* and the *New York Post* had a field day with that. Two things struck me about that. One, the reporters and editors desperately wanted a “Turn ‘em Loose, Bruce” story; they just wanted that story, they wanted to get that term in the lead, and they wanted it in the headline. The other thing was that not only did the editors not understand the implications of the facts in the cases that they were writing about—usually the case involved the allegedly low amounts of bail that Bruce Wright was setting—but they didn’t even understand the facts themselves. They didn’t care about the facts. The problem was that some of the stories were serious.

It strikes me that whenever the politicians get upset and want to criticize judges, we in the media are the conduit. That message goes out to the public through the media, which often exaggerates and distorts the facts. I think that this is an example of the press having extraordinary freedoms and not taking up the responsibility that accompanies those freedoms. When we think about what kinds of remedies are available when we have unfair criticism of judges, it strikes me that, in the media, we can start with the remedy of policing ourselves better.

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<sup>1</sup> See generally Ellis Henican, *Bruce Still Turns Loose His Opinions, Like It or Not*, *Newsday*, Feb. 18, 1996, at A5 (describing career of New York Supreme Court Judge Bruce Wright).