

20 December 1970

Miss Kaye Northcott
Editor
The Texas Observer
Austin 78705

Dear Miss Northcott,

Thanks for your letter of the 14th and the news of David Belin's response to my article on Charles Givens.

Since writing to you on 22 November 1970, I have heard from Leo Sauvage and Dr. Cyril Wecht, the second two of the three critics to whom I sent the typescript of the Givens article asking that they read it with an eye to any vulnerability of fact, reasoning, or conclusions. Sauvage, as you know, is the author of The Oswald Affair and many magazine articles on the case, an outstanding journalist who has been the American correspondent for Le Figaro for over 20 years. Dr. Wecht is a foremost forensic pathologist, a lawyer as well as a physician, and is the Coroner of Alleghany County, Pennsylvania, and President-elect of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

Neither Sauvage nor Wecht questioned the factual content of the article or the logic, and Sauvage felt that it set forth an unassailable case. His only doubt was whether it constituted technical grounds for disbarment under the criteria in force in the American Bar Association, much as such action was morally justified.

Reverting now to David Belin's reply to you, that my "allegations are false": My factual statements are accompanied by citations to the official papers of the Warren Commission, either published or obtained from the National Archives. They cannot be "false" unless the corresponding official records (including FBI reports, transcripts of testimony taken by the Warren Commission, reports co-authored by Belin himself, etc.) are false in the first instance, in which case the onus can be placed only on those who wrote and issued the records from which I quoted in the article. If Belin had given you a single example of a "false allegation" or an inaccurate one or one taken out of context so as to distort its meaning, he would deserve to be taken seriously. But, as you say, he did not go into specifics, and I suspect that he has no specifics to offer.

As to my allegations being "libelous", I fail to see what conclusions can be drawn other than that the facts present a prima facie case of perjury and collusion. Belin might claim that when he took Givens' testimony in April he no longer recalled the contents of the February joint report written by him and Joseph Ball, and that he was merely flagrantly careless, irresponsible, and incompetent in failing to recognize and deal with the dramatic alteration in Givens' story; but the fact that he specifically asked Givens in April if he had ever told anyone that he had seen Oswald reading a newspaper in the domino room at about 11:50 a.m. reveals that he was aware of the initial Givens' story and was seeking to vitiate and erase it. If that is "libelous" I shall be overjoyed to defend it in a court of law. But Belin will not sue. I have published masses of material just like the Givens article, and other critics have done the same, without any libel suits and without even the effective refutation by the Commission or its lawyers of any charge made against them by myself or any other serious critic.

Therefore I suspect that Belin is only trying to rattle us, hoping that we will retreat in the face of hollow but loud bluster. I hope that you will tell him that you agree to publish his reply together with my article. I think there is no chance whatever that he can demolish my evidence or my arguments--no chance. If, theoretically, he could, then I would deserve to have the article and the demolition printed and I would be ready to eat crow publicly and in the same pages, by withdrawing any unfounded charges and apologizing for any proven error or any unwarranted accusation made in the article.

Let's call his bluff. I agree with you, it should prove to be interesting!

All good wishes,



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